

## Embrace the promise of Christ's return: *Back to the Future*

### LESSON AT A GLANCE

#### Facilitator Notes:

- For Your Journey episodes can be found on the [NAC USA YouTube](#) channel *and* in the [NAC USA mobile app](#)

#### I wonder...

- What future event is the goal of Christians in the New Apostolic Church?
- What events are considered the end time?

#### I believe...

- Jesus Christ is coming again- that is a central statement of the gospel. Since His ascension into heaven the Apostles have proclaimed the return of the Lord. It is the goal of faith of New Apostolic Christians to be accepted by Him on this occasion. (Catechism Q&A question 550).
- The events of the end time are comprised of: Christ's return, the marriage in heaven, the great tribulation, the thousand-year kingdom of peace, the last judgment, the new heaven and the new earth. (Catechism chapter 10)

#### Materials:

- IGNITE Bible
- Catechism Q&A
- Something to play a video clip with (computer, TV, tablet, phone, etc.)
- Chartpaper or whiteboard/markers
- "God's Plan of Salvation" cards and answer sheet

#### References:

- Bible: Matthew 24:42-44, John 14:3, Acts 1:11, 1 Corinthians 15:20-28, Philippians 3:20-21, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17, James 1:18, Revelation 3:11, 20:1-9
- Catechism Q&A questions: 549-581
- 9<sup>th</sup> Article of Faith (Articles of Faith are found on page 251 of the Catechism Q&A)
- Community Magazine article "The return of Christ" – Quarter 4, 2019
  - [Click HERE to access the Q4 2019 community magazine](#)
- For Your Journey
  - [Episode 48 – What is the bridal congregation?](#)
  - [Episode 63 – The Last Judgment](#)
  - [Episode 71 – The promise of Christ's return](#)

### PRE DISCUSSION MESSAGE TO PARENTS AND STUDENT (TO BE SENT VIA EMAIL OR TEXT)

If you could know the future, would you want to? Join us tomorrow for small group at \_\_\_\_\_ where we'll be discussing this question, and more.

### POST DISCUSSION MESSAGE TO PARENTS (TO BE SENT VIA EMAIL OR TEXT)

#### Facilitator Notes:

- Please feel free to add local information and customize as necessary
- Consider including a link to one of the videos listed in the "References" section above.

Dear Parents,  
This week the "I wonder..." questions were about the future events, triggered by Christ's return. The youth were encouraged in the "Point to Ponder" component of the discussion to think about how their belief about the future impacts their decisions today. Consider reinforcing this point by asking/sharing how their/your belief about future events (return of Christ, desire to live a long life, pursuing education, wanting to reach certain health goals, saving for a car, etc.) has impacted their/your decisions in the present.  
As always, if you have any question about the topic, feel free to contact us.  
Your Youth Leaders

## SUNDAY SERMON REFLECTIONS (up to 10 minutes)

### Facilitator Notes:

- Allow 2-3 students to share their reflections. For larger groups, vary who shares from week to week.

- What Bible verse was used for the basis of last Sunday's sermon?
- What were some of the main takeaways? What did you learn?
- So far this week, how have you applied what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?
- Going forward, how will you apply what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?

## HOOK (up to 10 minutes)

### Facilitator Notes:

- Allow 2-3 students to share their reflections. For larger groups, vary who shares from week to week.
- Consider writing the responses on the chartpaper or whiteboard.
- In this semester "Embrace the promise of Christ's return" and the previous semester "Value the church", the topic of the Plan of Salvation has appeared a few times. This is not meant to be purely redundant, but rather as an emphasize on what Christ has promised of what is to come. The multiple discussions that include this topic should also show how elements of faith are woven together to create a cohesive understanding of what Christians in the New Apostolic Church are hoping and preparing for.

- How are you and how are you feeling today?
- Who would like to share their point to ponder or call to action from last week?
- Following up from the pre discussion message: Ask the students if they had the ability to know the future, would they want to? Why or why not?
- Some 'why' responses could include:
  - Use it to your financial advantage (stock market, lottery, betting)
  - To avoid danger or pain
  - Don't have to worry or fear about the unknown (what job you'll have, where you may live, whether you'll get married or not, etc.)
- Some 'why not' responses could include:
  - Knowing the outcome of certain situations ahead of time (particularly with a financial outcome like the stock market) would be cheating
  - Takes the excitement out of the "unknown" of life and could lead to a lazy "going through the motions" attitude
  - The anxiety of knowing that something unpleasant is coming (e.g death of loved one, or injury to yourself), and nothing can change it - it could have a paralyzing effect
- After the students have had a chance to share their perspectives, explain that in this small group, we'll be discussing the future events of the Plan of Salvation.

## SET THE STAGE (1 minute)

### Facilitator Notes:

- Preview the "I wonder" questions with the students.

### I wonder...

- What future event is the goal of Christians in the New Apostolic Church?
- What events are considered the end time?

## LESSON (up to 25 minutes)

### Facilitator Notes:

- For the sake of preparing for the discussion, the full Bible passage is included in the facilitator guide. However, in the actual discussion with the students, it is encouraged that the facilitator look up the passages in a physical Bible along with the students to reinforce the importance of using one's Bible and Bible literacy.
- For Your Journey – Episode 71 is 6:18 long. If you don't have time to watch it in class, consider sending it to the students in the day or two after the discussion to serve as a follow up and/or include the link in the follow up parent email.
- For additional background on Christ's return, consider reading the Community Magazine article "The return of Christ" – Quarter 4, 2019 prior to the discussion.
  - [Click HERE to access the Q4 2019 community magazine](#)

### Student Question #1 What future event is the goal of Christians in the New Apostolic Church?

- Jesus Christ is coming again- that is a central statement of the gospel. Since His ascension into heaven the Apostles have proclaimed the return of the Lord. It is the goal of faith of New Apostolic Christians to be accepted by Him on this occasion. (Catechism Q&A question 550).

### Student Question #2 How do we know Jesus Christ is coming again?

- Jesus Himself told us that He is coming again.
- Ask a student to read John 14:3
  - And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.*
- It is one of the fundamental certainties of the gospel that Jesus Christ will return and take His bride unto Himself. (Catechism Q&A question 555)
- If we believe the Bible to be true, and Jesus accurately predicted His death, resurrection, and ascension, that give us reason to believe His future promises as well.
- Consider playing the For Your Journey – [Episode 71 – The promise of Christ's return](#).
- In addition to Jesus Himself promising His return, others proclaimed that Jesus would return to witnesses of Jesus' ascension.
- Ask a student to read Acts 1:11
  - "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."*

### Student Question #3 When is Jesus going to return?

- We don't know.
- Since no man knows the moment in time of Christ's return, the believer is called upon to remain prepared for this event every day. Jesus made it clear in parables that believers are to be watchful in faith and expect His return at any hour. (Catechism Q&A 553)
- Ask a student, or group of students, to read Matthew 24:42-44
  - "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."*

- Throughout the Plan of Salvation and Future discussions, the terms firstling, or firstfruit, may appear in supporting material. These are those who will go with the Lord at His coming rather than at the last judgment. (Catechism Q&A question 530)
  - Consider asking a student to read a Bible reference containing the term “firstfruit”, James 1:18:
    - Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.*
- The Articles of Faith can be found on page 251 of the Catechism Questions and Answers book.
- The events of “God’s Plan of Salvation” activity can be cut out using the included pages, or students can write them out on index cards as an additional component to the activity.
- The “God’s Plan of Salvation” activity is also an opportunity to review the points from E5 – The Plan of Salvation.
- For Your Journey episodes can be found on the [NAC USA YouTube](#) channel *and* in the [NAC USA mobile app](#)

#### **Student Question #4 What events are considered the end time?**

- The events of the end time are comprised of: Christ’s return, the marriage in heaven, the great tribulation, the thousand-year kingdom of peace, the last judgment, the new heaven and the new earth. (Catechism chapter 10)
- The 9<sup>th</sup> Article of Faith gives the events of the end time, as triggered by Christ’s return. Ask a student, or multiple students to recite, or read, the 9<sup>th</sup> Article of Faith.

#### **Plan of Salvation activity (10-15 minutes)**

- The events of the end time continue God’s Plan of Salvation, which was already started in the Old Testament.
- Using the “God’s Plan of Salvation” activity at the end of this facilitator guide, ask the students to put the events of God’s Plan of Salvation in order.
- Remind the students that Jesus’ promise to return and the possibility of eternal life with the Triune God is part of the ‘good news’ of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The phrase ‘the gospel of Jesus Christ’ is featured in both the vision and mission statements of the New Apostolic Church. Preparing for these future events is why we exist as a church.

#### **Additional supporting Bible verses**

- If time allows, consider asking a student, or multiple students, to read any combination of the below Bible verses regarding events of the future:
  - Death will be destroyed: *1 Corinthians 15:20-28*
  - Our body will be transformed: *Philippians 3:20-21*
  - The comfort of Christ’s coming: *1 Thessalonians 4:13-17*
  - Christ will return; 1,000 Kingdom of Peace: *Revelation 3:11, 20:1-9*

#### **Additional supporting For Your Journey episodes**

- If time allows, consider showing one, or both, of the For Your Journey episodes below to expand on these two specific components of the future.
- If you have enough students, consider breaking them into two groups and assign each group one of the episodes to watch. After they’ve watched the episodes, they can share with the whole group what the takeaways from their assigned For Your Journey episode are.
- For Your Journey
  - [Episode 48 – What is the bridal congregation?](#)
  - [Episode 63 – The Last Judgment](#)

## WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME? (up to 10 minutes)

### Facilitator Notes:

### Close with the "I Wonder..." questions

- Ask a student to read an "I Wonder..." question, and invite another student to answer with an "I Believe..." statement or an "I Believe..." statement in their own words.
- As you review each question and answer, stop and check in with the group to be sure there are no misunderstandings or misconceptions.

### I wonder...

- What future event is the goal of Christians in the New Apostolic Church?
- What events are considered the end time?

### I believe...

- Jesus Christ is coming again- that is a central statement of the gospel. Since His ascension into heaven the Apostles have proclaimed the return of the Lord. It is the goal of faith of New Apostolic Christians to be accepted by Him on this occasion. (Catechism Q&A question 550).
- The events of the end time are comprised of: Christ's return, the marriage in heaven, the great tribulation, the thousand-year kingdom of peace, the last judgment, the new heaven and the new earth. (Catechism chapter 10)

### Point to Ponder...

- How does your belief in the events of the future influence your decisions and behavior today?

### A Call to Action...

- Write down why you want to be part of the bridal congregation when Jesus returns. Within the next 2 weeks, share your answers with at least 1 person in the congregation. Ask them why they want to be part of the bridal congregation when Jesus returns.

### Weekly Reflections

What Bible verse was used for the basis of last Sunday's sermon?

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What were some of the main takeaways? What did you learn?

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So far this week, how have you applied what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?

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Going forward, how will you apply what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?

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**Point to Ponder...**

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**Call to Action...**

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## Embrace the promise of Christ's return: *Back to the Future*

<p><b>I wonder...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What future event is the goal of Christians in the New Apostolic Church?</li> <li>➤ What events are considered the end time?</li> </ul>	<p><b>I believe...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Jesus Christ is coming again- that is a central statement of the gospel. Since His ascension into heaven the Apostles have proclaimed the return of the Lord. It is the goal of faith of New Apostolic Christians to be accepted by Him on this occasion. (Catechism Q&amp;A question 550).</li> <li>➤ The events of the end time are comprised of: Christ's return, the marriage in heaven, the great tribulation, the thousand-year kingdom of peace, the last judgment, the new heaven and the new earth. (Catechism chapter 10)</li> </ul>
<p>Bible: Matthew 24:42-44, John 14:3, Acts 1:11, 1 Corinthians 15:20-28, Philippians 3:20-21, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17, James 1:18, Revelation 3:11, 20:1-9          Catechism Q&amp;A questions: 549-581          Article of Faith 9</p>	

### 1. What future event is the goal of Christians in the New Apostolic Church?

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### 2. How do we know Jesus Christ is coming again?

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### 3. When is Jesus going to return?

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### 4. What events are considered the end time?

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**Point to Ponder:** How does your belief in the events of the future influence your decisions and behavior today?

**Call to Action:** Write down why you want to be part of the bridal congregation when Jesus returns. Within the next 2 weeks, share your answers with at least 1 person in the congregation. Ask them why they want to be part of the bridal congregation when Jesus returns.

## "God's Plan of Salvation"<sup>1</sup>

*The respective events can be cut out from the included sheets or written on cards. The participants are requested to arrange them in the appropriate chronological order. Cards arranged side by side represent events expected to take place at the same time, i.e. in parallel.*

Deliverance of Noah			
Election and blessing of the patriarchs			
Covenant with Israel			
Birth, sacrifice, resurrection, ascension into heaven of Jesus Christ			
Outpouring of the Holy Spirit			
Spread of the Gospel by the early Apostles			
Development of Christianity without occupied Apostle ministry			
Reoccupation of the Apostle ministry			
Preparation of the bridal congregation			
Return of Christ	Rapture of the bridal congregation	Resurrection of the dead in Christ	First Resurrection <sup>2</sup>
Marriage feast in heaven	Great tribulation		
Coming of the Lord with power and great glory, Satan bound	Resurrection of the martyrs	Establishment of the kingdom of peace	First Resurrection <sup>2</sup>
Satan released			
Ultimate defeat of Satan			
Resurrection of the dead	Judgement		
God's new creation			

<sup>1</sup> cf. CNC, Part 4, no. 4.4 as well as Part 10

<sup>2</sup> The term does not refer to a point in time, but should be explained as describing the order of the resurrection. The first resurrection includes the resurrection of the dead in Christ and the transformation and rapture of the firstlings as well as the resurrection of the martyrs from the great tribulation (cf. CNC, no. 10.5).



**Deliverance of Noah**

**Election and blessing of  
the patriarchs**

**Covenant with Israel**

**Birth, sacrifice, resurrec-  
tion, ascension into heaven  
of Jesus Christ**

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**Outpouring of the Holy Spirit**

**Spread of the Gospel by the early Apostles**

**Development of Christianity without occupied Apostle ministry**

**Reoccupation of the Apostle ministry**

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**Preparation of the bridal  
congregation**

**Return of Christ**

**Rapture of the bridal  
congregation**

**Resurrection of the dead in  
Christ**

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**First Resurrection**

**First Resurrection**

**Marriage feast in heaven**

**Great tribulation**

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**Coming of the Lord with  
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**Establishment of the  
kingdom of peace**

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**Ultimate defeat of  
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