Lesson 5: We Are Citizens of Heaven

Overview:

Key Focus: We are citizens of heaven, seated with Christ, and given His authority.

Bible Story: Heavenly Citizenship

Scriptures: Hebrews 10:12, Ephesians 2:6, Colossians 3:1, Philippians 3:20, Ephesians 2:19, Romans 14:17

Memory Verse: Philippians 3:20 (NKJV) For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Prep:

Materials Needed:

- 7 sticky notes

Classroom Prep:

- Write a letter of "citizen" on each sticky note, and place the notes around the room or under chairs.

Engage:

Have the children find the sticky notes and arrange the letters to spell the word "citizen." **A citizen is a person who lives in a community and follows the laws of the place of citizenship. We are citizens of a city, in a state that is in a country. What makes someone a good citizen of our city?** (Possible answers: picks up trash around town, treats other citizens nicely, cares about what happens in our city, share ideas to make our city better) **What makes someone a good citizen of our state?** (Possible answers: follows the laws of the state, votes, cares what happens in our state, share ideas to make the state better) **What makes someone a good citizen of our country?** (Possible answers: respects the leaders of our country, votes, follows the laws, talks about the country in a good way) **Today's lesson is going to show that when we say "yes" to Jesus, we become a citizen of another place.**

Memory Verse Activity:
Display and discuss the verse. Reinforce the idea of city, state, and country by displaying the verse in three phrases marked by a comma. Point out the first phrase is like our city, the second phrase is like our state, and the third phrase is like our country. Have everyone stand in a large circle holding hands and then take steps forward to be tightly together in the center. Lead everyone in saying the first phrase and then everyone takes two steps back while saying the second phrase. Then, keep stepping back with hands held until the circle is fully extended. Repeat the verse again, but this time take steps forward toward the center with each phrase.

Memory Verse: Philippians 3:20 (NKJV) For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Bible Story:

Place two chairs side-by-side facing the class. Read Hebrews 10:12. **Sitting at the right-hand side of someone shows honor and the place of most important influence. Jesus died and paid for our sins, so He deserves the most powerful seat next to God the Father. Jesus didn't sin; we did. Jesus paid for our sins with His life; we didn't pay but we get to have our sins forgiven because of what Jesus did one time on the cross. Jesus paid for all sins past, present, and future. He will not leave heaven and die on a cross each time someone sins. One payment for sin covered ALL sin and ended Jesus' work here on the earth. After Jesus returned to heaven, He got the VIP seat on the right side of God! Have you ever had VIP seating at a performance or event?** Allow several responses. **When someone at an event sits in the VIP booth, there are special privileges for everyone in that booth, such as food, gifts, and special visitors.**

Read Ephesians 2:6. **Being seated with Christ in heavenly places is the best VIP seating ever! Jesus' position of power and authority becomes ours also because we are seated with Him. He invites us to share His VIP booth.** Add a chair on the right side (facing the children's right side) and point to the chairs as the children name who sits in each—God, Jesus, and Christians. **Our physical body isn't sitting in the chair next to Jesus in heaven, but remember, we have a spirit inside our body that we can't see with our eyes or on an x-ray. The Holy Spirit lives in our spirit inside us. Jesus promised that when He returned to heaven, the Holy Spirit would come and be with us and help us. Even though our mind can't really make sense of how this happens, our spirit is seated next to Jesus in heaven.**

Read Colossians 3:1. **When we say "yes" to Jesus who is seated in heaven, we start thinking about things in heaven. The things of Jesus are above and the things of the enemy of God are below—they are opposites. Our Memory Verse says we are citizens of heaven, so it makes sense that we will be thinking about things of heaven.** Recite or read together Philippians 3:20. **When a person moves to a foreign country, the person has to learn the new**

laws and way of life in the new country. Allow any children who have lived in a foreign country to share their experiences. **What might be hard for someone from another country to get used to in our country?** Spend time developing the idea that a change of countries requires a change in how you live.

The moment we accept salvation, we become citizens of heaven. We are finished with our old citizenship to sin and disobeying God. People can move to a foreign country and choose to become a citizen of that new country. If they become a citizen of the new country, they give up their old citizenship and promise to follow the laws and ways of the new country. As Christians who are citizens of heaven, we give up our old sinful ways and follow God's ways.

Read Ephesians 2:19. **This verse says we are no longer foreigners, but fellow citizens with the other Christians. So, we give up our old life and gain a brand-new life as a citizen of heaven seated next to Jesus. We shouldn't sound like people who say bad or mean things because that's not the way they talk in heaven. We shouldn't do things like people who break God's laws because that's not the way they act in heaven. We have new citizenship, so we act like the citizens of heaven. We know that heaven is a place where worshiping God is always taking place. One way to show that you are a citizen of heaven is to worship God. Someday, when our body on the earth is no longer alive, we get to be in heaven all the time with Jesus! Now is the time to get ready for our eternal home in heaven.**

Read Romans 14:17. **What does this verse say the kingdom of God is not?** (The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking.) **What is the kingdom of God is?** (The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.) **When we are citizens of heaven, that's where God's kingdom is. We will show good heavenly citizenship by choosing right actions that follow God's ways and bring peace and joy. Would you be showing your citizenship is in heaven or on the sinful earth if you were angry all the time?** (Anger would show you are a citizen of the sinful earth.) **Would you be showing your citizenship is in heaven or on the sinful earth if you shared your lunch with someone at school who didn't have a lunch?** (Sharing and kindness show citizenship in heaven.) **When we learn more about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the Bible, we will learn more about how to be a good heavenly citizen of heaven. Let's all make it obvious this week that our citizenship is in heaven!** Lead a cheer for being a citizen of heaven.

Bible Story Questions:

- **Where is Jesus right now?** (Jesus is seated at the right hand of God in heaven.)
- **How did Jesus get that special place of honor in heaven?** (Jesus came to the earth, died for everyone's sins, rose again, and returned to heaven.)
- **When someone believes that Jesus paid for their sins and receives forgiveness of those sins, what new change happens?** (Believers become citizens of heaven.)

- **How would someone show good heavenly citizenship?** (We can good heavenly citizenship by choosing right actions that follow God's ways and bring peace and joy.)
- **How will you show good heavenly citizenship this week?** (Answers will vary.)

Bible Story Activities:

Games:

- Divide the group into smaller groups with a helper. Give a time frame for each group to come up with a short skit that shows two opposite reactions to a situation, such as studying for a test and cheating on the test. Each group will perform their skit, and the class guesses who the citizen of heaven was and who the citizen of the world was. If time remains, call out a scenario and let everyone act out a response from a citizen of heaven.

- Ideas for Working with Younger Kids:
  Remind the children that citizens of heaven act like Jesus, who is seated at the right hand of God in heaven. Have the children mimic each action that you do. Select a child and say, "_ is a citizen of heaven," and then have that child do some actions that everyone mimics. Continue this pattern until all children have participated.

Craft Idea:

- Ideas for Working with Older Kids:
  Have the children work together in pairs or small groups to create a document showing citizenship in heaven, including date of salvation, things given up, and things gained. Allow time to share the documents with the group. Invite everyone who is a citizen of heaven to sign the document, and pray with anyone who would like to become a citizen of heaven.

Worksheet:

Point out that when we sin, we are following the pattern of the world, and when we act like we are citizens of heaven, we follow the pattern of heaven. Guide the children to draw matching patterns and encourage them to color the patterns also. After they create a pattern, let them trade papers and let someone draw matching patterns. On the back of their papers, have them create a badge that shows they are a citizen of heaven.

Affirmation/Declaration:
Through Christ, my new citizenship is in heaven.
My actions will show that I am a citizen of heaven.

Make Connections:

Biblical Worldview Connection:
It is critical that citizens of heaven do not blend in and become indistinguishable with non-citizens of heaven. Showing the fruit of the Spirit is one way to show citizenship in heaven. Encourage the children to live this week like a citizen of heaven and be ready to tell people about how they can become citizens of heaven.

Missions Connection:
If you have internationals at your church, invite them to share prayer requests for the citizens of their country and then pray. Have the children gather in small groups with a globe, map, or inflatable world globe ball. Each child should point to a country and then pray for the citizens of that country to learn about Jesus so they can become citizens of heaven.

Family Connection:
Share about any family members or ancestors who changed citizenship. Use a whiteboard or paper on the refrigerator to record daily actions that showed family members are citizens of heaven. Each day talk about why it is important to show your citizenship is in heaven and not showing citizenship in the world that follows the enemy of God. Pray for each other and each morning encourage each other to be good citizens of heaven.

Prayer Points:
If any children wish to become citizens of heaven for the first time, meet privately with them and pray with them.

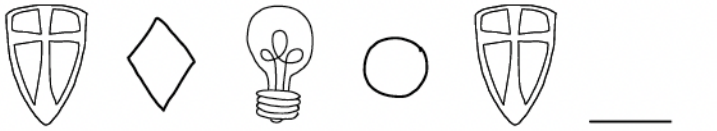
Let the children find a partner and share a prayer request with their partner. Encourage them to pray for God to help in the situation and pray for the partner to have faith and trust God to answer.

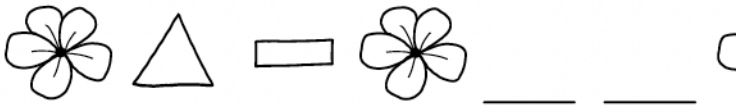
Name _____

Lesson 5: We Are Citizens of Heaven

Look at the pattern for what comes next. Draw the next part of the pattern.







Citizens of heaven shouldn't talk, act, or match the pattern of the world. *Create a new pattern and then have someone try to match it.*

Your pattern:

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Match it:

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Your pattern:

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Match it:

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

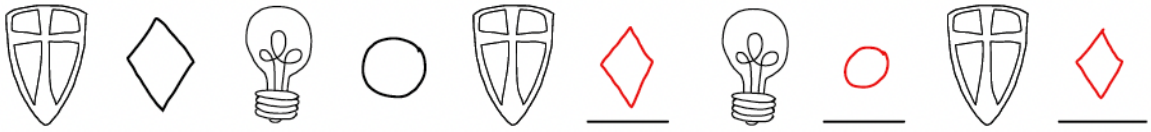
BONUS: *On the back of this page, create a badge that shows you are a citizen of heaven.*

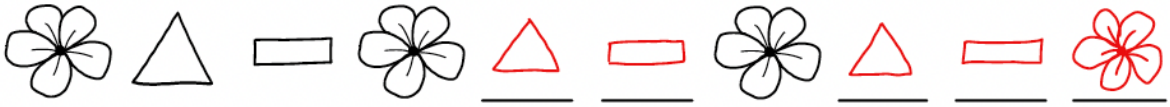
ANSWERS:

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Match it:

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Your pattern:

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Match it:

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

BONUS: *On the back of this page, create a badge that shows you are a citizen of heaven.*

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