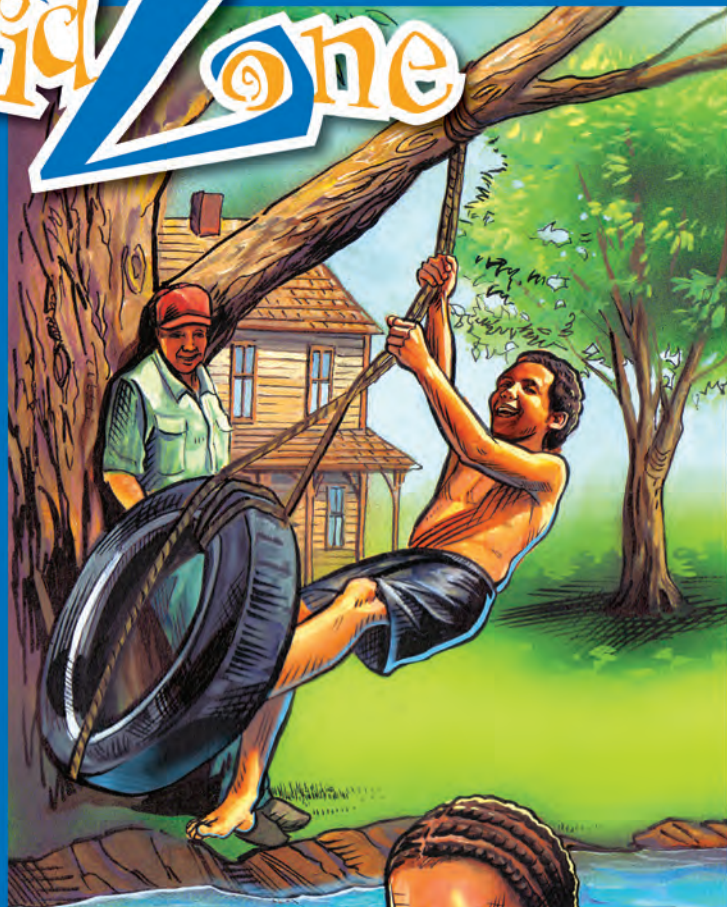



KidZone

Guide 14



Your
Favorite Place
in the Universe

A close-up illustration of a young girl with braided hair, smiling and splashing in blue water. She is wearing a white tank top. The water is depicted with dynamic, wavy lines, suggesting movement and play.

“My favorite place in the whole world,” Paul exclaimed, “is Grandma and Grandpa’s ranch!”

“Yeah,” his brother Randy agreed, “and I like Grandma’s apple pies the best.”

“I like playing soccer in their big yard,” Paul added.

Grandma and Grandpa’s place was a slice of heaven: swinging on the front porch, licking ice-cream cones, riding the horses, swimming in the creek, and best of all, listening to Grandpa’s stories about World War II. Yep, their place was heaven.

Until one visit. The aroma of fresh apple pies had disappeared from the kitchen. No one pulled Paul and Randy in the wagon. And the swing was always empty. Grandpa had died, and Grandma had moved to a nursing home.

What do you think Paul and Randy really liked most about visiting their grandparents’ house? Although the boys had many great things to do there, what really made the

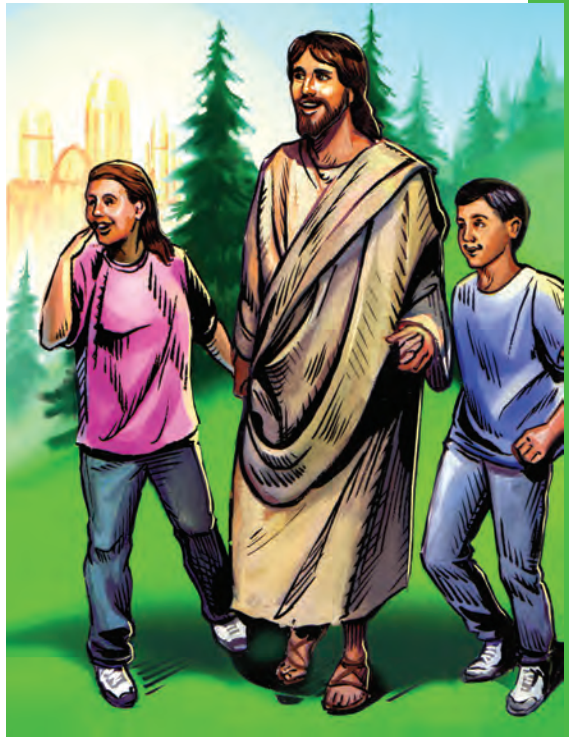


ranch special was Grandma and Grandpa. Without them, the huge slices of apple pie lost their flavor, the horses lost their canter, and the swing lost its magic.

Heavenly places

Heaven, too, will offer many great things to do: riding rhinos, flying to planets, eating the biggest, juiciest apples you ever sank your teeth into. But the best thing about heaven will be spending time with Jesus.

That's what the apostle John tells us. In Revelation 21 he wrote: "I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. . . . And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away'" (Revelation 21:2-4, NIV).



We read of no tears, no death, no fear, no night. But the wonderful things of heaven—even riding rhinos and flying to planets—will never fully satisfy us. Our joy and satisfaction will be complete only when we see God.

King David said to God, “But as for me, my contentment is not in wealth but in seeing you and knowing all is well between us. And when I awake in heaven, I will be fully satisfied, for I will see You face to face” (Psalm 17:15, TLB).

That’s the best part of heaven—we’ll see Jesus face to face. A writer named Frederick Buechner said it well: “When you are with somebody you love, you have little if any sense of the passage of time. When you are with God, you have something like the same experience. The biblical term for the experience is Eternal Life. Another is Heaven.”

Ever wondered about heaven?

If you’re like most people, then you’ve had questions about heaven. The Bible answers a lot of these questions. Fill in the answers for yourself by looking up the texts that go with the following questions:

Is heaven a real place where we can live someday?

1. Read John 14:1–3. What is Jesus doing now in heaven?

Heaven is just as real as our Friend Jesus! And God is inviting you and me and all of His other children to live with Him there. But the Bible says we won’t stay there forever.

Later God will re-create this earth as our perfect home for eternity.

Will we be ghosts in heaven, or will we have real bodies?

A couple of different texts help us answer this question. Philippians 3:20, 21 tells us that when Jesus comes our bodies will be changed to be like that of Jesus after His resurrection. Read Luke 24:39, and you'll see how Jesus described His resurrected body.

2. What things did Jesus have that a ghost or spirit wouldn't have?



Jesus had a real body. He invited the disciples to touch Him. He talked to real people and ate real food (Luke 24:43). The Bible teaches us that when we get to heaven, we will have real bodies as well.

Will we recognize each other in heaven?

First Corinthians 13:12 says, "Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known" (NIV).

In other words, we'll know each other better in heaven than we do now. Yes! We will recognize our friends and family in heaven. We'll also get to see our loved ones who died believing in Jesus.

In heaven, will we sit around on clouds all day and play harps?

3. Read Isaiah 65:21, 22. What are some activities people will be doing?

The Bible does mention harps in heaven, but nowhere does it describe a bunch of bored saints sitting around on clouds. Instead, it describes God's people doing real activities like building mansions and planting gardens. In other words, there will be tons of meaningful things to do. If you enjoy doing new things, learning, and creating, then you'll love heaven.

What will animals be like in heaven?

4. Read Isaiah 11:6–9 and write the answer.

Will sin ever spoil heaven?

5. Read Revelation 21:27 and write down what will not be in heaven.

Good news! We're promised that sin will never corrupt heaven again. Think about it. There will be no more fighting or killing or lying. No one will be sick or lonely. Heaven will be perfect—forever. Don't you want to go to heaven soon?

Now what?

When you see things this week that make you angry and remind you of the sin in this world, pray and give thanks that someday soon Jesus will come and make all things new. Remember that it is only through His love and forgiveness that we can have a place in that perfect world. All we have to do is accept His gift.

What's YOUR Future?

Q: What are you doing this summer?

A: I'll probably get a job babysitting or something.

Q: What are you doing next fall?

A: I'll go back to school.

Q: And then what?

A: Someday I'll graduate.

Q: And then what?

A: I'll get a job.

Q: And then what?

A: I'll get married.

Q: And then what?

A: I'll have kids.

Q: And then what?

A: I'll retire.

Q: And then what?

A: I'll die.

Q: And then what?





Talking to God

Dear Father, thanks for loving me so much that You have prepared a special place for me in heaven. I want to be with You forever. In Jesus' name, Amen.

kidZone

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