

MERCYME

Artist:

MERCYME
MERCYME.ORG

Album Title & Record Company:

I CAN ONLY IMAGINE - THE VERY
BEST OF MERCY ME
FAIR TRADE/COLUMBIA

Video Title:

I CAN ONLY IMAGINE

Study By:

JEFF CHAVES
NORTHPOINTE COMMUNITY CHURCH
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA
JEFFCHAVES@YMAIL.COM



Themes

Heaven; Longing For, Hope; In God,
God's Kingdom

Objective

To engage students in a conversation
about heaven by looking at verses
that describe it.

Warm Up

I Can Only Imagine What's in the Bag – Before your group starts, get a brown paper lunch bag (or a used fast food bag – whatever is handy.) Write “I Can Only Imagine” on the outside. Fill the bag with 15-20 of small items—the more random the items, the better. (Some ideas: key, unshelled peanut, ketchup packet, pencil, flash drive, matchbox car, hotel soap, etc.) Have the bag ready for the group but don't let anyone look inside. Choose a couple of volunteers. Tell them they will have one minute to look in the bag and describe as many items as possible. The key is that you cannot say any part of the word. (For example, don't say “light” while describing a flashlight.) When someone in the group guesses correctly, take the item out of the bag. Take turns and find the winner who gets the most correct items out of the bag. If there is a tie, have each person describe one item and the fastest time wins.

Transition

Ask if the students if they have seen the *I Can Only Imagine* movie. Have someone give a quick summary of the film. The movie is based on MercyMe's lead singer, Bart Millard, and the journey God led him on to write the song. The song was inspired by the death of Bart's dad in the 1990's. It took a number of years, but the song became a huge hit on Christian Radio and crossed over to the Adult Contemporary stations by 2003. It is the only Christian song that has been certified double platinum, selling more than 2.5 million copies. The song was re-recorded and released along with this movie in 2018. This new version has also topped the Christian charts.

The Video

Pass out the Student Guides and call your students' attention to the first question. Have them watch the video carefully and write down the images they get about heaven from the video.

Transition

Ask your students what they wrote. Lead a discussion to find out what your students think heaven is really like. Ask if they think there are clouds and angels with harps like we see in

cartoons? Point out that **1 Corinthians 2:9** says “However, as it is written: ‘What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived’ – the things God has prepared for those who love Him.” It is really impossible for us to truly understand the place that Jesus is preparing, but we get some clues from Scripture.

Bible Study

Break the students up into smaller groups and have them each tackle a single verse and the questions on the Student Guide. After 5-10 minutes have a spokesperson from each group read the verse and answer the questions

- **Isaiah 63:15** – How does this describe heaven?
- **John 14:1-4** – How is heaven pictured by Jesus here?
- **2 Corinthians 5:1** – What is heaven like according to this passage?
- **Hebrews 11:14-16** – What is the image in this passage?
- **Hebrews 12:22** – What is happening in heaven, according to this passage?

Have other students respond to their answers. Do they have a different view based on the passage? Ask everyone to answer the

final question: Do any of these passages change your idea of heaven? Take a few minutes to discuss the responses.

Wrap Up

Just like in the video, we can only imagine what heaven will be like, and any idea we may have will only pale in comparison to the real thing. Tell your students that the most important thing about heaven is that Jesus is there – like He said in **John 14:1-4**. Direct your students to the next passage: **John 14:5-6**. Thomas asked how they could find the way to where He's going? Jesus simply responded by saying that He is the way.

Ask, “Have you put your trust in Jesus? Do you know with certainty that you will be with Him in heaven?” Make some time when they can talk to you about it – or explain salvation as you close.