

Middle School November 16 & 17



God wants his kingdom to come on earth, specifically in our city.

Small Group

1. **Discussion.** This is time to process what it will be like when the Kingdom of God is fully here and the kingdom of the world is a thing of the past. This gives us a better picture of what the Kingdom of God crashing into our city right here and now could look like! This should all be very exciting!
2. **Activity.** We want to spend time dreaming about what our city would look like if more of the Kingdom of God crashed in.
3. **Training.** Encourage the kids to keep thinking about the Kingdom and having conversations with their friends and family about it. This has the potential to change our city!

1. Discussion

First have everyone say their name and their favorite thing to do in their city (this could be an activity, a favorite restaurant, or a favorite place to hang out). The possibilities are endless!

1. For those of you who were here last week and got a SEEK card, how did it go?
 1. For those of you who weren't here and didn't get a card, can you think of a time in the past week when you saw God's Kingdom happening?
2. What's the coolest, most interesting or most impactful thing you've learned about the Kingdom throughout this journey?
3. What do you think about God's promise that Jesus will come back one day as a victorious King?
 1. How does that make you feel? Why?
4. Let's spend time imagining a city with no sickness, pain, death or evil. What would that city be like? Remember, it'll be a lot like a normal city! Even with no evil, we still need to eat. *(What would the buildings and houses look like, what kind of food would there be, how would people interact with each other, etc.)*
5. Read Revelation 21:1-4 as a group. What's your favorite part of this verse? What do you think it will be like to have God live with us?

2. Activity

There will be large city skyline cutouts on craft paper hanging on the walls. Look for them at the beginning of the hour so that you can direct your small group to the nearest one.

The New City that God will create for us when Jesus comes back is the best news ever. And guess what? We don't have to wait until Jesus comes back to experience tastes of that city. God let's us experience that now in our own city. Anytime we seek the Kingdom of God here in our own city, we get a glimpse of what is to come. Today, we're going to do a little dreaming about our own city. Be thinking of things that you think should continue, change or start in our own city to make it look more like the Kingdom of God. Everything is valid! We can dream about getting rid of poverty and more people following Jesus, but we can also dream about the great places to go and fun things to do. We could even dream that our football team would win the Super Bowl. Miracles do happen.

Once you've had a minute to think, we're going to go walk over to the paper in the shape of a city skyline (hanging on the wall). Write down your ideas on the paper. It'll be really cool to see everyone's ideas of ways to make our city great!

3. Training

Hand out the dog tags to each student.

This week, you're getting a something a little different than a challenge card. You're getting a dog tag that says, "Kingdom Come". Hang it somewhere you'll see each day to help you keep dreaming about what our city would look like if the Kingdom of God took over. Spend some time talking to your friends and family about how you could start working as a team to seek the Kingdom together. The cool thing about the topic of the Kingdom, is that most people are going to be excited about making our city better, even if they don't follow Jesus. It has been really great being on this journey with you!

Large Group

Welcome

Welcome everyone! Whether this is your first time or your 73rd time in Middle School, we're really glad you're here. For the past six weeks, our church and other churches across several states have been on a journey to discover more about the Kingdom of God.

City Trivia

Before we get started, let's play a little game. We're going to play a game of trivia about our city. If you know the answer to any of these questions, stand up and I'll call on you to answer!

Insert any type of trivia about your city.

For the Cincinnati tri-state area, here are some examples:

- 1. Name three local ice cream shops or restaurants*
- 2. What year was the Cincinnati Reds baseball team founded? (1881)*
- 3. When was the last time the Bengals won the Super Bowl? (1988)*
- 4. What's the name of the tallest roller coaster at Kings Island?
(Diamondback)*
- 5. How many bridges connect Cincinnati to northern Kentucky? (Nine)*

Great job, everyone!

Two Kingdoms

Back to the Kingdom. You might be wondering, "What's the Kingdom of God?". And that's a great question. Over the past couple weeks we've discovered that there are actually TWO kingdoms. The Kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world. The Kingdom of God is ruled by a loving, gracious King who wants to serve us and has amazing plans for us. The kingdom of this world is ruled by a deceptive king who is only interested in controlling us. Even though these kingdoms don't have territory lines like countries or states, we do get to see them. We just have to be looking.

God's Will

Jesus, the King of the Kingdom of God, said that the Kingdom of God is wherever God's will is done. Guess how we find out what God's will is? The Bible is filled with stories that show us God's character and his good plans and desires for our

lives. We know that God wants our bodies to function well. He wants us to be in a safe environment and have healthy, growing relationships with people around us. So when we see needs being met and relationships being restored, we know that's the Kingdom of God.

Kingdom Of This World

But what about all the terrible stuff that happens? Where does that fit in? That's the kingdom of this world. The king of that kingdom, the Devil, is interested in stealing and destroying all the good things God has given us. That's why we see broken relationships, people not having what they need to live a healthy, flourishing life and ultimately, death.

Kingdoms At War

These two Kingdoms are at war with each other. And the great news is that the Kingdom of God is more powerful than the kingdom of this world. Jesus has more authority than the devil. We're going to talk about this more today.

In Between

Right now, we're stuck in the middle of the war between kingdoms. One moment, we might see the Kingdom of God crashing into our friends' life because his relationship with his dad is being mended and then the next moment, we see the kingdom of this world when we get news that an aunt has cancer. A couple weeks ago we learned about how to be spiritual fighters by turning to God and admitting we want to change to be a part of his Kingdom, not the kingdom of the world.

God's Promise

But God has promised us something amazing. He's promised us that Jesus will come back as a victorious King who defeats the devil once and for all. The Kingdom of God will be present all the time and the kingdom of this world will be a thing of the past.

Revelation

There's a whole book in the Bible about what it will be like when Jesus comes back. It was written by a guy named John. In the book of Revelation, John describes a vision of what it will be like when the Kingdom of God overtakes and defeats the kingdom of the world. Here's what he says,

VERSE: Revelation 21:1-4

Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell 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.

Scary

Talking about all of this has the potential to be a little scary. That's how our culture has depicted it. There are lots of movies about the end of the world and how scary and chaotic it will be. The truth is, it might be scary for people who aren't with the King. But for those who are on his team, it's the best thing that could ever happen. Just imagine... No more death, no more sickness.

New Jerusalem

And, it's not like some people describe Heaven. I don't know about you, but I've definitely thought that I might get bored of being in Heaven if all I do is walk around on golden roads and sing all day. Can anyone else relate to that? Guess what?! Though we will get to spend time with God face to face and praise him, we'll be doing normal things like working. Only it will be awesome. Working won't be hard and draining like your chores and homework. It will be fun and fulfilling!

SLIDE: picture of city skyline

We're all going to live in an amazing city together! Good food, good art and maybe even sports! The Bible calls this the New Jerusalem. Above all, we'll get to live with our King, Jesus, without anything keeping us separated. This is really exciting! All the good things that I experience today can't even compare to what's to come. It's going to be amazing!

Big Picture

So why are we talking about all of that? Great question. We're looking at that because that's the big picture. That new, amazing city that the Bible calls the New Jerusalem is the end goal. And if that's the end goal, I'd like to know how I can experience pieces of that right now.

Kingdom of God All the Time

We've spent the last six weeks experimenting with what it means to be a part of the Kingdom of God. Now, we're moving forward. We want to experience the Kingdom of God even when we're not talking about it on the weekend at church. How do we do that? I have good news for you. There are LOTS of opportunities to keep seeking the Kingdom, in your life, in your spheres of influence and in your city.

The Kingdom In Our City

Specifically, let's talk about what seeking the Kingdom in our city looks like. What would it look like if our city started looking more like the city John talks about in Revelation 21? What effect would that have on the poverty level, the quality of schools, the restaurants, and things to do in the city? I don't know about you, but I bet when Jesus comes back and I'm living in the New Jerusalem... *(Insert something you're looking forward to. For example, I'll have the best French fries ever or I'll go to the most amazing concert ever).*

SLIDE: picture of your city

Thanksgiving Food Drive

So let's dream about making those things happen today. Here's a video of an easy way that we can get involved in seeking the Kingdom as a community. Every year, we do a thanksgiving food drive. Thousands of families in our city and in cities across the world are able to have a great thanksgiving meal as a result of our generosity. Here's a video from last year:

VIDEO: Thanksgiving Food Drive

Now THAT'S a great example of the Kingdom of God happening in our city. Imagine if that started to be the norm. That would mean that people wouldn't go hungry! There would be abundance everywhere in the city. It would look more and more like the perfect city John described. Today in small groups, we're going to spend some time dreaming about what our city would look like if we saw more of the Kingdom of God crashing in. I'll pray and then we'll break up into small groups.

Pray.

Dismiss to small groups.

Prep and AV Needs:

Small Group:

- City Scape outline on brown craft paper (template on public drive)
 - These should be hung from the wall in the large group room
- Markers/pens
- Dog tags with 4" chains that say "Kingdom Come"
(<http://www.dogtagsonline.com/fast-quote.html>)

Large Group:

- LIVE Bible

AV Needs:

- Slide: Middle School Graphic
- Verse: *Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell 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 21:1-4*
- Slide: picture of a city skyline (on public drive)
- Slide: picture of your city (on public drive)
- Video: Thanksgiving Food Drive intro video
- Slide: Middle School Graphic