



The Great Supper

Luke 14:16-24

Level C

Ages 11-14

Lesson Focus: Responding to the Lord

Reading Summary: A man invited people to a great supper. When his servant went to tell the guests that it was ready, all asked to be excused. One said, “I have bought ground and must go and see it.” Another said, “I have bought oxen and I am going to test them.” Another said, “I have married a wife and cannot come.” When the servant told his master, the master became angry and said, “Go into the streets and lanes and bring in the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind.” And the servant said, “Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.” Then the master said, “Go out into the highways and hedges; fill my house. None of those who were invited shall taste my supper.”

Lesson 5		Materials Supplied	Materials Needed
1. Welcome Warm-up Activity (2-3 minutes)	Brainstorm	Would You Rather... directions p. 2	
2. Focus on the Word Use all activities (5-7 minutes)	Read the Word and Talk About It	see <i>Reading Summary</i> above discussion guide p. 2	Bible or copy of Luke 14:16-24
3. Learn by Doing Choose 1-2 activities (15-20 minutes)	Read and Discuss explore the influences of heaven and hell on our thoughts and reflect on where common excuses come from	Making Excuses directions p. 3 <i>Making Excuses</i> pp. 5-6	Pens or pencils
	Active Game discover how challenging it can be to keep track of something important when a four-square balloon game gets busy	Eyes on the Prize directions pp. 3-4	40 balloons in a variety of colors; 1 balloon of a unique color; masking tape or painters' tape to mark a four-square court; open floor space; whistle or bell; paper and pencil to keep score
4. Wrap It Up (2-3 minutes)	Take the Message Home introduce the <i>Take Home Cards</i>	The Bread of Heaven p. 7	

1. Welcome Warm-up Activity

Would You Rather...

Introduce the topic of choices by asking which students would rather do in the following situations:

- a. If you broke something, admit you broke it *or* pretend you don't know what happened.
- b. Lie about your plans because you know your parents won't like them *or* tell the truth and risk not being allowed to do what you want with friends.
- c. Ignore someone who is unpopular and pretend you don't know her *or* reach out to her and include her.
- d. Offer to help with dinner when you are hungry *or* complain that dinner's not ready.
- e. Wait until a parent asks you to clean your room *or* take time to hang up your clothes each day.

Some choices do not appear to have spiritual consequences, but actually do nudge us closer to a heavenly path or farther away from it. Today we're going to read a story in which different choices take people closer toward or further away from the kingdom of God.

2. Focus on the Word

Read: Read: Luke 14:16-24

Have you ever been to a fancy dinner with lots of guests? What made the meal special?

In today's story a master planned a special dinner and invited a list of guests. When the food was ready he sent a servant out to tell the guests that the feast was ready. What did they say to him? They could not come. Each had a different excuse. One had bought a field; another had bought five new oxen; another had married a wife.

Can you think of a time when you made an excuse for not doing something? Perhaps homework, or chores? At times we all make excuses when there are things we don't want to do.

How did the master feel? Angry and upset. We can imagine how disappointed he must have felt when all the guests he invited chose other things instead of coming to his feast.

What did he do next? He told his servant to bring everyone who was poor, maimed (injured), lame (could not walk) and blind (cannot see) to the feast. **And then when there was still room for more people—who did the master say to invite next?** Everyone who was out walking in the city.

When angels hear the Word, they think about the Lord inviting people to heaven. How does the Lord invite us to heaven? Through His Word.

The people who were invited first were people like us—they had the Word and should have been trying to do what it says. But they chose to do other things instead. Each excuse they gave is a different kind of activity we might choose instead of doing what the Word teaches.

The others who were invited later are people who do not have the Word. They have difficult struggles in their lives, but are willing to follow the Lord when they hear Him calling.

The Lord is never angry—but sometimes we might feel that He is. He cares deeply for us and wants so much to bless each one of us with the happiness of heaven.

The Lord invites us to follow Him to heaven as well. We do this by listening to His Word and doing what He teaches there. Then He can bless us with happiness for ever!

3. Learn by Doing

Choose one or two activities

Choice Making Excuses

The Writings reveal that all thoughts flow in from the spiritual world. Some come from the angels with us and are heavenly. Others come from the evil spirits with us and are selfish. We have the choice of dwelling on or rejecting them; of making them our own or not.

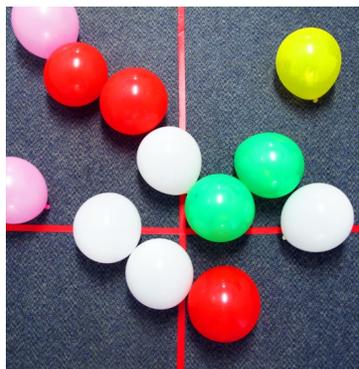


This activity explores where excuses for not engaging with the Word come from, and how we can nurture and strengthen thoughts that help us read the Word with a view to doing what the Lord wants.

1. What thoughts and feelings come up when I ask, “Have you read or listened to the Word today?” or “Have you have thought about the Lord today?” or “What have you done for others today?” If it’s Sunday and you are here, chances are you have thought about things like this. But how about on other days of the week?
2. If we are reminded that we should be thinking about this kind of thing we might hear voices in our minds bringing up excuses—trying to shelter us from guilty feelings. Where do these excuses come from? We’re going to take a look at this.
3. Hand out *Making Excuses* (pp. 5-6). Read and discuss.

Choice Eyes on the Prize

When life gets busy it can be hard to keep our “eyes on the prize”—heaven! If we are feeling busy with daily responsibilities and tempted by fun things to do, it’s difficult to keep eternal things in mind. Discover the truth about paying attention to our eternal goal through playing a four-square balloon game.



1. Divide students into four teams. Number off by standing in a circle and counting aloud. (1, 2, 3, 4, 1, etc.)
2. Assign each team to one area (quadrant) of the cross on the floor.
3. We will start with 2 balloons. One balloon will be in the Team 2 area;

Materials Needed for Each Student

Pen or pencil, copy of *Making Excuses* pp. 5-6

Prepare in Advance

Read through *Making Excuses* pp. 5-6. **Note:** answers for the questions on the bottom of p. 5 can be found by reading the material on p. 6.

New Church Concept God’s Goal

Divine providence has as its goal a heaven consisting of people who have become angels, to whom it is possible for the Lord to impart all the blessings connected with love and wisdom, and to impart these from Himself in them. See *Divine Providence* 27

Materials Needed

40 balloons in a variety of colors; 1 balloon of a unique color; masking tape or painters’ tape to mark a four-square court; open floor space; whistle or bell; paper and pencil to keep score

Prepare in Advance

Use tape to make a cross on the floor in the middle of an open space. Blow up the balloons. Prepare score sheet.

Eyes on the Prize *continued*

one will be in the Team 4 area. When I say “GO”, pass the balloons into another team’s area by hitting or carrying them as quickly as possible. **You must stay in your own area.**

4. When I blow the whistle play stops immediately and each team scores 1 point for every balloon in their area. We will play several short rounds. The team with the **lowest** score in the whole game wins. (To switch things up, have teams either sit or stand.)
5. Each round should last 20 to 40 seconds. After each round, add 3 more balloons to the game.
6. Once you’ve played 3 or 4 rounds and have more balloons than students, add the uniquely-colored balloon and tell the class that it is worth 10 points instead of 1. Play 2 more rounds.
7. Have all students sit for a discussion:
 - When was it easiest to ensure there were no balloons in your area?
 - When there were all sorts of balloons flying around, how easy was it to keep track of the 10 point balloon? Why? (During the activity, the balloon with 10 points gets lost because there are so many other balloons and a lot is happening, making it hard to stay focused.)
6. In the parable about the Great Supper, people were distracted by their worldly concerns—so much so that they couldn’t let go of them to attend the feast they had been invited to.
7. The special balloon is like the Word. It is easy to be distracted from reading it or doing what it teaches if worldly concerns feel more important and urgent.
8. What strategies might help change this situation? What does it take to love the Word, to want to read it? How do the choices we make support or challenge our ability to read the Word?

New Church Concept Drawn to Heaven

The Lord continually withdraws people from evils so far as they are willing to be withdrawn, and leads them to heaven; but so far as they cannot be withdrawn from evils the Lord cannot lead them to heaven. For so far as people are withdrawn from evils so far they do good from the Lord, and that good is good in itself; but so far as they have not been withdrawn from evils, so far they do good from themselves, and that good has evil within it. See *Apocalypse Explained* 1162



4. Wrap It Up

Take the Message Home

Choose one or two questions to help bring the message home.

- What strategies can you use to find a balance between living in the moment and thinking about eternal life—which seems so far away?
- What habits might you cultivate to include the Lord in your life—now and in the future?
- Which lessons have you particularly enjoyed in this series?
- Have any of these lessons changed the way you see yourself and your goals?

Give *Take Home Cards* (two per page, p. 7) on “The Bread of Heaven” to the students as they leave and suggest they put them up where they will see them this week.

Making Excuses

1. At times it is difficult to make the Lord a part of our lives—to think about Him and what He wants for us and for others, and especially to read His Word. Even people who do this regularly struggle from time to time. Below is a list of excuses that might be stopping us.

Read the list and circle two excuses you would like to talk about later.

It can wait until later.

I did it yesterday.

I don't really care.

I'm too busy. I don't have time.

Going one day without reading is not going to hurt!

Being useful is more important than reading.

It's not relevant to my life.

Nobody will care if I do it or not.

I've already read it.

I don't see other people doing it.

What I'm doing now is more important.

It's easier for other people to do it.

It's my business if I want to read it or not.

I'm too tired.

2. Thoughts stream through our minds all the time. Just try to stop them! Is it ever possible to have *no* thoughts in your mind?
3. The Writings tell us that our thoughts come from the good and evil spirits who are with us—even though we cannot see or feel their presence. So some of our thoughts come from heaven and others come from hell.
 - If this is true, do *thoughts* that casually flit through our minds show what we really care about?
 - Does *dwelling* on particular thoughts tell us what we care about?
 - How can we find out whether a *specific* thought comes from heaven or hell?
 - Does knowing this help us understand what we are thinking?

Making Excuses *continued*

4. While we are not responsible for the thoughts streaming into our minds, we are responsible for spending time dwelling on them. When we dwell on good thoughts we bring the angels with us closer to the center of our lives. When we dwell on mean thoughts or justify our poor choices with excuses, we bring hell closer to the center of our lives.

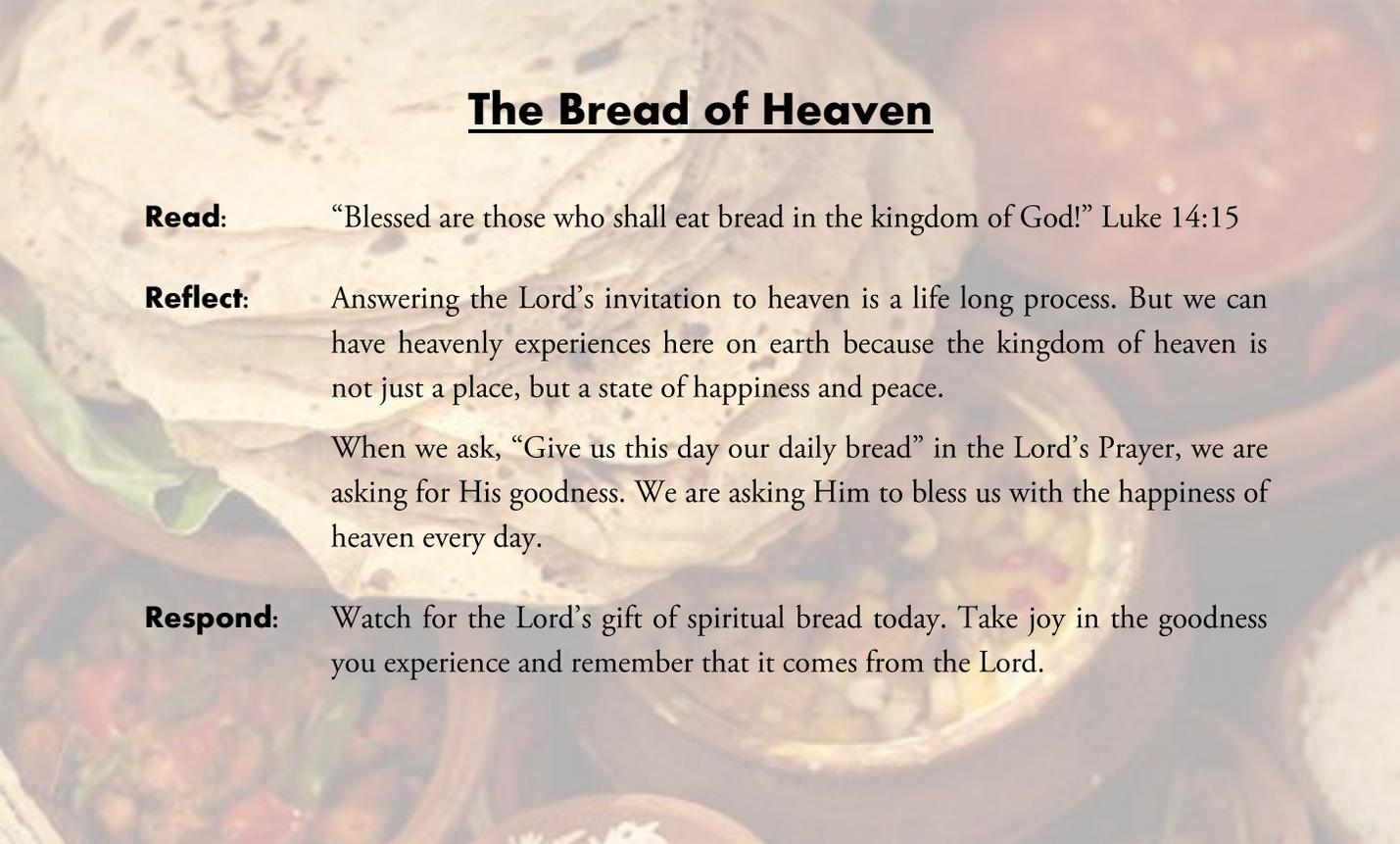
5. The Writings teach that there are three levels of heaven. The angels in each level are motivated by a different kind of love. The devils in hell are also motivated by three different kinds of love. These loves are opposite to the heavenly loves.

The Angels in the Heavens...		The Devils in the Hells...	
Highest Heaven	Love the Lord and do what He wants as soon as they learn what it is	Deepest Hell	Love only themselves and want everyone to obey them
Middle	Love learning what is right, thinking about it, and doing it	Middle	Love to have possessions and dominate others through having stuff
Lowest Heaven	Act from moral principles without understanding them very well, so some-	Mildest Hell	Have no faith in the Lord and lead an immoral life

6. Now look back at the statements you circled at the top of the previous page.
 - It is never possible to be *sure* about where thoughts come from. However, what kind of love is *most likely* to be behind each of those thoughts? Use the chart about the loves of angels in heaven and devils in hell to help you. What did you discover?

 - How might you explain this to someone—perhaps even yourself—who struggles with thoughts like this but wants to have an easier time reading the Word or remembering the Lord and others.

 - How does knowing the way angels and evil spirits influence our thoughts help us deal with negative thoughts that come up?



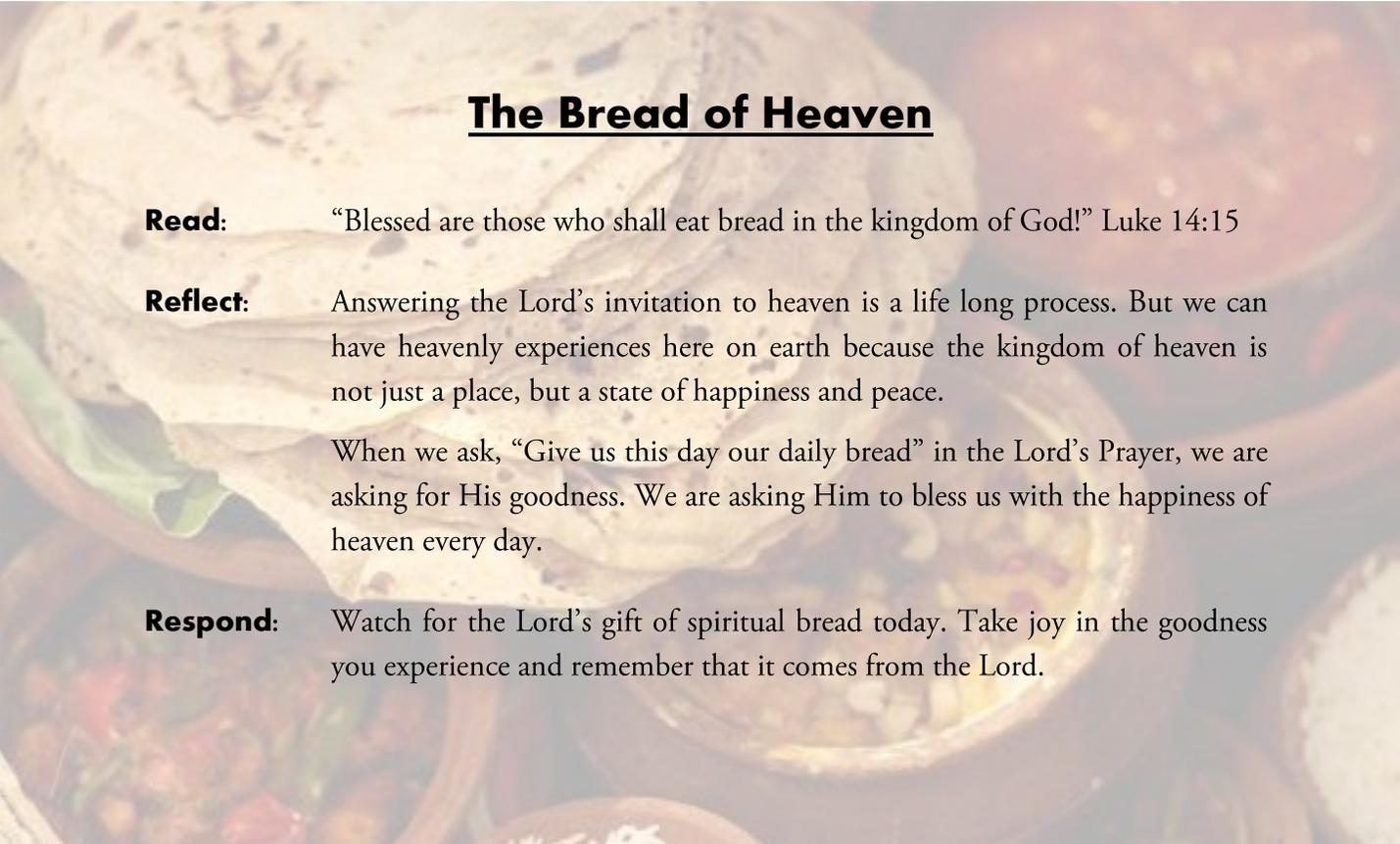
The Bread of Heaven

Read: “Blessed are those who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!” Luke 14:15

Reflect: Answering the Lord’s invitation to heaven is a life long process. But we can have heavenly experiences here on earth because the kingdom of heaven is not just a place, but a state of happiness and peace.

When we ask, “Give us this day our daily bread” in the Lord’s Prayer, we are asking for His goodness. We are asking Him to bless us with the happiness of heaven every day.

Respond: Watch for the Lord’s gift of spiritual bread today. Take joy in the goodness you experience and remember that it comes from the Lord.



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