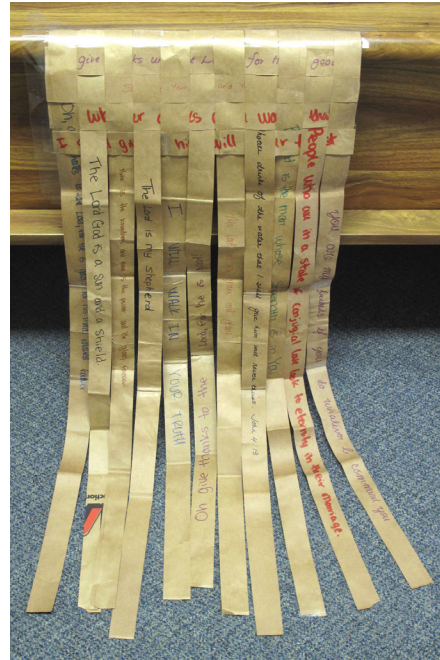


Make: Our Bed of Life

Underlying Ideas

The sick man at the pool of Bethesda lay on his bed for 38 years, unable to get up and move forward in his life. This activity takes a closer look at the man's bed or mat. The Heavenly Doctrine for the New Church tells us that beds have a relationship or correspondence with the network of ideas on which a person's mind rests—the ideas we base our lives on. Another name for this network of ideas is “doctrine”. In the spiritual world, beds reflect the foundational ideas on which a person bases his life. People who are wise have magnificent beds. People who are not wise, who do not think about or love true ideas, have broken or filthy beds (see *Apocalypse Revealed* 137).



Activity

Students will think of good principles to live by that come from the Word. Each principle is like a single thread. When all of the threads are woven together they form an underlying network of ideas that our minds rest on. After brainstorming as a group, students will write down these true ideas on strips of paper or fabric. The strips will be woven together to create a mat of teachings on which to rest their spiritual lives. (A set of quotations is included in case students have difficulty coming up with their own ideas.) Conclude with a discussion on what it means to “take up your bed and walk.”

Materials Needed for Group

- long thin strips of sturdy paper or fabric approximately 1” (2.5 cm) wide (strips of paper grocery bags or other recycled paper work) *Note:* To create a mat that is rectangular, cut some of the strips longer (the length of the mat) and some shorter (the width of the mat). Shorter strips may also be trimmed to length as the mat is built.
- marker or pen for each student
- copy of *Bed of Life Quotations* for each student (see following page)

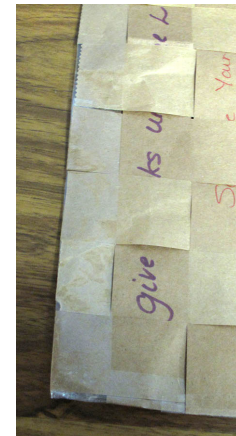
Set the Scene

1. What makes your bed comfortable? (e.g. clean sheets, soft mattress, pillows)
2. Do you think that the man who lay on his mat was comfortable? Why didn't he get up for 38 years? (He couldn't get up alone, and he didn't have anyone to help him.)
3. There's an old saying, “As you make your bed, so must you lie on it.” What kind of bed is this? (Situations we have set up for ourselves through our own choices.)

1. Have you ever felt stuck on an idea or in a way of thinking? (E.g. I'm going to fail this test, I don't trust this person, I can't do this, I'll never be as good as her, etc.) It can be difficult to overcome negative thinking habits like this.
2. Jesus is sometimes called the Great Physician. When He was in the world He healed the sick. Bad habits and negative thinking are different kinds of sickness—sicknesses of the mind. The Lord can heal our spiritual sicknesses, just as He healed people who were sick while He was in the world.
3. Just as the man lay by the pool but could not reach the water, we may know true ideas that could be used to heal the sick thoughts of our mind, but not be able to act on them.
4. Beds in the Word picture the foundational ideas that our minds rest on. These ideas may be good and true (e.g. the Lord is my light and salvation, the truth shall make you free, etc.) or selfish and false (e.g. I am the most important person here, I live by my own ideas, if it can't be proved I won't believe it, etc.). While living on earth, people's minds have both of these kinds of thoughts. In the spiritual world after death, our spirits will rest on the kind of bed we have built during our life in the world.

Group Project

1. We are going to create a “mat” as a group by weaving together strips of paper with true and good ideas from the Word written on them.
2. Take a strip of paper and write one truth from the Word, or one truth based on the Word, that you know and love on it.
3. Use the *Bed of Life Quotations* to help you get started.
4. When students have completed a number of strips one or two can start to weave them together to create a mat while others continue to make more strips.
5. To start making the mat, tape the ends of several long strips to a hard surface such as the edge of a table (see picture on previous page)
6. Weave shorter strips back and forth through the longer strips.
7. Tape the edges to secure and finish the mat (see picture at right).
8. Choose a place in the classroom or elsewhere in the church to display the mat.



Wrap-up - Conclude the lesson by discussing the end of the story.

1. The man in the story was healed when he did what the Lord asked, which was to “Rise, take up your bed and walk.” How do “we take” up our beds? (by acting on true ideas that are in our minds)
2. Where did Jesus meet the man later? (in the temple)
3. When we put the Lord's truth into action in our lives, we are living with Him. We are living in His temple.

Bed of Life Quotations

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. (Matthew 6:13)

Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. (John 4:13)

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. (John 13:34)

If you love Me, keep My commandments.... He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. (John 14:15, 21)

O Lord my God, I called to you for help and You healed me. (Psalm 130:2)

Blessed are those who do His commandments. (Revelation 22:14)

The conjugal union of one man with one wife is the precious jewel of human life and the repository of Christian religion. (see *Conjugal Love* 444r[peated])

Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and keep it. (Luke 11:28)

Rise, take up your bed and walk. (John 5:8)

You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. (John 15:14)

The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein. (Psalm 24:1)

Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the Lord. (Psalm 27:14)

Blessed is the man whose strength is in You. (Psalm 84:5)

For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly. (Psalm 84:11)

Teach me Your way, O Lord; I will walk in Your truth; unite my heart to fear Your name. (Psalm 86:11)

Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. (Psalm 107:1)

Charity itself is to act justly and faithfully in the office, business and employment in which one is engaged, for then everything that a person does is of use to society, and use is good. (*True Christian Religion* 422)

People who are in a state of truly conjugal love look to eternity in their marriage. (*Conjugal Love* 209)