

General Church Education



Waking up in the Spiritual World

*Divine Love and Wisdom 85; Arcana
Coelestia 177, 178; Heaven and Hell 494*

Lesson 21

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 1: The Lord Is Our Creator

For ages 6-7 years

WAKING UP IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

DIVINE LOVE AND WISDOM 85; ARCANA COELESTIA 177, 178;
HEAVEN AND HELL 494

The Old and New Testaments tell us many things about the spiritual world. The Writings give us even more details. The many beautiful truths about life in the spiritual world are given so that we can know something of what is to come after our natural body dies.

Our next four lessons will focus on the spiritual world. Today's lesson is about the resurrection process and the beginning stages of life after death. This lesson builds on the ideas about life after death that were introduced in the stories about Easter and the miracles of raising the dead.

Our readings for these lessons are from the Writings for the New Church revealed by the Lord through His servant, Emanuel Swedenborg. The readings have been adapted for children. We will learn more about Emanuel Swedenborg in lesson twenty-five.

IDEAS FOR PARENTS & TEACHERS

- Young children are eager to accept the truth that heaven is a real place. They are fascinated with the details of what life there is like. When someone they know and love leaves the life of this world to go into the next, we can use this event as an opportunity to reinforce their beliefs about the Lord as our Heavenly Father, who desires that all people will live in heaven with Him.
- The stories from the Word are a wonderful resource for us to use as we teach our children about the miracle of eternal life.

FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT AND THE WRITINGS

When we move from the natural world into the spiritual, which happens when we die, we take everything that pertains to our character except our earthy body. In fact, when we enter the spiritual world or our life after death, we are in a body as we were in this world. There seems to be no difference, since we do not feel or see any difference.

This body is spiritual, though, so it has been separated or purified from earthly matter. Further, when anything spiritual touches and sees something spiritual, it is just like something natural touching and seeing something natural. So when we have become a spirit, we have no sense that we are not in the body we inhabited in the world, and therefore do not realize that we have died. *Heaven and Hell* 461

WAKING UP IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

IMPORTANT IDEAS

The Lord gives the blessing of eternal life to everyone.

Everyone is gently welcomed into eternal life by the Lord's highest angels and by friends and family members who have gone before them into the spiritual world.

The Lord's miracles of restoring people reassure us that life continues after the death. The Lord told us many wonderful things about the spiritual world in the books written by His servant Emanuel Swedenborg. Swedenborg saw clearly into the spiritual world and told us what he saw. This was a wonderful gift from the Lord. Today we will learn about the death of our natural body and its resurrection into a spiritual body. Resurrection means "making alive again." The Lord is the only One who has power to make us alive again after our natural body dies. He gives everyone eternal life in His spiritual world.

The natural body dies when the lungs and the heart stop. This can happen when a person is old, is sick or has an accident. In every case the Lord begins gently drawing the spirit out of the earthly body and reawakening it in its spiritual body. The Lord sends His highest or "celestial" angels to be with a person at this time. They are tender, loving and gentle and protect people from bad feelings and thoughts.



Once celestial angels are present with a person who has been awakened they do not leave him, for they love everybody. People who are dying are normally thinking about eternal life and hardly at all about physical health and happiness. The angels keep them in this thought for quite a while

before withdrawing and giving way to spiritual angels who accompany them next. During all this, they think that they are still living in the body. *Arcana Coelestia* 182, 177 and 178 (adapted)

Newly arrived spirits are surrounded by people they know such as friends and family members they may not have seen for a long time.

As soon as we arrive in the other life our friends and relatives recognize us. Many people who have just come from the world are overjoyed to see their friends again, and there are friends overjoyed that they have arrived. Married partners often meet and welcome each other joyfully. *Heaven and Hell* 494 (adapted)

After death, spirits often don't even realize that they are living in a new world and using a spiritual body. Their friends and companion angels show them the wonderful surroundings, which are far more beautiful than any on earth. They do this slowly and with kindness, so that there is no fear.

The life of newly arrived spirits is not unlike their life in the world. Once they get over their astonishment at being in a body and enjoying all the senses they had in the world, they want to know about heaven. Their friends tell them about eternal life, and take them to various places with different people. They go to cities and parks.

Our first stage after death is like being in this world. This is why it still seems to us as though we were in this world unless we notice things that are out of the ordinary and remember that angels told us we were spirits when we were awakened. So the one life carries on onto the other, and death is only a passage. *Heaven and Hell* 495 and 493 (adapted)



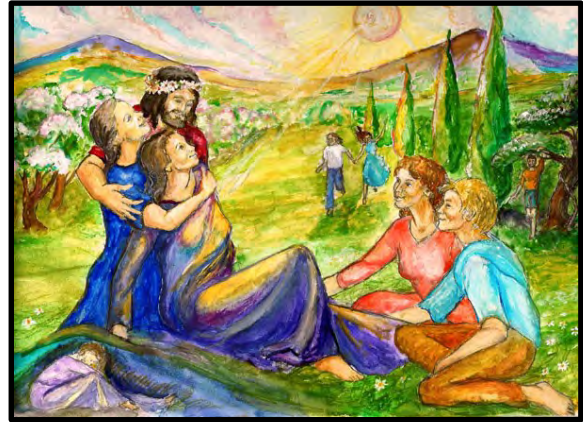
DISCUSSION

- Why do you think that the Lord gave Emanuel Swedenborg the wonderful gift of sight into the spiritual world? *(So that we could know about heaven and that life goes on forever.)*
- What are some things that you learned in this lesson about resurrection, or awaking into spiritual life? *(The highest or celestial angels are with us as we wake up. We will meet family and friends. We will feel at home and see familiar places and things. We will feel like ourselves.)*
- How do you think angels feel when they welcome newcomers into their world? *(Answers might include - happy, excited to see old friends, overjoyed to see their married partners, eager to show the beautiful sights of the spiritual world.)*
- Why do you think that newcomers to the spiritual world don't always know that they have moved from the natural life to spiritual life?
- *(Because the spiritual body seems similar in many ways to the natural body. Their surroundings seem familiar. They are surrounded by familiar people. The change to spiritual life is very gentle and happens slowly.)*
- We learned that friends take newcomers around to different places to show them the spiritual world. Gradually they begin to see things that are "out of the ordinary," or different from what they were used to in the world. Can you imagine what some of these differences might be? *(There are many answers, including the ideas of beauty and variety in the Lord's heavenly kingdom.)*
- In our next lesson, we will learn more about the beauty of the spiritual world and about how people find their way to their heavenly homes.

WAKING UP IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD | Activities

Recitation

- Learn the recitation.
One thing I have desired of the Lord,
That will I seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the Lord
All the days of my life,
To behold the beauty of the Lord,
And to inquire in His temple.
Psalm 27:4



When the recitation has been learned, give children the recitation picture on the last page of this lesson, and a sticker, e.g. a star, to decorate it.

Song

- **Becoming an Angel**
Listen at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-becoming-an-angel/>

Videos

- **What Heaven Is Like (story)**
Watch at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-what-heaven-is-like/>
- **Angels Around Us (song)**
Watch at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-angels-around-us-song/>

Projects

- Meeting Friends in Heaven Project
- Picture to color

Meeting Friends in Heaven Project

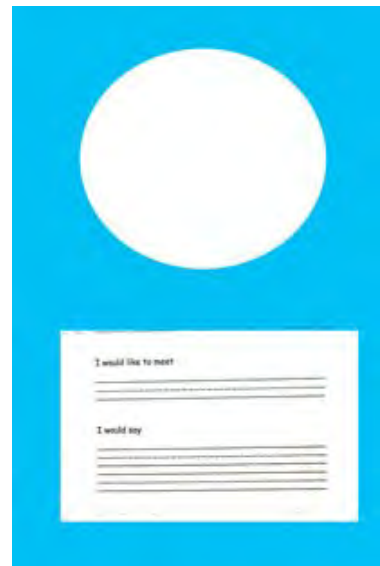
This project helps children reflect on how real heaven is and how people meet and talk together in heaven.

Supplies needed

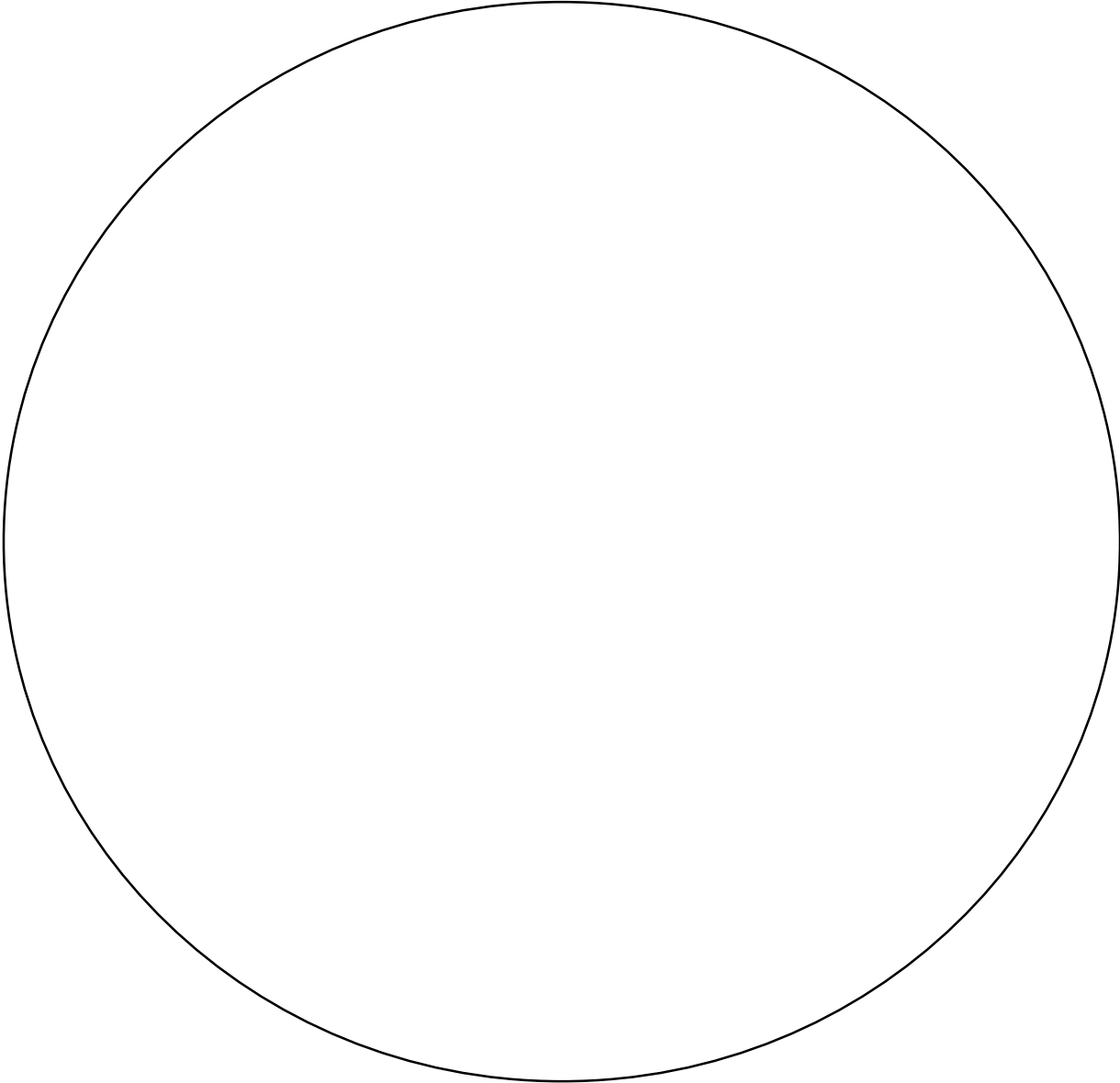
- 1 piece blue paper approximately 12"x18" (30cm x 45cm)
- 1 piece stiff white paper approx. 9"x12" (23cm x 30cm)
- 1 circle template
- 1 printed page
- crayons
- pencil
- scissors
- glue
- *optional:* gold glitter

Directions

1. What does heaven look like? (It is similar to our earth but much more beautiful.) What do the angels look like? Do they have bodies similar to ours? Who would you like to meet and talk to in heaven?
2. Use the circle template to cut a circle out of stiff white paper. Draw a picture of a person you want to meet in heaven. You could put yourself in the picture meeting this person. You could also draw some of the heavenly landscape in the background.
3. Use the page with lines on it to write about the person you would like to meet and tell what you would like to say.
4. Fold the blue paper in half horizontally. Glue the circle with the picture to the top half of the page. Glue the printed paper to the bottom half of the blue page.
5. If you want, put a circle of glue around your picture and sprinkle gold glitter on it to make heaven look even more special.



Template for Meeting Friends in Heaven Picture



I would like to meet

I would say



Recitation Award | Lessons 21, 22, 23, 24

