

6th & 7th Grade Edge Homestudy

Lesson #8: Beyond

Where Am I Going?

GOAL

The goal of this lesson is for you to understand heaven as your eternal goal, a gift that is freely given but requires us to accept it in faith and then live in accord with everything God has revealed.

TEACHING

Beyond

All items in the material world come to some sort of end. Our electronics become outdated and replaced, or they break and we get new ones. Our food eventually goes bad or expires. Our clothes get old or ripped and need to be recycled. All living things also reach an end, which we call “death.” Death is a reality of life.

As human beings, we all have a common origin, being created by God in His image and likeness. We all have equal dignity, and we will all face the same end. Unlike the rest of the material world, human beings are both physical and spiritual beings; when we die our soul is separated from our body. Our bodies go through the natural process of breaking down and decomposing. However, our souls are immortal and do not die; they live on for eternity. (CCC 366) We believe that at a point called the “final resurrection,” our bodies will be raised from the dead like Jesus’ and we will be reunited with our souls. (CCC 366)

Our Destiny

Read Wisdom 1:13

God did not create death; death is a result of sin and entered the world through original sin. (CCC 413) When we sin, it affects our life here and now, but it also has eternal consequences. God desires for all of us to one day be in heaven, but we were created with free will, so we have to freely choose to love God and accept this great gift He has given us. (CCC 2002)

When people use their free will to choose not to love God and do not seek forgiveness for their sins, their choice becomes permanent at the end of their life and their soul goes to hell, where they permanently exclude themselves from a relationship with God and those who love God. (CCC 1033)

But God does not abandon us to sin and death; rather, God sent His only Son, Jesus, to save us from sin and bring us to eternal life with God in heaven. (CCC 359, 1949) Heaven is eternal life with God where we will live forever in perfect unity and love with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as well as all of the other people who are in heaven. Heaven is “the state of supreme and definitive happiness, the goal of the deepest longing of humanity” (CCC 1023).

Going Deeper

The joy and happiness of heaven is beyond anything we could imagine; in heaven, “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away” (Revelation 21:4). In heaven, we will have the perfect relationship with God; He will be enough for us and fulfill every desire of our hearts.

God created us all freely out of love. We did not ask to be born, and we did nothing to deserve the life He has given us. In the same way, God freely gives us the gift of heaven through Jesus; there is nothing we did to deserve salvation, yet Jesus died and rose from the dead to save us. (Romans 5:8)

Living Hope

The grace of Jesus and the gift of heaven are freely given to us in the Sacrament of Baptism, where we are freed from original sin, made sons and daughters of God, and become a part of the community of the Church. (CCC 1213) This sacrament begins our spiritual life. We are united through baptism to the death and Resurrection of Jesus so one day, when we die, we can be resurrected to eternal life with Jesus. (CCC 1277)

Going Deeper

The Sacrament of Baptism is necessary for salvation and is a gift given to the Church by Jesus Himself as the means for salvation. God has bound salvation to the Sacrament of Baptism, but He is not bound by the sacraments. God, in His infinite mercy, is able to work outside of the sacraments, but that does not mean we should neglect them or think that they are not necessary. (CCC 1257-1258)

While there is nothing we did or can do to deserve God's love and the gift of heaven, we are called to respond to this great love in the way we live our lives. There is a proper way to respond when we are given a great gift. We have all been given the gift of heaven, and we should respond to God with great gratitude and love. We should take care of the gift we have been given.

When we choose to know God, love God, and serve God, we remain on the path He has given us, which will lead us to heaven, and live lives full of hope. When we have hope, we "desire and expect from God both eternal life and the grace we need to attain it" (CCC 1817). By following the law God has given us and accepting the grace that comes to us through Jesus, we will orient our lives toward our destination of heaven. (CCC 1949)

Read John 14:2-4

God wants us to get to heaven so badly that "He did not spare His own Son for the sake of man. Nor does He ever cease to work, trying every possible means, until He has raised man up to Himself" (CCC 358). What we do with our lives matters. The choices we make matter. Our lives are not random; we were created for a reason and are called to eternal life with God.

With the truth of our origin, dignity, and destiny at the foundation of our lives, we discover what it means to be human and can properly form our identity. This allows us to find true happiness, meaning, and purpose, both today, tomorrow, and for all of eternity.

Prayer

At this time, close your eyes and, if you are ready, prepare to accept the gift of eternal life into your heart. If you are not yet ready that is fine, simply be open to and read the following words:

Jesus, I trust in you. I accept the gift of life you have given me through the Sacrament of Baptism, and I freely choose to love and follow you. Help me continue to love you and follow you every day. Thank you for your death on the cross. Thank you for the new life you give us. I accept it all, and I love you.

Take a few moments to reflect on these words. Conclude the lesson by praying an Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be.

Lectio Divina

Read John 6:28-29, 53-59, 14:2-4

What word or verse jumped out at you?

What is God saying to you through this scripture?

What is God asking you to do?

Read 1 Corinthians 2:9

What word or verse jumped out at you?

What is God saying to you through this scripture?

What is God asking you to do?

Questions

- What is one word you would use to describe heaven? Why?

- How have you seen heaven represented in TV, movies, or memes?

- How are these images (those you used in answer to the previous question) different than the way Scripture talks about heaven?

- Why do you think you were created for heaven? How do you know that you were created for heaven?