

Learn by Doing

Choice Pack Your Bags!

Our life on earth is our preparation for entering the kingdom of heaven. In this activity, students think about what we need to “pack” for our journey to heaven and what things we will want to leave out of our spiritual suitcases.



1. Have you ever been on a trip to a place you had never been before? What did you do to get ready for the trip? (get new clothes, get things to do while you travel, pack a suitcase, etc.)
2. The most important trip any of us take is the journey to our eternal spiritual home. We spend our entire lives planning and preparing for this journey, deciding what to pack into our hearts and minds.
3. We’re going to play a game about packing for heaven. See *Game Directions for Pack Your Bags!* (p. 2).
4. Once you finish the game, invite students to take turns reading positive cards from their suitcases. Which of your cards seems like the hardest thing for you to do? Which one seems easiest?
5. Does anyone have negative cards left in their suitcase? Would you be willing to read one or two? In this game, it was purely chance whether you got stuck with one of these negative cards or not. How could you get rid of things like these in real life? (be sorry, work on not doing them again, etc.)
6. What happens if you leave this world with negative things in your “suitcase”? Do these things stop you from going to heaven? (No!) Right after death we wake up in the world of spirits, where we are led to see ourselves clearly. People who do not know about the Lord and heaven will be taught about it. People who have mostly loved the Lord and tried to do what’s right but still have negative thoughts and feelings will have to work on rejecting them in order to come into heaven. The Writings call this process “vastation”. (See “Vastation” box on right.) The more we get rid of these negative things on earth, the easier it will be for us to enter heaven.
7. What happens if most of the things in someone’s spiritual “suitcase” are negative? (They could still choose heaven, but the path will be challenging because they love negative things.)
8. Unlike in the game, we can *choose* to do good things that prepare us for heaven and choose to avoid or get rid of negative things that hurt us. The next time you get ready for a trip, think about what you are doing to prepare for the greatest trip of all!

Materials Needed

Open space, device for playing music, chair for every student, stapler, pens, copy of *Game Directions for Pack Your Bags!* p. 2, copy of *Thoughts and Deeds Cards* pp. 4-10 printed and cut apart, a copy of *Suitcase* p. 3 for each student

Prepare in Advance

See directions on page 2

New Testament Loving Others

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. John 13:34-35

New Church Concept Vastation

As a result of their own sins, people bring with them into the next life countless evils and falsities which they have accumulated. Even people who have led upright lives do so. Before these righteous people can be raised up into heaven their evils and falsities must be dispersed. This dispersing is called vastation. See *Arcana Coelestia* 698

Game Directions for Pack Your Bags!

Object:

Pack a “suitcase” of kind thoughts and deeds to take to heaven. Each student will fill a paper suitcase with positive and negative *Thoughts and Deeds Cards*. Students keep the positive cards and try to get rid of the negative ones. The goal is to finish with as few negative cards as you can, leaving mostly positive cards in the suitcase when the game ends.

This game is played similarly to musical chairs. Students walk around a line or circle of chairs in the middle of the room as music is playing and take the seat closest to them when the music stops. Unlike in the standard game, the number of players matches the number of chairs throughout the game.

Prepare Before Class:

1. Print a *Suitcase* (p. 3) for each student and one set of the *Thoughts and Deeds Cards* (pp. 4-10) for the group. Cut the *Thoughts and Deeds Cards* apart and shuffle well.
2. Find fun fast-paced music for the game and set it up on a music playing device.
3. Place a chair for each student in a line or a circle in the middle of the room. Circles of chairs should all face outwards. Lines of chairs may be set up as two back-to-back lines, or as one line with chairs facing in alternating directions (one forwards, one backwards, etc.).
4. Divide the shuffled cards into as many piles as you have students and place one pile face down under each chair.
5. Choose chair(s) to be “repenting” chairs. Mark the chair(s) with tape or a sticker so students can easily identify them. Groups with 3 or fewer students need 1 chair. Add one additional repenting chair for every 2 additional students in your group.

Prepare In Class:

Give each student a copy of the *Suitcase* (p. 3). Have them fold the page along the dotted line and staple the sides closed to create an envelope.

Play:

1. Students stand in a circle around the chairs. The teacher starts the music. Students walk clockwise around the chairs. The teacher stops the music suddenly, when students aren’t expecting it.
2. When the music stops students sit in the chair nearest them, pick up a card from under the chair, read it and put it into their suitcase.
3. Students who land on a “repenting” chair may place one negative *Thoughts and Deeds Card* (with a beige background) **face-up in a separate discard pile**, and pick up a new card from the regular pile under the chair. If they have no negative cards to discard, they just pick up a card from the regular pile. If that card is negative, it may be discarded right away, but a second card cannot be picked up. Remember the goal is to get rid of negative cards that make it harder to go to heaven.
4. Take 10 turns. Students will have varying numbers of cards in their suitcases depending on the number of discards they have made.
5. Move to the discussion on p. 1.



Suitcase

Hold a door open	Bake cookies to give to someone
Smile at someone new	Give up your seat
Clean up someone's yard or garden	Send a card
Write a thank you note	Reach out to someone in need
Say "please" and "thank you"	Let someone else go first

Spread kindness	Clean the kitchen
Show compassion	Do the dishes
Pay it forward	Ask nicely
Volunteer	Donate to a good cause
Raise money for a good cause	Donate used items you no longer need

Wait for a friend	Take time to really listen
Listen with your heart	Call a grandparent
Give a flower	Respect a friend's point of view
Do a favor	Give a genuine compliment
Say you're sorry	Pray for a friend

Forgive mistakes	Ask for forgiveness
Apologize	Share a snack
Lend a pencil	Respect personal boundaries
Call a sick friend	Offer a hug
Give help when it's needed	Be there when it matters

Read the Word	Reflect on one commandment
Learn a verse from the Word	Say a verse from the Word
Pray	Say the Lord's Prayer
Sing a religious song	Display a verse from the Word
Say the 10 Commandments	Learn a religious song

Pray for help from the Lord	Pray for someone who needs help
Pray for courage to do what's right	Pray for guidance
Recite the Golden Rule	Reflect on what Jesus might do in your situation
Listen to your conscience: it's God speaking	Listen for God speaking in His Word
Pay attention to the angels with you	Read from the Word

Give thanks to God	Praise others
Acknowledge God's gifts	Praise God for His goodness
Trust in God's leading	Let God lead you
Ask for God's help	Put others first
Kneel to pray	Use the Golden Rule

Speak with respect	Respect others
Praise God	Thank God
Ask for forgiveness	Avoid doing what you know to be wrong
Express thanks to God	Put God first
Acknowledge that God is in charge	Obey what God commands

Enjoy being angry	Show hatred
Want revenge	Be selfish
Be jealous	Get enraged
Want to be the best at others' expense	Be thoughtless about others
Take what isn't yours	Disobey the commandments

Take credit for others' ideas	Take credit for what others have done
Take the Lord's name in vain	Have a bad attitude toward others
Have a bad attitude toward God	Gossip
Lie	Steal
Make fun of others	Tease others

Hang on to a grumpy mood	Cheat
Knock others down	Want to win at others' expense
Be happy that others are in trouble	Criticize others
Bend the truth	Take more than your fair share
Belittle others	Boast

Want all focus on you	Deliberately hurt others
Complain about others	Complain about your share
Take another's turn	Justify bad choices
Bully others	Push others around
Leave others out	Be rude