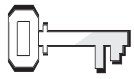


The Parable of the Great Feast



References

Luke 14:15-24;
Christ's Object Lessons,
pp. 219-237



Memory Verse

"Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God" (Luke 14:15, NIV).

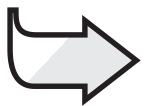


Objectives

The children will:
Know that Jesus invites everyone to His "banquet," His gift of salvation.

Feel grateful for the invitation to Jesus' banquet.

Respond by saying yes to Jesus, and accepting His invitation.



The Message

Jesus invites us to be with Him in heaven.

Monthly Theme

God's love is a gift; we don't earn or buy it.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Jesus tells a story about a rich man who prepares a banquet. The man sends his servant to bring the invited guests, but many make excuses and say they can't come. So the man invites poor and crippled people to come. These people accept. When told there is still room, the man has his servants go into the streets and bring more people to the banquet.

This is a lesson about grace.

The banquet represents the free gift of salvation, made available to all. The invitation to the banquet is for all people on earth. But many make excuses. People don't accept God's gift, because money, responsibilities, and relationships often stand in the way. Jesus wants us to know that while the invitation is for everyone, we have to accept the invitation to be with Him at the banquet.

Teacher Enrichment

"In [Middle Eastern cultures] even today it is customary to dispatch a messenger a short time before the feast actually begins to remind the guests of their invitation" (*The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 808).

"Those who declined the invitation to the gospel feast placed more value on temporal interests than on eternal things" (*The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 808).

"Some feel that this man [recently married] was probably basing his refusal on the fact that certain exemptions from some of the ordinary military and civil duties were accorded a man during the first year of his married life (see on Deut. 24:5). . . . But this law did not exempt him from normal social relationships" (*The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 809).

"The highways and hedges" refers primarily to the giving of the gospel to the Gentiles following the Jews' final rejection, as a nation, of the gospel invitation" (*The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 810).

"Jesus does not teach by this parable that earthly possessions are necessarily incompatible with the kingdom of heaven, but

rather that inordinate affection for the things of earth disqualifies a person from entering heaven—in fact, it leaves him with no desire for heavenly things” (*The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 811).

“By the great supper, Christ represents the blessings offered through the gospel. The provision is nothing less than Christ Himself. . . . In the feast He had provided, God offered to them the greatest gift that Heaven can bestow—a gift that is beyond computation. The love of God had furnished the costly banquet, and had provided inexhaustible resources. ‘If any man eat of this bread,’ Christ said, ‘he shall live for ever.’ John 6:51.

“But in order to accept the invitation to the gospel feast, they must make their worldly interests subordinate to the one purpose of receiving Christ and His righteousness. . . . The heart that is absorbed in earthly affections cannot be given up to God” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 222, 223).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 6. Add a long table set as a banquet table.

<h2>Program Overview</h2>			
Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	A. <i>Heavenly Party</i> B. <i>Excuse, Excuse, Yes</i>	party decorations, fresh fruit, paper plates, napkins, small wrapped gifts index cards or paper
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	none <i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children’s Mission</i> gift box none
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	none paper plates, marker Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Charades</i>	none
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>God’s Invitation</i>	invitation pattern (see p. 97), paper, art supplies, scissors

***Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.**

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Listen to last week’s memory verse and encourage the children to share any experiences from last week’s lesson study. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.



Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- party decorations
- fresh fruit
- paper plates
- napkins
- small wrapped gifts

A. Heavenly Party

When the children come into the room, have it decorated for a party: balloons, streamers, flowers, fresh fruit to eat (if appropriate in your Sabbath School). You will compare this feast to a feast in heaven.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **What do you think is going to happen here today? Do you think it will be fun? What do you think about having a party at church? Why? Can you imagine Jesus coming to a party like this and having a good time?**

Tell me about some parties Jesus attended when He lived here on earth. (wedding at Cana, Simon’s feast) **What do you think would happen if we could invite Jesus to eat at our homes?**

The Bible story today is a parable Jesus told about a big feast. Do you know that we’re going to have a great big feast in heaven when we get there? The Bible says “Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God” (Luke 14:15). The message today is:

JESUS INVITES US TO BE WITH HIM IN HEAVEN.



Say that with me.

B. Excuse, Excuse, Yes

Ahead of time prepare some cards or pieces of paper with “yes” or an excuse written on them. Examples: “I have to walk the dog,” “I have to practice my instrument,” “I think I’m getting sick,” “I don’t think my mom/dad will let me,” “I have to watch my baby brother/baby sister,” etc. Give some children an “excuse” card and some of them a “yes” card. Give only a few “yes” cards.

Have the children sit or stand in a circle and choose one child to be “it.” “It” stands in the center of the circle, spins around with one arm outstretched then stops. He or she then says to the person to whom they are pointing, “Will you come to my picnic?” The person being pointed to will read what is on his or her card. If it is an excuse, the student will read it and then sit down or leave the circle. If the card was a “yes” then the student will go stand in a special spot for people who said yes. “It” continues calling until no one is left in the circle.

You Need:

- index cards or pieces of paper with an “excuse” or “yes” written on them (see activity)

Debriefing

Ask: **What is an excuse?** (a reason you give for doing something or not doing something that many times is not true or not the real reason) **Why do people come up with excuses? What are some things that we should try never to make excuses for?**

The Bible story today is a parable that Jesus told about a man having a feast. When the feast was ready, the man sent a servant to remind those who had been invited but they all had excuses! They missed out on a great feast. The Bible says: "Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God" (Luke 14:15). Today's message tells us that . . .



JESUS INVITES US TO BE WITH HIM IN HEAVEN.

Say that with me.

Prayer and Praise



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing from last week's lesson study and review last week's memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special warm greeting to all visitors.



Suggested Songs

- "Amigos de Cristo" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 69)
- "Seek Ye First" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 67)
- "His Banner Over Me Is Love" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 25)
- "God Is So Good" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 13)
- "I Want to Be Ready" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 127)



Mission

Share a story from *Children's Mission*. Emphasize that God invites everyone to join Him in heaven.



Offering

Continue collecting the offering in a gift box. Talk about how God gives us the wonderful gift of salvation for free, and how when we give our offerings, we help tell others about His gift.

You Need:
• gift box



Prayer

Thank God for His gift to us—Jesus. Thank Him that we can help tell others of His love.

Bible Lesson

Experiencing the Story

Characters: host, servant, two guests, other guests (rest of children)

Ask the four main characters to mime their parts as the story is read.

Read or tell the story.

“Have you finished inviting our guests?” asked the host of the party.

“Yes, sir, I have,” replied his servant.

“Thank you, my friend. I can always trust you to do a good job for me.” The master smiled, thinking of the wonderful banquet he had planned.

The master had planned a great feast for his friends. They had been invited long ago. When the banquet was ready, the servant personally went to let the guests know that it was time to come.

After knocking on the first door, the servant waited. And waited. And then waited some more. Finally he knocked again. After several minutes the door opened, and an impatient man said, “Yes? What is it? What do you want?”

Courteously the servant reminded the man of his invitation to the banquet. “Please, sir, do come right away! My master has everything prepared and is looking forward to visiting with you!”

With a sigh the man said, “Oh, of course! I wish I could, but I just bought a field, and I need to go look at it. I’m terribly sorry. I do hope you understand.” And with that, he closed the door quickly.

Shaking his head, the servant went to the next address on his list. *Surely I’ll have a better response here*, he thought to himself. However, when the homeowner came to the door, he said, “I’ve

just bought five yoke of oxen. I need to try them out! Please ask your master to excuse me!”

A third time the servant knocked on a door. This time a man stuck his head outside and listened to the servant. “I just got married!” he announced. “I can’t come!”

The servant went to house after house, with the same result. Everyone who had been invited to the banquet seemed to have a reason for not attending! He finally returned to his master’s home and explained how each of the guests had responded with excuses.

For a moment a look of sadness crossed the face of the host. “That’s certainly too bad,” he said, “but we can invite others! Go out to the streets and alleys and bring in anyone who looks like they could use a good meal! Hurry!”

After inviting everyone he could find, the servant went home, exhausted. Soon the dinner party guests arrived and were welcomed. The faithful servant watched as they came in. A good group, but there was still room at the banquet table.

“Master, we still have room for more,” the servant reported.

“Quick, my friend! Go out to the country roads! Go everywhere you can think of! Let’s fill this place! Everyone who accepts my invitation will enjoy the feast with me!”

The man in the story had a wonderful party planned, but many people in the story had excuses for not coming. They let other things become more important than being with their friend. And because they were too busy with things, they turned down the invitation and missed the great feast!

Jesus is giving us an invitation, just as the man who planned the banquet invited many people. But Jesus’ invita-

tion is not to a banquet or a feast. Jesus invites us to accept salvation. Accepting salvation means that we ask Jesus to forgive our sins and choose to do the things He want us to do. We have a choice. We can decide to accept His invitation or to let other things become more important to us. How will you choose?

Debriefing

Say: **Jesus told this story to help us understand His invitation to be saved and live with Him in heaven.**

Can you imagine the joy of being with Jesus for eternity? Would you like to experience that?*

*Teachers, take note of children who raise their hand or who show interest. Talk with them about this after Sabbath School and notify their parents.

Remember our message. Let's say it together:



JESUS INVITES US TO BE WITH HIM IN HEAVEN.

Memory Verse

In advance, write each word of the memory verse on a different paper plate.

Mix up the plates and place them on a table. In groups of three or four, have the children come to the table and put the words in order. (Large group: use several sets of plates.) Repeat the memory verse several times.

The memory verse is: **"Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God" (Luke 14:15).**

You Need:

- paper plates
- marker

Bible Study

Say: **Let's open our Bibles to Luke 14. This is where today's story is found. Let's take turns reading verses 15 to 24.** Have adults assist as needed.

Debriefing

Say: **Jesus was speaking to some Pharisees in this parable. The Pharisees were Jewish leaders who thought they were more righteous than everybody else. Jesus wanted them to know that He had come to offer them salvation, but they had not accepted Him. Who is like Jesus in the story?** (the man who prepared the banquet) **Jesus also told the Pharisees this parable so they would know that God wanted everyone to be saved. Let's look at John 3:16. Who does God want to be saved?** (the whole world) **The people in the parable made excuses for not attending the banquet. What kinds of excuses do people make these days for not accepting Jesus' invitation of salvation?** (too busy; I don't know what to believe; more interested in other people; too interested in worldly things) **How can we accept Jesus' offer of salvation?** (read our Bibles; pray; listen to parents, preachers, and teachers; tell others about Jesus) **Jesus wants us to accept Him while here on earth so that we can spend eternity with Him. Let's say our memory verse again:**

"Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God" (Luke 14:15).

Now let's say our message:



JESUS INVITES US TO BE WITH HIM IN HEAVEN.

You Need:

- Bibles

3

Applying the Lesson

Charades

Ask the children to take turns acting out things that could get in their way of accepting Jesus' invitation to heaven, while the other children guess what it is.

Ideas: school or learning, sports, earning money, becoming popular or famous, negative influence of friends, seeking only fun and entertainment, accumulating things, etc.

Now ask them to take turns telling about things that could help them understand and accept Jesus' invitation to come to Him and live with Him in heaven.

Ideas: praying; reading the Bible; listening to pastor, teachers, parents; reading about Jesus in storybooks; studying the Sabbath School lesson; accepting Jesus as their Savior; sharing Jesus' love with others, etc.

If the children talk about doing good deeds or obeying rules and laws, remind them that obedience is not the root of our salvation, it is the fruit (or result) of our salvation. We obey and do good works in response to God's love for us. Avoid emphasis on works as a way of earning salvation.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask:

What will you do this week to help you understand Jesus' invitation to be with Him in heaven?

Our story today helps us understand how to accept the salvation that Jesus offers. Jesus is coming to take to heaven those who have accepted his salvation and have chosen to follow His way. In heaven there will actually be a great feast! Who will be there?

(whoever accepts Jesus as their Savior; whoever accepts His invitation to be saved; those who put Jesus first in every part of their lives, etc.)

How much do you have to pay to attend Jesus' party? (nothing—it's free)

Raise your hand if you are glad that God has given us such a wonderful gift, and if you accept His invitation to live and eat with Him in heaven. (Do not take these indications lightly. Talk with and encourage individual children as they respond.)

Let's say our memory verse together again: "Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God" (Luke 14:15).

Remember today's message? Let's say it together:

Remember today's message? Let's say it together:



JESUS INVITES US TO BE WITH HIM IN HEAVEN.

4

Sharing the Lesson

God's Invitation

Make a copy of the invitation pattern (below) for each child. Have the children decorate them. On the inside they can write "Let's plan to meet there" and sign it. Then they can cut it out.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask:

What does the front of the invitation say? With whom will you share it this week? Be sure to help them know that Jesus' invitation to be with Him in heaven is for them.

Tell them about the Bible story of the banquet, and also about the banquet God has prepared for them in heaven.

Tell them that God wants everyone to accept His invitation and be there with Him. Let's remember . . .



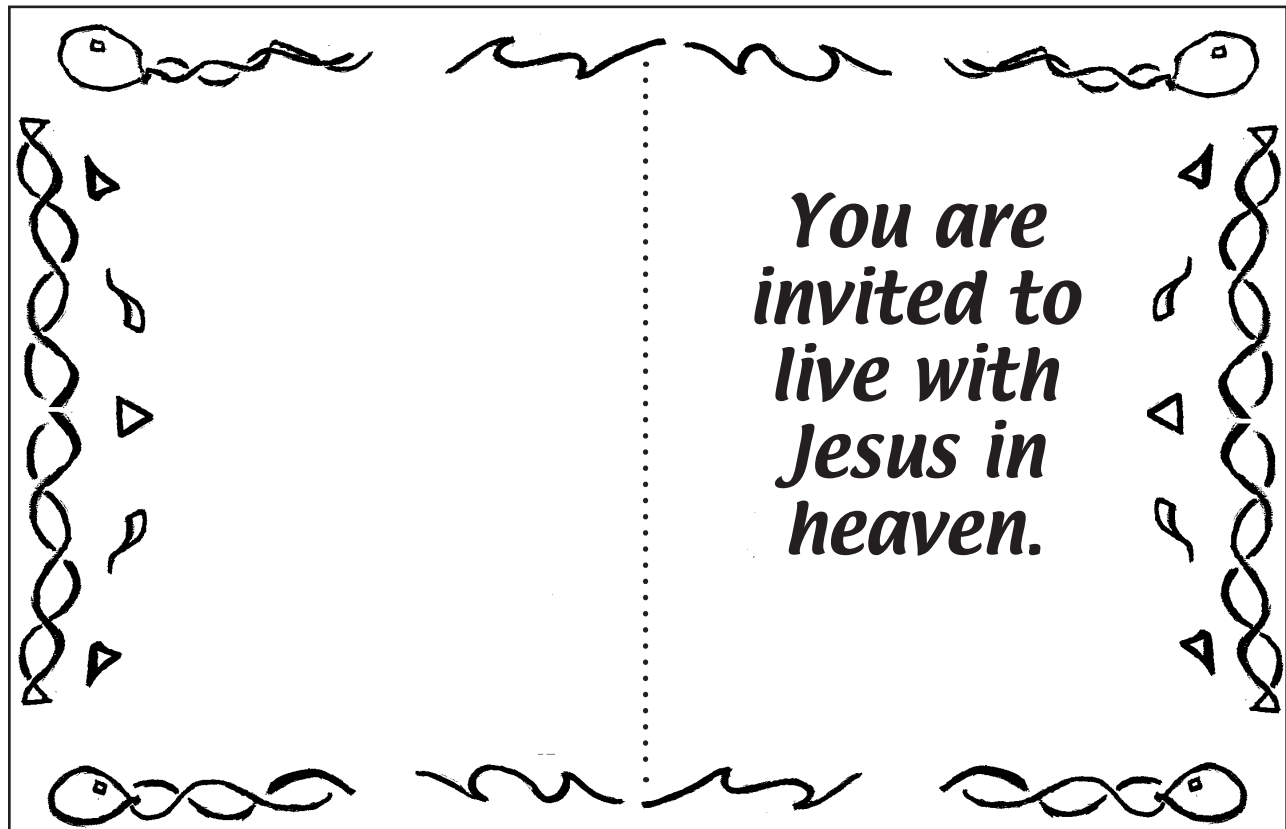
JESUS INVITES US TO BE WITH HIM IN HEAVEN.

Closing

In a short prayer, thank God for His gift of salvation and His promise that if we accept Jesus as our Savior, we will live with Him in heaven one day.

You Need:

- invitation pattern (below)
- paper
- art supplies
- scissors



The Parable of the Great Feast

References

Luke 14:15-24;
Christ's Object Lessons, pp. 219-237

Memory Verse

"Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God" (Luke 14:15, NIV).

The Message

Jesus invites us to be with Him in heaven.

Jesus told a story once about someone who had prepared a great feast. When the feast was ready, he sent to call the guests. Read on to find out what happened and what it could mean for us.

Once Jesus and His disciples were having a meal at someone's house, and Jesus told this story.

"A man gave a big banquet and invited many people," Jesus began. "When it was time to eat, the man sent his servant to tell the guests, 'Come! Everything is ready!'

"But all the guests said they could not come. Each man made an excuse. The first one said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go look at it. Please excuse me.'

"Another man said, 'I have just bought five pairs of oxen; I must go try them. Please excuse me.'

"A third man said, 'I just got married; I can't come.'

"So the servant returned. He told his master what had happened.

"Then the master became angry and said, 'Go at once into the streets and alleys of the town. Bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.' Later the servant said to him, 'Master, I did what you told me to do, but we still have places for more people.'

"The master said to the servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes. Tell the people there to come. I want my house to be full! None of those men that I invited first will ever eat with me!'"

Jesus was talking about Himself in this parable. He is like the man who planned the party and invited many people. Jesus has invited everyone to accept His salvation, which leads to eternal life. And He's giving you an invitation! Many people in the story had excuses for not coming to the party. They let other things become more important than being with their friend. They weren't really true friends at all. Because they were too busy with things, they turned down the invitation and missed the great feast!

In this parable the invitation to the banquet is Jesus' invitation for us to accept His salvation. Accepting salvation means that we ask Jesus to forgive our sins and choose to do the things He wants us to do. We have a choice. We can decide to accept His invitation or to let other things become more important in our lives. How about you? Right now, will you say yes to the invitation Jesus has given you? Do you want to be with Him in heaven and experience the joy of being in His presence forever?



Daily Activities

Sabbath

- If possible, go with your family to a place where fruit grows. Find a quiet spot and read your lesson story together. Then read Revelation 22:1, 2 to find out about a special fruit tree in heaven. Who will enjoy the great feast in heaven? Who will eat from the special tree?
- Teach your family the memory verse.

Sunday

- Give the invitation you made in Sabbath School to someone and tell them the Bible story. Let them know that God's invitation is for them too. (Or make an invitation now. Write the memory verse and message on the front. Inside, write, "Let's plan to meet at the party.")
- Write your memory verse on a paper plate. Use it to review the verse with your family this week.

Monday

- With your family, read and discuss Luke 14:1-15. Where was Jesus at this time? What was He doing there? Why do you think He talked about inviting people to dinner?
- Luke 14:1-15 tells what happened before Jesus told the parable of the great feast. Have someone help you find the word *parable* in a dictionary. Talk about its meaning. Why did Jesus use parables to teach lessons?
- Thank Jesus for His parables that help us understand His Word.

Tuesday

- During worship, read and discuss Luke 14:15-24. Whom does the servant represent? Whom does the master represent? Who are the people who refuse to come to the feast? Who are those who come? How is the invitation to the great feast like Jesus' invitation to us today?
- Sing about Jesus' coming to earth again. Then thank Him for His promise to do so. Ask Him to

help you and your family to be ready when He comes.

Wednesday

- For worship today, read Matthew 22:1-14 with your family. How is this story similar to the one in your lesson this week? Now read Revelation 19:6-9. Who is the Lamb? Who is the Lamb's bride? When will this wedding supper take place?
- Draw a picture of the Lamb's wedding supper. Put yourself and your family at the table. Show it to your family. Keep the picture to remind you to pray for your family.

Thursday

- With your family, read Revelation 19:6-9. Ask your parents or grandparents about their wedding. Did they have a wedding feast? If possible, look at their wedding pictures. Compare their wedding to the wedding feast of the Lamb in heaven. What might keep you from the Lamb's wedding supper? How can you get ready to be there?
- Sing songs about heaven, then thank God for His promises. Ask Jesus to help you and your family be ready to live with Him forever.

Friday

- Share some fruit as you act out your lesson story with your family. Be the servant who invites and then reminds people to come to the great feast.
- Ask someone to read Revelation 21 and Revelation 22:1-5. How is heaven different from where you live? What will you eat at Jesus' great feast in heaven?
- Before prayer, sing "I Want to Be Ready" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 127). Ask Jesus to help you and your family to be ready when He comes.