



## Session Objective

One of humankind's most basic, deepest questions is: What happens when you die? Christianity offers the unique answer that in Christ, death has been conquered! Your participants will learn what it means that life does not end with this world and will, like so many Christians, struggle over the details of that hope.

## Faith Statement

### Q. 1. What is your only comfort, in life and in death?

That I belong—body and soul, in life and in death—not to myself but to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ, who at the cost of his own blood has fully paid for all my sins and has completely freed me from the dominion of the devil; that he protects me so well that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, that everything must fit his purpose for my salvation. Therefore, by God's Holy Spirit, God also assures me of eternal life, and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for God.

—Heidelberg Catechism (4.001)



## Engage

Open your time together in prayer and lead a conversation based on the following questions:

- What do you think happens when you die?
- Do you believe that there is life after death? Why or why not?
- What is one specific question you have about the afterlife?
- Do the good or bad moments of life make you more hopeful for life after death? Why?



## Explore

Have a volunteer read Romans 8:36–39 out loud and then explore the following questions with the group:

- What does this Scripture say about what's now? about what's next?
- Do you think of the afterlife as a new beginning, as a different stage of life, as a continuation of life, or in some other way?
- Why do people want to know what's next?



## Express

Use the following questions to help the young people express what they've learned:

- Do you think death is bad, glad, or sad?
- When someone dies, should you grieve, celebrate his or her life, or both? Should you pray that God is graceful or trust in God's grace?
- What does *salvation* have to do with the afterlife?

Also, consider discussing the questions from Engage again to see if anyone has any new perspectives after exploring the Bible passage.



## Exit

Close in prayer, thanking God for the time that you have had together talking about God's Word.





## Session Objective

Many religions teach that we have some special existence after death. Some religions teach about souls, judgment, salvation, paradise, and other concepts similar to Christianity. Your participants will learn about the unique Christian perspective on heaven, that God is so wild and crazy in love with us that God sacrificed God's own Son so that we might have eternal life!

## Faith Statement

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

—Apostles' Creed



## Engage

Open your time together in prayer and begin a conversation based on the following questions:

- What are some of the images or concepts of heaven portrayed in American society? in popular teenage culture? Are those images biblical or fantasies?
- Are the cultural messages consistent with the biblical message?
- When it comes to heaven, do you think people believe the Bible or society more? Do teenagers believe the Bible or society more?
- In one word, what do you think heaven is like? In one sentence?



## Explore

Have a volunteer read John 3:16–17 out loud and then explore the following questions with the group:

- What do those verses say about eternal life?
- Is eternal life about hope, living forever, living fully now, or something else?

Have another volunteer read Daniel 12:1–3 out loud and then explore the following questions as a group:

- What do those verses say about “resurrection of the body”?
- Is this image about heaven or some other aspect of the afterlife?
- How does this work with your normal image of heaven?

Have another volunteer read Isaiah 11:1–9 out loud and then explore the following questions as a group:

- The image of heaven as peaceful, with lions lying down with lambs—what does that image mean to you? Is that an image of an afterlife heaven or heavenliness on earth?
- Other than lions and lambs, what things do you imagine are important parts of heaven? Why?
- What things do you imagine cannot be in heaven? Why?



## Express

Use the following questions to help the young people express what they've learned:

- Some people think heaven is like coming home to God. What would God's home be like? Who is there?
- How is God's comfort during life similar to or different from God's comfort in death? How is God's grace during life similar to or different from God's grace in death?
- How do you feel salvation during physical life? Is that feeling different in death, or just more intense?
- To feel more certain about your salvation, would it be more difficult to believe harder, behave better, or trust God more deeply? Which of the three is most helpful for salvation?
- Do you trust that God forgives and will forgive you? Why or why not?
- How would you respond if someone asked you: What is heaven like?

Also, consider discussing the questions from Engage again to see if anyone has any new perspectives after exploring the Bible passages.



## Exit

Close in prayer, thanking God for the time that you have had together talking about God's Word.



## Session Objective

For some of us, terrifying images of hell have been like a moral paddle, whacking us toward better behavior. For others, hell is more confusing than scary: How could a loving God create such a thing? In this session, your group will study what Scripture says (and doesn't say) about hell, sin, and God's judgment.

## Faith Statement

The same Jesus Christ is the judge of all people. His judgment discloses the ultimate seriousness of life and gives promise of God's final victory over the power of sin and death. To receive life from the risen Lord is to have life eternal; to refuse life from him is to choose the death which is separation from God. All who put their trust in Christ face divine judgment without fear, for the judge is their redeemer.

—*Confession of 1967* (9.11),  
inclusive language version



## Engage

Open your time together in prayer and lead a conversation based on the following questions:

- What are some of the images or concepts of hell portrayed in American society? in popular teenage culture?
- Are those images biblical or fantasies?
- Are the cultural messages consistent with the biblical message?
- When it comes to hell, do you think people believe the Bible or society more? Do teenagers believe the Bible or society more?
- In one word, what do you think hell is like? in one sentence?



## Explore

Have a volunteer read Matthew 5:17-19 out loud and explore the following questions together:

- What does this Scripture passage say about hell?
- Some people think God is too "nice" to send anyone to hell, others think hell is just an idea to motivate us to behave better, and still others are scared of a real place of punishment. Have you ever felt like any of those? What made you feel that way?
- Of those three interpretations of hell, which do you think is most consistent with the Scripture that was just read?

- Where is the hope if breaking a commandment makes us the "least"? Based on this Scripture, are you more scared of hell or more confident and trusting that God will send you to heaven?

*Note to Leader:* Explore, Option B, from the main curriculum is appropriate to lead in a coffeehouse setting.



## Express

Use the following questions to help the young people express what they've learned:

- Some people think about hell as total separation from God. What would that be like?
- How has your understanding of hell changed since you've been talking about it during this session?
- How would you respond if someone asked you: What is hell like?

Also, consider discussing the questions from Engage again to see if anyone has any new perspectives after exploring the Bible passage.



## Exit

Close in prayer, thanking God for the time that you have had together talking about God's Word.





# How Can I Get Into Heaven and Stay Out of Hell?



## Session Objective

Many Christians fear eternal judgment, and many are excited about the possibility of eternal glory. Some of us are motivated by this fear or excitement to try earning our way into heaven or at least working ourselves away from hell. Some Presbyterians, on the other hand, radically trust God's sovereignty, believing that salvation is out of our hands. Your participants will investigate these different conditions for eternal life.

## Faith Statement

Now it is most certain that all of us are by nature sinners and godless, and before God's judgment-seat are convicted of godlessness and are guilty of death, but that, solely by the grace of Christ and not from any merit of ours or consideration for us, we are justified, that is, absolved from sin and death by God the Judge. For what is clearer than what Paul said: "Since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:23 f).

— *Second Helvetic Confession* (5.107)



## Engage

Open your time together in prayer and lead a conversation based on the following questions:

- Is any one characteristic shared by everyone or everything that gets into heaven? What is it?
- How would you feel if you found out that more or different people are in heaven than you expected? fewer than you expected?
- In one word, what is the key to getting into heaven? in one sentence?



## Explore

Have a volunteer read Genesis 11:1–4, and explore these questions:

- Is there any way to "build" your way to heaven?
- If you followed all of God's commandments, would that get you into heaven? Does following some commandments get you closer?
- Can someone who is not baptized get into heaven? Does baptism, sacraments or any other ritual get one into heaven? closer to heaven?
- Can someone who does not acknowledge Jesus as his or her Savior get into heaven?
- Does acknowledging Jesus as Savior get one into heaven? closer to heaven?

Have another volunteer read Ephesians 2:8–9, and continue the conversation.

- What do these verses mean to you?
- What is grace? If God's grace is a gift, and it is the key to salvation, then why should you care about going to church, believing in God, or doing good works?



## Express

Give each of the following pairs of Scripture passages to four different youth or small groups of youth: John 6:54 and Amos 5:18–24; Romans 10:5–9 and James 2:14–24; Romans 2:7 and Ephesians 2:8–9; Romans 3:23–24 and Matthew 7:21. Make sure each student or small group has a Bible. Have students read their verses to themselves, and then explain the Scripture passages' tension to the whole group. Then use the following questions to help the young people express what they've learned.

- What would heaven be like if people had to earn their way there? if God's grace were the only way there?
- Why do you think the Bible addresses the question of getting into heaven in so many different ways? How does that make you feel? How does that affect your faith?
- As a teenager, how should heaven affect your life now?

Also, consider discussing the questions from Engage again to see if anyone has any new perspectives after exploring the Bible passages.



## Exit

Close in prayer, thanking God for the time that you have had together talking about God's Word.

