

Future HS | Hope After Loss: A Place Prepared

Beyond

Series Description:

Life is full of next steps you can't see yet — decisions, losses, callings, and seasons that feel uncertain. Beyond helps students step into the unseen future God is inviting them toward by anchoring them in Scripture and practical rhythms. Rooted in passages like James, Romans, 1 Peter, John, and Jeremiah, this series shows that hardship doesn't cancel God's plan — it refines faith, builds character, and produces hope. Each session moves from honest theology (God's sovereignty over the future; suffering as sanctifying) to short, usable practices (prayer, confession, faithful rhythms, community) so students learn to move forward even when the next thing is invisible. The goal is to turn anxious wondering into steady, forward-looking faith: students who expect God to be at work in today, who live toward his promises, and who practice spiritual habits that shape how they step into tomorrow.

Core Theology Insights:

Sovereignty, Sanctification, Incarnational Presence, Redemption, Active Faith

Emphasized Relationships:

God, Self, Others

Response:

Hopeful, persevering faith that moves toward God's promises.



Title

"Hope After Loss: A Place Prepared"

Scripture

John 14

Bottom Line

Heaven is not a metaphor — it's a promise. And Jesus Himself is preparing it for you.

Memory Verse

"But we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us." – Romans 5: 3b-5

25 min

Teaching

5 min

Introduction (ME)

What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

Tension (WE)

What You Need

No supplies needed

Leader Note:

Before you read or teach this section, share a short, honest story from your own life about a time you were carrying too much (stress, family pressure, anxiety, grief, burnout) and finally admitted you needed help. The goal is to model vulnerability and show students that even leaders hit a point where they can't hold everything alone. Keep it real and age-appropriate.

After you share, you can say something like, "Here's an example of the kind of story I mean," and then use or adapt the story below. The following story is pulled from this week's video. You can also choose to play the video provided.

Have you ever gotten lost in a new place and had to stop at one of those big maps? They are usually at an amusement park, a public park, or a mall, and the entire layout of the place is right in front of you. If you have, let me ask you, what is the first thing you look for on the map? Is it where you are going?

No! You look for the little dot that says, "You are here." Because it is really hard to picture where you are headed if you do not know where you are standing.

Back in 1970, NASA launched Apollo 13. The mission was simple. Go to the moon. But two days into the flight, an oxygen tank exploded and systems started failing. Instantly, the goal changed from landing on the moon to keeping three astronauts alive and returning them home safe.

NASA did not immediately jump into telling them where to land. First, they had to assess ...where are they right now? Have they drifted? How bad is the damage? What are the limits? Only after they identified their real position could they chart a path forward. Thankfully, they made it back to earth safely, and it has since been named NASA's most "Successful Failure." There was even a movie made about it. But here's my point, direction without location is useless.

See, most of us live like we are supposed to already know where we are going. There is pressure to have a plan. Pressure to be confident. Pressure to look like we have it together.

That tension only gets heavier when something changes unexpectedly or something is lost. It causes us to experience something called, "Grief."

Grief is what happens when something important is taken away or changes in a way you didn't choose. Most people think of grief only as death, but it can also show up when a relationship ends, when life does not turn out the way you expected, when your health changes, or when something you loved is suddenly gone.

5 min

Truth (GOD)

What You Need

No supplies needed

Grief can feel different for everyone. It can look like sadness, anger, confusion, numbness, or even missing something so much it hurts. Sometimes it affects your body and your focus, not just your emotions. And grief has a way of pulling questions out of us that we do not usually say out loud. Questions like: Why did this have to happen now? Why did things not turn out the way I thought they would? Why does it feel like God was silent? Does any of this actually mean something, or is it all just random?

Those questions do not mean you lack faith. They mean you cared. A sociologist named Peter Berger said that humans are always searching for what he called "signals of transcendence." That is a fancy way of saying this. Deep down, we feel like there has to be more than just loss, more than just endings, more than just this moment.

And when we feel that ache, we usually respond in one of two ways. We panic and try to rush ahead. Or we freeze and stop moving altogether.

We chase the next thing. The next achievement. The next relationship. The next distraction. Or we shut down, numb out, and avoid thinking about it at all. But neither of those actually helps us understand where we are.

We want a clear map.

We want exact directions.

We want guarantees.

But what Jesus is saying is ... what we actually need is Him. What we need most is hope.

In John 14, the disciples are unsettled. Jesus has been talking about leaving. Things feel uncertain. The future feels unclear. Their hearts are troubled. And the reality is that they really were headed for a great loss.

Jesus says: "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in me" (John 14:1 ESV). Before Jesus talks about where they are going, He addresses where they are right now. Anxious. Confused. Unsure. Then He points them forward.

"In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have you that I go prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself that where I am you may also be. And you know the way to where I am going" (John 14:2-3 ESV).

That sounds comforting, but it also raises an honest question. Jesus tells them, "You know the way to where I am going."

Thomas says what everyone else is thinking. "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?"

And Jesus responds with one of the most important statements He ever makes: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:6 ESV).

Jesus isn't handing them a map ... He is offering Himself. Instead of searching for answers and details, He's saying "Follow Me."

The disciples, and us, really need that. Because something very true

5 min

Application (YOU)

What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

Landing (ME)

What You Need

No supplies needed

about this life is that there are going to be a lot of times we really do feel lost.

When Jesus says, "I am the way," He is not saying, *I will show you the way someday*. He is saying, *I am the way right now*. The disciples wanted clarity. They wanted directions. They wanted something solid to tell them everything was going to be okay. And Jesus gives them something even better. Himself.

"You already know the way ... because you know me." *That is a huge shift*. Jesus is saying that following God is not about having everything figured out. It is not about knowing every step ahead of time. It is about knowing who to follow and staying close to Him.

This is not Jesus handing them a map. He is saying, *stay with me. Walk with me. Trust me.*

And Jesus isn't just speaking in metaphors here.

When He says: *"In my Father's house there are many rooms"* (John 14:2 ESV), He is talking about a real place. He is talking about eternal life.

Life beyond loss. Life beyond grief. Heaven itself. Real. Secure. Waiting. When Jesus says, "I go to prepare a place for you," He is saying that loss is not the end of the story. Pain is not the final word. Nothing is wasted. Nothing is random.

God is still working, even when it feels like things are falling apart.

Here is the core truth Scripture gives us: Our grief does not mean God is absent. Our losses do not mean the story is over.

Heaven is not a vague idea or a comforting thought. It is a real promise Jesus Himself is preparing.

Before we go any further, I want to say this clearly.

If you have encountered real loss in your life, your grief is very real. And Jesus never rushed people through loss. In John 11, when His friend Lazarus died, Jesus did not offer quick answers or explanations. He wept with those who are weeping. He entered the pain. That matters. Your questions are allowed. God isn't threatened by your disappointment, your confusion, or your sadness. What's important to remember is that you can't isolate in your grief. We have people around here who love you and are ready to walk you through any tough situation you'd like to share.

Grief does not disappear because of faith. But faith gives grief somewhere to rest.

And what Jesus offers us in John 14 isn't a way to avoid pain ... what He offers is a way to carry it with hope.

Somewhere along the way, hope can start to sound like pretending everything is fine. But biblical hope is different.

Hope is not denial. It is trust.

Trust that God is still good, that He is still present, and that even when things come to an end, He is still preparing something new.

Heaven is not a metaphor. It is a promise. It is a real place, and Jesus Himself is preparing it for us, and preparing us for it.

If you were standing in front of a big map of your life, feeling lost and looking for that little "You Are Here" icon, the question you need to ask yourself is this: Am I with Jesus?

Jesus said: *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"* (John 14:6 ESV). If you are lost and looking for direction, Jesus is the way. If you are confused and looking for truth, Jesus is the truth. If you have experienced real, heartbreaking loss, Jesus is life. And He has overcome death.

Grief does not get the final word.

Loss does not get the final word.

Jesus does.

Let's pray.

Jesus, thank You that You do not turn away from our grief. Thank You that You see our loss and welcome our questions. Bring comfort to those who are hurting and hope to those who feel disoriented. Help us trust that even when things end, You are still preparing something good. Amen.

32 min

Groups

2 min

Think About This

What You Need

No supplies needed

This conversation is about helping students be honest about grief, loss, and feeling "lost," while showing them that Jesus doesn't just offer advice, He offers Himself. The goal is to normalize questions, acknowledge real pain, and point them to this hope: Jesus is the way, and heaven is a real place He's preparing, not just a metaphor.

Leader Tips

- This week touches grief, loss, anxiety about the future, and death. In other words, not light stuff.
A few things to keep in mind as you lead:
 - Don't force anyone to share deeply personal stories. Give options like "you can keep it general" or "you can write instead of talk."
 - Normalize honest questions: "Why did this happen?" "Where was God?" Those questions are not rebellion; they're often evidence that something mattered.
 - Watch for humor used as a shield. A little joking is fine; if one student keeps derailing, gently pull it back: "Jokes are welcome, but this might be a moment to let others share too."
 - If a student hints at self-harm, abuse, or anything dangerous, don't process it in front of the group. Thank them for trusting you and follow your church's safety/reporting process afterward.Your job is not to fix their grief. Your job is to sit in it with them and quietly point to Jesus.

10 min

Discussion Questions (Core Questions)

What You Need

No supplies needed

(These hit the heart of the week's content.)

Quick check-in:

"If your life had a giant map with a 'You are here' dot, what word would be next to the dot tonight? Tired, confused, okay, hopeful, numb, busy, something else? Just give one word."

Let everyone answer briefly.

1. Have you ever gotten lost somewhere and realized you had way more confidence than actual direction? What happened and how did you finally figure it out?
2. If someone opened a map of your brain right now and there was a "You are here" dot, what would that dot be sitting on most of the time: school, friendships, family, sports, work, a relationship, your phone, or something else?
3. What is one place you could get dropped into and immediately feel lost: a huge mall, an airport, IKEA, a big city, a theme park, or somewhere else?
4. When you're stressed or overwhelmed, what is your go-to distraction: scrolling, sleep, music, gaming, talking to someone, or pretending nothing's wrong?
5. If someone handed you a literal life map right now, what's the first thing you would want to look up: your future job, who you'll marry, where you'll live, how something hard turns out, or something else?
6. The teaching talked about grief not just as death but as any loss/change you didn't choose. Without sharing anything too personal, what's a kind of loss students your age go through that adults sometimes underestimate?
7. When life feels confusing or heavy, are you more likely to rush ahead into the "next thing" or freeze and avoid thinking about it? What does that usually look like for you?

10 min

Discussion Questions (Dive Deep)

What You Need

No supplies needed

(These dig into the Bible, context, and theology in student language.)

1. Read John 14:1–3 (NIV) together.
“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms... I am going there to prepare a place for you.”
Which phrase hits you the most right now and why?
2. Jesus starts with “Do not let your hearts be troubled” instead of handing out instructions. Why do you think He starts with their hearts before He talks about heaven or the future?
3. Thomas asks, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” (John 14:5 NIV). Why is that such a relatable question for high schoolers?
4. Jesus responds, “I am the way and the truth and the life” (John 14:6 NIV). Which part feels hardest to believe for you right now: that Jesus is *the way*, *the truth*, or *the life*? What makes that part hard?
5. When Jesus talks about His Father’s house with many rooms, the lesson said He’s talking about a real place, not just a comforting idea. How does it change things if heaven is an actual promise Jesus is preparing, not just a nice metaphor?
6. The teaching said, “Grief doesn’t disappear because of faith. But faith gives grief somewhere to rest.” What do you think that means in real life?
7. Practically, what might it look like to “stay close to Jesus” when you feel confused, disappointed, or unsure about the future? What’s one small, realistic thing a student could actually do this week?

10 min

Discussion Questions (Culture Questions)

What You Need

No supplies needed

(These connect the topic to real life and the world students live in.)

1. Our culture basically says you should always look confident, busy, and moving forward. How does that make it harder to admit when you feel lost, sad, or unsure?
2. Social media is everyone's highlight reel. How does seeing everyone else's "best moments" affect the way we deal with grief, disappointment, or unanswered questions?
3. When people your age face loss or change they didn't choose, what are the most common ways you see them cope: jokes, disappearing, posting vague stuff, grinding harder, party/escape vibes, or something else?
4. Where do you see people talk about heaven or "a better place" in culture (shows, songs, posts, conversations)? How is that usually different from the way Jesus talks about the Father's house in John 14?
5. How might it be countercultural for a Christian to say, "I don't have everything figured out, but I'm trusting Jesus with my future and my grief"? What reactions do you think that would get?
6. If you have friends who don't share your faith but are going through something really painful, what does it look like to bring hope without being fake, preachy, or giving cheesy answers?
7. Based on what we talked about tonight, what's one small, specific way you could live with more hope this week in the middle of normal life (not after everything is "fixed")?

Resources

Teaching Outline

What You Need

No supplies needed

HS LESSON OUTLINE / Beyond / WK 4

John 14

Bottom Line: Heaven is not a metaphor. It's a promise Jesus is preparing for you.

INTRO (ME)

- Read John 14:1-7
- Getting lost → big maps → look for "You Are Here"
- You can't plan direction without knowing location
- Apollo 13:
 - Mission fails
 - Goal becomes survival
 - NASA first asks: Where are we right now?
- Point: Direction without location is useless
- John 14:
 - Disciples troubled, Jesus is leaving
 - Jesus starts with reassurance
 - Thomas asks: How do we know the way?
 - Jesus: "I am the way, the truth, and the life"
 - Not a map. A person. Follow me.

TENSION (WE)

- Pressure to know where we're going
- Loss or change increases the pressure
- Grief = loss you didn't choose
- Grief brings hard questions
- Questions do not mean weak faith
- We want maps and guarantees
- Jesus says what we need is Him and hope

TRUTH (GOD)

- "I am the way" = right now
- Following Jesus = closeness, not clarity
- Father's house = real place
- Heaven is real, secure, prepared
- Loss is not the end
- God is still working
- Grief ≠ God's absence

APPLICATION (YOU)

- Grief is real and allowed
- Jesus entered grief before fixing it (John 11)
- Questions are welcome
- Do not isolate in grief
- Faith gives grief somewhere to rest
- Jesus offers hope, not avoidance

LANDING (ME)

- Hope ≠ denial
- Hope = trust
- Heaven is a real promise
- Ask: Am I with Jesus?

- Jesus is the way, truth, and life
 - Grief doesn't win
 - Loss doesn't win
- Jesus does