

**One truth shared:** While we struggle here in this world, we have the hope of heaven where the saints shine in glory forever.

*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."*

*He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."*

*He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life."*

**Revelation 21:1-6**

## We Feebly Struggle; They in Glory Shine

An endless trickle of tears streamed down Gabriella's face and pooled on her pillow. How could she sleep when her heart was so broken? How could she rest peacefully knowing her abuela, her grandmother, was suffering on her deathbed at the hospital?

Gabriella's abuela, Carlita, was her dad's mother. For decades Carlita had been the rock of the whole family. She was the one who first immigrated from Colombia to make a living in the U.S. She was the one who made sure her children (and later her grandchildren) were always in church. She was the one who pushed her family for success in education and work. She was also the one who passed down their Colombian heritage and traditions.

Gabriella always thought it was so funny when her abuela would get angry and revert to correcting them all in Spanish. She was so strong yet so kind and loving! But now stage four cancer had quickly ravaged Carlita's body. The once strong pillar of the family was now lying frail and fragile in a bed, seemingly a shadow of the person she once was.

Eventually Gabriella fell asleep that night, but sadly more tears would be waiting for her in the morning. That night her abuela passed away in her sleep at the hospital. It seemed like Gabriella's world was flipped upside down. Now what was she going to do? Now where would the family find strength? Now who was going to make the world's best empanadas?

The family was not looking forward to the funeral and final goodbyes at all, but it turned out to be just what they needed. The pastor read the words of this devotion from Revelation 21. Here the apostle John sees a vision of God's people beautifully dressed as a bride at a wedding. The bride is radiant, glorious, and filled with joy because God dwells with his people and wipes every tear from their eyes. No more suffering. No more troubles. No more cancer! "I am making everything new!" Jesus declares. The pastor reminded everyone at the funeral that Carlita was now dressed so beautifully and sitting at the marriage feast of the Lamb, Jesus Christ. This was his gift of grace to her. "To the thirsty I will give water without cost," Jesus says. It was so comforting to Gabriella and her family to be reminded that their dear abuela was now living with Jesus in eternal peace and joy. How gracious that God would take her from pain to peace, from death to life!

How many things do each of us suffer through in a lifetime? Oh, the pain and the hurt as we and our loved ones struggle through life! Yet even as we struggle, we remember with joy those who have been called home to heaven. They have won the race and received the crown of life! They are no longer just saints who live by faith like we are, but they are saints who live by sight, face to face with Jesus forever. What comfort to know of their joy, and what comfort to know it will soon be ours! Amid all the sadness of this life, know the joy that Jesus guarantees you. After all, he declares in these verses, "It is done."

**Prayer:** Jesus, dry my tears of sadness in this life. There is so much suffering and pain! Give me strength and fill me with the hope of heaven where there will never be tears again! Amen.

## Foundation Teen Facilitators Guide

Year C

All Saints

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### We Feebly Struggle; They in Glory Shine

**Starting the Discussion:** *This first section is intended to be light and easy, to engage and get the conversation going. Have a little fun with these questions.*

- What would you describe as the saddest thing about living in this broken and sinful world?
- Why is death so hard for us to deal with?

**Connecting:** *This section serves as a bridge between the opening conversation and the body of the study/discussion. It should get the group thinking about the topic/text even before they've looked at it.*

Jesus declared, "I am the resurrection and the life." Why can we be sure that death is not the end for Christians?

**Digging In:** *Here we want to dig into some texts or the text for the day and see what Scripture says. The questions are meant to be open ended to give a beginning of a scriptural conversation. These are a guide for a spiritual and scriptural conversation.*

- Describe how Jesus is like our heavenly bridegroom and we are like the bride. Explain why that is a comforting description.
- Jesus tells us that he gives us this gift of heaven "without cost." What would your life be like if going to heaven depended on you earning it?
- Describe what you think it will be like to dwell with God and see him face to face?

**Conclusion:** *Here we want to wrap up the discussion, perhaps circling back to the "connecting question" above.*

What are you looking forward to the most in heaven?