

COMING KING

CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Paper, pencils (coloured if you have them), markers and/or crayons
- Copies of the downloadable “Litany” and “Prayers & Thanksgivings” booklets
- Copies of the lesson handout
- Copy of the leader’s notes
- OPTIONAL: Bibles (ESV or similar recommended)
- OPTIONAL: A white board, easel pad, or chalk board with markers/chalk
- OPTIONAL: Have notebooks on hand for teens to take home and use as prayer journals if they wish

ICE BREAKER: UTOPIA CAMPAIGN

Provide your teens with paper and pencils (add coloured pencils, markers and crayons if possible). Working alone, in pairs, or in small groups, have your teens create a trifold brochure advertising “utopia” (an imaginary place where everything is perfect). Ask them to use at least one panel to describe the leader of that place (such as a prime minister, monarch or president). Allow a brief time for them to present their creations to one another. *Note: this is meant to be a fun imaginative exercise rather than a theologically accurate description of heaven.*

THE LITANY: BEGINNING WITH PRAYER

Begin the formal part of the lesson by saying together the Litany, leaving off the Grace (which can be said at the close of the lesson).

AT THIS POINT IN THE LESSON, ASK IF THE TEENS SUCCEEDED IN DOING LAST WEEK’S CHALLENGE, HOW IT WENT, AND WHETHER THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO SHARE.

DISCUSSION: THE PERSON IN CHARGE

As an introduction to the lesson ask the teens to discuss the following questions.

DEPENDING ON THE COMFORT LEVEL FOR SHARING IN YOUR GROUP, IT MAY BE EASIER TO HAVE THEM VOLUNTEER ANSWERS WITH ALL RESPONSES WRITTEN TOGETHER ON A BOARD.

- Have you ever had a terrible teacher in charge of a classroom? What happened? How could a good teacher have handled the situation differently?
- What are some other situations where the person in charge makes a big difference?
- What are the qualities of the sort of person you’d want to have in charge?
(If you did the opening exercise, refer to the qualities they gave to their utopian leader).

A few things worth pointing out (if they don’t otherwise arise during the discussion):

- *Chances are your teens have had lots of experience of both good and bad teachers to draw from! The bad teachers may not have been able to manage the class or may have been angry or simply unfamiliar with the material they were meant to teach. A good teacher has a strong grasp of the material and is able to create an ordered, interesting and safe environment where learning can thrive.*
- *Any situation in which one person or group of people is in charge qualifies: government, companies, churches, sports teams, etc.*
- *A good leader is one who genuinely cares about those who are being led. Some qualities they may come up with would include: honest, strong, competent, thoughtful, humble, merciful, just, wise, etc.*

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THE LESSON: 2 PETER 3

The first part of the lesson (below) can be read aloud. Then the teens are asked to read the Bible text (either silently to themselves or aloud together), followed by some additional questions for discussion.

By thy Coming again in glory, Good Lord, deliver us.

Jesus humbled himself to come among us and die for our sins, but now he has been raised to life and is seated at the right hand of the Father where he intercedes for us! Jesus promised that he would return again and when this happens it will be “in glory” – a contrast to his first coming.

When Jesus told his disciples that he was going where they could not follow, they were dismayed, but he comforted them saying, “if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also” (John 14:3). And though his words to the disciples had been words of comfort, Jesus also made clear that his second coming would be very different from his first one: “For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done” (Matthew 16:27).

The second coming of Jesus is one of the mysteries included in the “last things”, along with the resurrection of the dead, the judgement of humanity, and eternal life (heaven/hell). Scripture doesn’t give us a timeline for when these things will happen, but challenges us to hold fast to the hope of Christ’s return, and to live holy lives so that we are sure to be ready when it does happen. And in the very last words of the very last book of the New Testament, Jesus says, “Surely I am coming soon”, and with St. John our hearts respond: “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!” (Revelation 22:20)

Refer to 2 Peter 3.

(THE TEXT IS PROVIDED ON THE BACK OF THE HANDOUTS AND IN THESE LEADERS’ NOTES SO THAT EVERYONE CAN MARK IT UP AND MAKE NOTES ON IT IF DESIRED. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN READ OUT OF A BIBLE).

Read through the text. Then ask the teens to respond to what they’ve just read. Here are some questions to help guide the discussion.

- What was going on that St. Peter was concerned about?
- What explanation does St. Peter offer for the delay of Christ’s return?
- What stands out to you in St. Peter’s description of what will happen?
- What does St. Peter want his readers to do in response to all of this?

A few notes and reflections for reference:

- *St. Peter was concerned about “scoffers” who were suggesting that Jesus was not coming as he’d promised and that no judgement would occur, and who were using this as a excuse to follow “sinful desires” (v3-4). He also refers to a group of people who are twisting St. Paul’s words and other Scriptures “to their own destruction” (v16). He wants his readers to be firmly rooted in the truth so that they are not led off-track by these people (v17).*
- *St. Peter begins his explanation by refuting the idea that no divine judgement has occurred in the past. He points to the flood as an example of God’s judgement after a long period of patient waiting (v5-6). He reminds them that God is outside of time and that our idea of “soon” is not the same as God’s idea of “soon” (v8). Moreover, he points to the delay as an act of divine patience, born of love, because God’s desire is for everyone to repent and avoid the consequences of not doing so (v9)! This passage is especially relevant for us, since we are living many centuries after St. Peter wrote and thus our human concept of “soon” needs to be informed by his reminder.*
- *The comparison of the coming of that day to a “thief” is interesting and underlines the importance of being always ready for something that will take us by surprise (v10). The language St. Peter uses is powerful, violent, and frightening (v10,12). But he also underlines the hope we have, the promise we have received of a place*

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where “righteousness dwells” (v13). Your teens may find humour – and comfort – in the suggestion that St. Peter sympathizes with those who find St. Paul’s writing “hard to understand” (v15-16).

- St. Peter wants his readers to remember what scripture has prophesied and commanded (v2), and he wants them to be able to identify “scoffers”, the “ignorant” and the “unstable” when they encounter them (v3,16). He wants them to be confident in the loving and patient character of God (v8-9). But St. Peter’s emphasis is on the importance of living in a state of readiness for Christ’s return (v10): that they should be holy, godly (v11), diligent, at peace (v14), firmly rooted in the truth (v17), and growing in grace and the knowledge of the Lord (v18).
- “Optimism hopes for the best without any guarantee of its arriving and is often no more than whistling in the dark. Christian hope, by contrast, is faith looking ahead to the fulfillment of the promises of God, as when the Anglican burial service inters the corpse ‘in sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ.’ Optimism is a wish without warrant; Christian hope is a certainty, guaranteed by God himself. Optimism reflects ignorance as to whether good things will ever actually come. Christian hope expresses knowledge that every day of his life, and every moment beyond it, the believer can say with truth, on the basis of God’s own commitment, that the best is yet to come”. – J.I. Packer

DURING EACH LESSON, IF THE TEENS RAISE THEOLOGICAL OR BIBLICAL QUESTIONS THAT YOU DON’T FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT ANSWERING, SAY SO, BUT LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU’LL FIND THE ANSWER AND RESPOND AT THE NEXT MEETING.

PREVIEW: AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Take a brief moment to look at the at-home challenge together.

THE WEEKLY “AT-HOME CHALLENGE” IS TYPICALLY A SIMPLE ASSIGNMENT TO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME IN PRIVATE PRAYER. ENCOURAGE THE TEENS TO GET NOTEBOOKS THAT CAN BE USED AS PRAYER JOURNALS. ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO SHOW THEIR JOURNAL OR THEIR PRIVATE PRAYERS TO ANYONE.

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

Scripture is filled with prayers and praises in the form of poetry and songs. During this unit, try your hand at song-writing; drawing inspiration from the love God has for you, made evident in the work of Jesus Christ.

Spend some time this week writing your own song of praise inspired by the second coming of Christ.

(Stuck? Spend some time instead reflecting on the words of this hymn penned by John Cennick in 1752 (modified by Charles Wesley and Martin Madan during the same period): “Lo! he comes with clouds descending, once for favoured sinners slain; Thousand thousand saints attending, swell the triumph of his train; Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! Christ appears on earth again”.)

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect.

Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious Majesty, to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, now and ever. Amen.

(THE COLLECT FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT, BCP PAGE 95)

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CLOSING PRAYERS

Close with any prayers that might be appropriate in the context of the discussion of the day.

AT THE END OF EACH LESSON, IF YOU FIND THAT YOU STILL HAVE LOTS OF TIME REMAINING, YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO TAKE SOME TIME TO EXPLORE THE "PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS" SECTION IN THE BCP (PAGES 39-62, OR YOU CAN USE THE DOWNLOADABLE BOOKLET). AS YOUR GROUP MEMBERS COME ACROSS PRAYERS THAT THEY FIND RELEVANT, PAUSE AND PRAY THEM TOGETHER. IF YOU'RE PRESSED FOR TIME, YOU MIGHT CLOSE WITH THE THEMED PRAYER FROM THE AT-HOME CHALLENGE.

Then finish with the "Grace", printed at the end of the Litany booklet.

2 PETER 3: THE PROMISE OF HIS RETURN

¹This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, ²that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles, ³knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. ⁴They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." ⁵For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, ⁶and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. ⁷But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgement and destruction of the ungodly.

⁸But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹The Lord is not slow to fulfil his promise as some count slowness, but is patient towards you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

¹¹Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, ¹²waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! ¹³But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

¹⁴Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. ¹⁵And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, ¹⁶as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. ¹⁷You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. ¹⁸But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.