# SALVATION LESSON 1: Heaven is a Free Gift

***After completing this Sunday school lesson, the children will understand that it is impossible for someone to get to Heaven on his or her own efforts. The next two lessons address the issues that all persons are sinners and this sin causes separation from God. The last two lessons explain how God sent His only Son to pay the price for our sins and how it is by placing our trust in Jesus alone that we can be saved.***

#### TOPICS

Believing, Born Again, Faith, Grace, Heaven, Salvation

#### AS KIDS ARRIVE (10 minutes)

# Create new ways for prayer together. See Below Prayer Suggestions:

**Prayer Box**Decorate a small box with a removable lid. Label the outside of the box "Prayer Box." Have the kids put their name on an index card, and jot down a personal prayer request. When finished, place the cards into the prayer box. At the end of class, have each child pull out one card from the box and have them pray for that person during the week.

**Open Prayer Journal**Purchase a spiral notebook. Put the date of the current Sunday in the top corner of the sheet of paper for that week. Have the book open to the appropriate page each Sunday and displayed in a prominent place. Encourage the children to write down any prayer requests or praises as they arrive each Sunday. They can also look at previous pages to see what prayers were answered. The journal can be referred to during class prayer time, or the requests can be reviewed at the end of class and given to the children for prayer during the week.

**Wall of Prayer**To encourage prayer requests make a "Wall of Prayer." Hang up a piece of newspaper (end rolls from local papers may be free) or you can use butcher block paper. Allow the children to write their prayer requests on the paper after they have shared their requests with the class. It is a faith building visual reminder of the prayers and allows for great follow-up on prayers when they get answered.

**What Would I Do to Go to Heaven? (Activity) If you choose the Prayer Box,** Have each child fill out their index card and drop it into the **Prayer Box** at the front of the class. Then have them follow the instructions for the activity, **"What Would I Do to Go to Heaven?"**

#### OPENING PRAYER AND PRAISE

#### MEMORY WORK (12 minutes)

**"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast" Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV**
Have several children read these verses. Then explain that "saved" is similar in meaning to eternal life, or Heaven. Read the verse again, but this time substitute the words "can go to Heaven" for "have been saved." Ask, what does "not by works" mean?

#### SCRIPTURE READING AND DISCUSSION (15 minutes)

**Introduction:**During Jesus' ministry, many people heard Him talk about the Kingdom of God and eternal life in Heaven. It was clear that life on earth was different than the life Jesus was talking about. One day, a young ruler came to Jesus to find out what he had to do to have eternal life in Heaven. The passage we are going to read is from Matthew chapter 19, but the very same account can also be found in Mark 10 and Luke 18.

**Read Matthew 19:16-26 (The Rich Young Man)**

**Discussion Questions:**
1. Did you recognize any of the commandments Jesus gave the young ruler? (Last 5 of the 10 commandments, except Jesus changed the 10th one from do not covet to love your neighbor.)2. Since the man said he kept all the commands mentioned by Jesus, why do you think he asked, what do I still lack? (He was aware of something holding him back.)3. Why did the young man go away sad? (He had great wealth, but more importantly, he knew he couldn't do what Jesus suggested.)
4. Does having great wealth make it impossible to go to Heaven? (No.)
5. Then what was really keeping this man from eternal life? (The man loved his wealth more than Jesus. So his riches prevented him from placing his faith in Jesus and following Him in obedience. Without Jesus, no one can receive the gift of eternal life.)
6. Based on verse 26, can a man be good enough to save himself? (No, with man it is impossible, but with God all things are possible.)

#### CLASS EXERCISE (15 minutes)

**The Price is Right (Game)**

#### Closing  CLASS EXERCISE (10 minutes)

**Verse Worksheet 1**
Hand out one worksheet to each child, and have them **paraphrase** the first two verses. (Ephesians 2: 8,9 and Proverbs 14:12) The remainder will be completed at the end of lessons 2 and 3. When finished, have the kids place the worksheet in their folder for next week.

#### APPLICATION (5 minutes)

Today (tonight) we learned that Heaven cannot be earned. No matter how much money we have, no matter how good we are, we cannot buy Heaven. It is a free gift - yes completely free!

A long time ago, the people of the world got together, and thought they could build a tower all the way up to Heaven. Then all they would need to do was climb up the tower, and be with God. It was called the tower of Babel. A picture of what it may have looked like is shown on your worksheet.

As the people were building this tower, God became quite angry. For homework this week, I want you to read about the tower of Babel in Genesis 11: 1-8. Next week, have an answer to the following question: **What was man trying to do that was so wrong?**

#### CLOSING PRAYER (2 minutes)

**If you chose the Prayer Box**
Have each child take one card out of the box. (If they draw their own name, have them put it back and try again) Have a few minutes of silent prayer, so each child can pray for the person on their card. After praying, have them write their name on the back of the card. Close the lesson with prayer.

When finished, have each child put the card back into the box for next week. The cards will be returned to the owner during the fourth lesson on Salvation.