

John's Vision of Jesus

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BIBLE PASSAGE: Revelation 1:9-20

MAIN POINT: Jesus appeared to John in a vision to tell about the end of time.

KEY PASSAGE: Revelation 21:5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What will happen when Jesus returns? Jesus will destroy all evil and make all things new.

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Leader BIBLE STUDY

The apostle John wrote the Book of Revelation from the island of Patmos. Patmos was a small Greek island where the Roman emperor often exiled prisoners. John was likely sent to Patmos as a prisoner, arrested for preaching the gospel.

With this session, introduce kids to the Book of Revelation—the last book of the Bible. Other Bible books tell us about things that happened in past, but Revelation tells about things that will happen in the future. A glimpse of the future kingdom of God gives believers hope and encourages them to remain faithful to Christ.

In Revelation 1, Jesus appeared to John in a vision to tell

about the end of time. John was on the island of Patmos when he heard a voice telling him to write what he saw. John turned and, in a vision, saw Jesus: He was wearing a long robe with a gold sash wrapped around His chest. His head and hair were as white as snow, and His eyes were like a fiery flame.

Because the Book of Revelation is highly symbolic, avoid dwelling on the physical description of Jesus. Jesus' appearance to John reveals what Jesus is like: worthy of all honor, powerful, and victorious.

John saw Jesus walking among seven lampstands, symbols for the seven churches. Explain to the boys and girls you teach that lampstands are used to bring light into dark places. That is the purpose of the church—to bring the light of the gospel into a dark world.

When John saw Jesus, he fell at Jesus' feet. Jesus reached down and put His hand on John. He said, "Don't be afraid" (Rev. 1:17). Jesus explained that He is the First and the Last, the Living One.

While Jesus was on earth, He defeated sin and death by dying on the cross and coming back to life. Now Jesus is lifted up in glory and honor. We can look forward to a future with Him forever.



Additional resources for each session are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

The BIBLE STORY

Bible Storytelling Tips

John's Vision of Jesus

Revelation 1:9-20

- **Change your posture:** Stand as you tell narrated portions and then kneel down when John encounters Jesus.
- **Count to seven:** As you name the seven churches, hold up seven fingers for kids to visualize seven.

Like many believers, **the apostle John faced suffering and persecution for telling people about Jesus. The Roman emperor punished John by sending him to an island called Patmos (PAT muhs).**

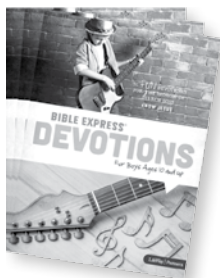
While John was on the island, he had a vision. John heard a loud voice like a trumpet. The voice said, “Write on a scroll what you see. Then send the message to the seven churches in Ephesus (EF uh suhs), Smyrna (SMUHR nuh), Pergamum (PUHR guh muhm), Thyatira (THIGH uh TIGH ruh), Sardis (SAHR diss), Philadelphia (FIL uh DEL fih uh), and Laodicea (lay AHD ih SEE uh).”

John turned around to see whose voice he heard. He saw seven gold lampstands, and he saw Jesus—the Son of Man. Jesus was wearing a long robe with a gold sash wrapped around His chest.

When John saw Jesus, he fell at Jesus’ feet. Jesus put His hand on John and commanded him, “Do not be afraid! I am the First and the Last, and the Living One. I was dead, but look—I am alive forever and ever.”

Jesus explained that the seven lampstands were the seven churches. He told John to write about everything he had seen.

Christ Connection: Jesus showed Himself to John and explained that He is the First and the Last, the Living One. While Jesus was on earth, He defeated sin and death by dying on the cross and coming back to life. Now Jesus is lifted up in glory and honor forever and ever.



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD'S WORD?
GET
BIBLE EXPRESS!**

Invite kids to check out this week's devotionals to discover how God's Word can help them grow in the gospel. Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Introduce the STORY

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KEY PASSAGE: Revelation 21:5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What will happen when Jesus returns? Jesus will destroy all evil and make all things new.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to share about the most memorable dream they have ever had. How did they feel when they woke up?

Activity page (5 minutes)

- "StoryWords" activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete "Story Words" on the activity page. Challenge boys and girls to fit all the words listed into the grid. Suggest they count the number of boxes and the number of letters in a word to find a fit. Point out how they can use letters already filled in to help them find the right word for the puzzle.

SAY • How many of these words have you heard before?

Are there any words that are new to you? [*Allow kids to respond.*] Some of these words are names of places, like Sardis (SAHR diss) and Thyatira (THIGH uh TIGH ruh). All of these are words you will hear in our Bible story today. Keep them in mind as you learn how they all fit together.

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Start and finish

Prepare to play partner charades by writing the following events on separate index cards: *playing a basketball game, mowing the lawn, talking on the phone, doing the dishes, reading a book, and getting a haircut.*

Invite two volunteers to draw an index card. The first volunteer should act out the beginning of the event. The second volunteer should act out the end of the event. Encourage the rest of the group to guess what the volunteers are acting out. (Example: When talking on the phone the first player might begin by picking up a pretend phone and mouthing a conversation. The second volunteer should mouth a brief conversation and then hang up the phone.)

After kids guess, allow another pair to act out an event.

SAY • In today's Bible story, Jesus said, "I am the First and the Last." What do you think He meant by that? We will soon find out!

OPTION 2: Old and new

Guide kids to form pairs. Give each player a paper bag with several old and new coins. Players should each pull out one coin at a time. If the coins are both old, player 1 collects them. If both new, player 2 collects them. If one is old and one is new, players set them aside. Play until kids cycle through all of their coins. See who collected the most coins.

SAY • New coins are clean and shiny but with use, they get worn and dull. Imagine something old becoming new again! Today's Bible story is about how one day, Jesus will return. He will make everything new!



LOW PREP

- index cards
- marker

Tip: If your group is large, prepare a few more cards of events with clear beginnings and endings.

- shiny, new coins
- dull, old coins
- paper bags, 1 per kid

Transition to teach the story

Teach the STORY

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- room decorations
- Theme Background Slide (optional)

Suggested Theme Decorating Ideas: Create a hot air balloon by positioning a tall laundry hamper at the front of the room. Over the hamper, hang a large balloon or beach ball from the ceiling. Tape four lengths of string between the basket and the sides of the balloon. Decorate the basket with streamers or construction paper. Add exploration props, such as a telescope, binoculars, maps, and so forth.

Countdown

- countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

- Bible
- backpack
- telescope or binoculars

[Leader enters carrying a backpack, a telescope or pair of binoculars, and a Bible.]

LEADER • Hello, everyone! I am so glad to see you. My name is *[your name]*. I am so excited because pretty soon, I will be taking a ride in a hot air balloon at the annual hot air balloon festival. Have any of you ever been in a hot air balloon? This isn't my first time, but it will be my first time in a long time. You can see everything from up there. I'm going to take this

telescope [*these binoculars*] to help me see things that are really far away.

You know, that is kind of like what we are going to do when we study the Bible together the next few weeks. We'll start out on the ground—with one specific story—and then we'll move on up for an even greater view of what's going on, or how the story fits into the whole story of the Bible. Let's get started.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • As we get started, let me introduce you to our big picture question. This question will help us remember what these stories are all about. Our big picture question is, ***What will happen when Jesus returns?*** That's a great question. The answer is, ***Jesus will destroy all evil and make all things new.*** How do we know this? Well, our Bible story will tell us.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline or big story circle. Point to previous stories as you review.

• Giant Timeline or
Big Story Circle

LEADER • All of these stories come from the Bible, and all of the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even greater story—the story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus. We started all the way back here, at the very beginning, learning about God's creation and how sin entered the world.

Then we saw how God was working out His plan through His people. Then, He kept His promise to send a Savior by sending Jesus into the world. Jesus lived a perfect life and then died on the cross for

our sins. He rose again on the third day and then later ascended into heaven. After Jesus ascended to heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to be with believers. The church began, and the good news about Jesus spread to both Jews and Gentiles. Everyone who trusts in Jesus as Lord and Savior receives forgiveness and eternal life.

Our Bible story today comes from the last book in the Bible, the Book of Revelation. Let's check it out.

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

- Bibles
- "John's Vision of Jesus" video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Open your Bible to Revelation 1:9-20. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "John's Vision of Jesus."

LEADER • John was exiled to the island of Patmos because he had been preaching and teaching about Jesus. While he was there, he had a vision. A vision is like a dream, but John was awake. A voice told John to write down what he saw and send it to seven churches.

John turned around, and he saw Jesus, the Son of Man, standing among seven lampstands.

Jesus appeared to John in a vision to tell about the end of time. First, Jesus told the churches something about Himself. He said that Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega—the beginning and the end. If you don't know Greek, don't worry! I will tell you that *Alpha* is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and *Omega* is the last letter. Think of Alpha and Omega as *A* and *Z*. Jesus was saying, "I am the A and the Z." Jesus said that He has always existed, He is alive today, and He will come again. [See *Rev. 1:8*.]

Jesus explained that the seven lampstands represented seven churches. John faithfully wrote down this revelation—this mysterious thing that Jesus made known—and John’s word are found in the Book of Revelation in the Bible.

Christ connection

LEADER • Jesus showed Himself to John. Jesus said that He is the First and the Last, the Living One. While Jesus was on earth, He defeated sin and death by dying on the cross and coming back to life. Everyone who trusts in Jesus will live with Him forever.

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Revelation 21:5.

LEADER • We are going to review the key passage. I want you to repeat after me.

Say the first part of the key passage. Then pause for kids to respond. Then say the second part for kids to repeat. Lead boys and girls in singing “Everything New.”

- Key Passage Poster
- “Everything New” song

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

LEADER • Sometimes thinking about the future can be scary because you don’t know what is going to happen tomorrow or a week from now or a year from now! Check out this video.

Show the “Unit 36, Session 1” discussion starter video. Then lead kids to discuss the following questions:

- What were the cupcakes looking forward to?
- What do we look forward to? Is there anything to fear?

- “Unit 36, Session 1” discussion starter video

- How do we know what our future holds?

LEADER • God calls us to believe His Word and trust that Jesus will return as He promised.

Sing (4 minutes)

• “I Stand Amazed” song

LEADER • When John saw Jesus, he responded by falling at His feet. One way we can respond to Jesus is to worship Him by singing! Let’s sing together. Sing the unit theme song, “I Stand Amazed.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Father God, thank You so much for Your Word. We thank You that You sent Your Son to save us from our sins and that You are sending Him again to make all things new! We look forward to the day He returns. Come, Lord Jesus! Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

Apply the STORY

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Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- bath tissue

Guide the kids to stand in a circle. Pass around a roll of bath tissue, instructing kids to each tear off a length. Lead boys and girls in reading the key passage poster together.

Then tell kids to count the number of squares of bath tissue they have in their hands. That number is how many words of the key passage they should say on their turn.

Choose a player to begin and go around the circle, inviting kids to hold up each square as they saw a word of the key passage.

SAY • Great job. Now tell me this: ***What will happen when Jesus returns?*** [Allow kids to respond.] ***Jesus will destroy all evil and make all things new.***

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster
- Bibles, 1 per group
- paper bags
- strips of paper
- marker

Before the session, write the following sentences on separate strips of paper and put them in a paper bag. Make three sets of sentence strips:

- *While John was on the island, he had a vision.*
- *John heard a loud voice like a trumpet. The voice said, "Write on a scroll what you see. Then send the message to the seven churches."*

- *John turned and saw seven gold lampstands, and he saw Jesus.*
- *When John saw Jesus, he fell at Jesus' feet.*
- *Jesus put His hand on John and commanded him, "Do not be afraid! I am the First and the Last, and the Living One. I am alive forever and ever."*

Form three teams of kids. Position the paper bags at one side of the room and instruct the teams to line up at the other side of the room. Explain that team members should take turns going to the bag and bringing back one sentence strip at a time until they collect all of the strips.

Players should work together to arrange the strips in the correct order to tell the Bible story. When a team finishes, players should sit down and raise their hands. Wait for all of the teams to finish. Then call on the fastest team to read the strips in order.

SAY • Great job, everyone! **Jesus appeared to John in a vision to tell about the end of time.** While Jesus was on earth, He defeated sin and death by dying on the cross and coming back to life. Now Jesus is lifted up in glory and honor. We can look forward to a future with Him forever.

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Jesus is ...

Form groups of four or five kids. Give each group a piece of paper and a pencil. Explain that when you say go, kids should work with their groups to think of and write down as many words to describe Jesus as they can.

Then invite a group to share its list. Other groups should compare their lists and put a check mark next to any words the first group listed. Ask another group to share its list,



- paper
- pencils

sharing only words that have not already been shared. Allow each group a turn to share.

SAY • In our Bible story today, **Jesus appeared to John in a vision to tell about the end of time.** Jesus' appearance to John shows us what Jesus is like: worthy of all honor, powerful, and victorious.

OPTION 2: Make paper lanterns

Give each kid a pencil, scissors, and a piece of construction paper. Guide them to follow these steps to make a paper lantern:

1. Cut a 1-inch strip off the short side of the paper. Set the strip aside to be the lantern's handle.
2. Fold the paper in half lengthwise.
3. Starting from the folded edge and about an inch away from the short edge, cut a straight line, stopping about an inch away from the edge.
4. Continue cutting more straight lines, about an inch apart all the way across the paper. Remember not to cut all the way to the edge opposite of the fold.
5. Unfold the paper to reveal several vertical slits. If you choose, use stickers or markers to decorate the lantern.
6. Roll the paper to connect the short edges together. Overlap the edges slightly and staple them to form a tube.
7. Glue or staple the paper strip from step 1 onto the top of the lantern as a handle.

Encourage boys or girls to display their lanterns at home.

SAY • In his vision, John saw seven lampstands. The lampstands stood for seven churches. Lampstands are used to bring light to dark places. In a similar way,

- construction paper
- scissors
- stapler or tape
- rulers
- pencils
- stickers or markers

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

the church exists to bring the light of the gospel to a dark world.

This week, talk with a friend about what you think heaven will be like. Share the hope you have for the future—that when Jesus returns, *Jesus will destroy all evil and make all things new.*

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, thanking Him for His Word. Thank God for the church, which brings the light of the gospel into a dark world.

As time allows, lead kids to complete “Seeing Stars” on the activity page. Kids should use the words on the five-pointed stars to fill in the blanks in the Bible story main point.

- pencils
- Journal Page
- “Seeing Stars” activity page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.