

THE RAPTURE

Objects to have: A large magnet; small metal objects and wood chips.

Introduction to the lesson: Hold the magnet and ask the children to identify what it is and what it does. After scattering the wood and metal pieces on a flat surface, hold up one of each. Ask the children which object the magnet will be likely to pick up. Test their answer by slowly moving the magnet over the objects. After picking up all the metals emphasize the fact that the magnet did not have to touch the surface to pick up the metal, but, in fact the metal rose up to meet the magnet. Tell the children that just as this metal rose to meet the magnet, in today's story we will find out about people who will rise up in the air to meet someone very special.

The Lesson: Someday Jesus is coming back for all the Christians, those people who have asked Him into their hearts. We call this time the rapture. Although the word "rapture" is not in the Bible, that is the word we use to describe the return of Jesus. The word "rapture" means "to be caught up;" it also means "a time of great joy" and what could be more joyful than being caught up to meet Jesus face to face and to live with Him forever in Heaven.

Read 1 Thes. 4:16:17 How will we know Jesus is here? Well, have you ever had a visitor come to your door? You did not know that person was there until he announced himself by knocking or ringing the doorbell. When Jesus comes He will announce Himself in three ways: First, with a shout-a shout of victory. Second, with the voice of the archangel. Third, with the sound of a trumpet. Jesus must think it is important for us to know He is here. We do not know the exact time that Jesus is coming. He could come at any time. We should always be ready and watching for His return.

When Jesus comes, He will first do something special for the Christians whose spirit is already in Heaven. Do you know someone in your family, perhaps a grandparent's who is already in Heaven? When people that are saved die, their spirit goes immediately to Heaven and their bodies are buried here on earth. Our bodies are not perfect; they are sinful and cannot go to Heaven. When Jesus comes for His own, all the bodies of the Christians that have died, will come out of their graves, and be changed into perfect bodies as they rise to meet Jesus in the air. Next, Jesus will take up all the Christians who are still alive. We will also be given new bodies that are perfect and can never sin.

Think of all the millions of Christians that Jesus is coming back for. (Make a list of some). That is a lot of people. How long do you think it will take for all of us to meet Jesus in the air? (Let them guess.) **I Cor. 15:51:53** says, that it will happen in the "twinkling of an eye." (Have everyone blink their eyes.) The rapture will happen quicker than you can blink.

Back to our magnet. Whom does the magnet represent? (Jesus) Whom does the metal represent? (Christians) Will Jesus have to come down to Earth to get us or will we meet Him in the air? Whom do you think the wood chips represent? They represent all those who don't know Jesus as their Saviour, the lost people. They will be left behind. Wouldn't it be good to know that you will be in the rapture to meet Jesus when He comes?