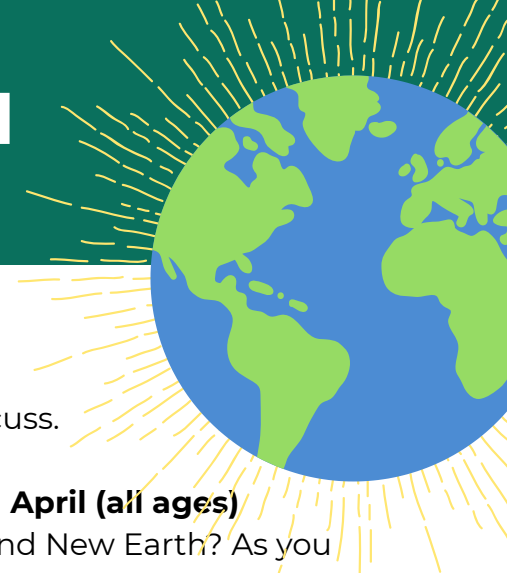


NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH

A family conversation after telling the April story



The following suggestions are a few activities to help process the New Heaven and New Earth. Keep your story pieces out as you discuss.

1. You may want to review your stories from September through April (all ages)

What pieces from God's Story would you find in the New Heaven and New Earth? As you review your story props, decide whether to include them. Are there any pieces or people you won't find there?

2. What else will be in the New Heaven and New Earth?

Discuss with all ages what things from this list will be found in the New Creation: jobs, chores, tears, pain, sickness, cities, food, flowers, beds, houses, sin, pollution, cell phones, and other screens, your favorite food, Bible characters, family members who have died, or pets. Any other ideas? We hope this will lead to a great discussion.

3. Use your family peg dolls as you discuss. (all ages)

We asked you to place the backdrop of your home and your family's peg dolls near the story as if they are watching the scene. Has your family been invited to the New Heaven and New Earth when God comes to live with his people? Ask each family member if they want to place their peg dolls into the story scene. You have a gold marker. Would each person want to write their name in the Book of Life? Parents: This is a permanent (eternal) marker; it could stain clothing.

Here are some further questions to discuss. You can do these over several days or all at once.

Who gets to live forever with Jesus?

John 3:16:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Romans 10:9:

"If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

Romans 10:13:

"For, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'"

John 1:12

"But to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God"

Why doesn't everyone choose to become a child of God?

Discuss the topic of free will (God gave us a choice whether to love him or not). After reading each bullet point, ask, "And then what happened?"

- Adam and Eve chose to disobey and ate the fruit.
- The people in Noah's day chose to disobey God.
- The people at the Tower of Babel decided they didn't need God.
- After God delivered his people from slavery in Egypt, they decided to worship other gods in the desert.
- Once they got to their promised land, God's people still decided to follow other gods.
- Even when Jesus came to earth, most people didn't want to hear about living forever in God's Kingdom.
- The temple curtain reminded God's people that because of their sin, they must be separated from him, but something happened when Jesus died.
- Our sin separates us from God.
- Jesus died on the cross to forgive our sins and bring us back into a relationship with God, our Father.
- God loves the whole world, but he doesn't make us love him. So, now what happens?

What does the Bible say about how we can respond? Look back at the story in Acts:

At Pentecost, Peter told the people they had sinned when they crucified Jesus. When they heard this, Peter's words went straight to their hearts. Do you remember what they started asking each other and Peter? (Hint: read the story in Acts 2)

What should we do now?

In Acts 2:38, Peter answered their question, "Tell God you want to be forgiven from sin that separates you from him. Like the people in Acts 2, you could be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. All you have to do is ask!" This is God's promise to everyone who wants to be one of God's people.

What happens when I ask God to forgive my sins?

1 John 1:9: "But if we confess our sins, he will forgive us. We can trust God. He does what is right. He will make us clean from everything wrong we have done."

What happens to my sin when I am forgiven?

Psalm 103:12 says that as far as the east is from the west, that is how far God will remove our sin from us.

Micah 7:19 describes God's compassion in that he will throw our sins far away into the sea.

How do I live as a follower of Jesus?

We have work to do while waiting for Jesus to return. More people need to know about God's Story. He loves them and sent his son Jesus to die for them. You can show them his love and tell them his story.

Matthew 25:31-46

Matthew 28: 19-20

Spend time together in prayer.