

Freedom to Choose

Overview

Use the video *Mental Trash Talk* to start a discussion about messages in our minds. Lead into a discussion on *Divine Providence* 320, which states that all good is from the Lord, and all evil is from hell.

Prepare to Teach

Preview the video at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-sOBHNYL_0. Or, go to YouTube.com and look for “Mental Trash Talk off the left eye.” The video is 4 minutes long. Set up internet access ahead of time. Decide whether students will gather around a screen or use a projector.

Materials Needed

- equipment for showing the video
- internet connection
- copies of *Divine Providence* 320 to share (see next page)

Directions

1. Say, “The video we are about to see helps get us thinking about the messages we hear inside our own heads and the choices we are constantly making.”
2. Watch the video, then discuss:
 - What is a trash-talker’s goal?
 - What kinds of trash talk comments do people hear about themselves in their own minds?
 - What kinds of situations are more likely to cause a kid to have mental trash talk going on in their head?
 - Do you think this problem goes away when people get older?
 - Where do you think the mental trash talk comes from?
 - Is trash talk a reliable source of information about yourself? Why or why not?
 - It’s important, when people do something wrong, that they feel bad long enough to notice that they did a wrong thing and try to correct it and learn from the experience so they can do better next time. What’s the difference between that process and listening to mental trash talk?
 - What do you do when you realize you’re having a thought that’s mental trash talk?
3. Distribute copies of the quotation from *Divine Providence*. Discuss what it means and how it relates to ideas in the video. Point out that while the video says the ideas discussed are Swedenborg’s, Swedenborg himself says that the ideas are not his and not even from an angel, but that everything he wrote down came from the Lord alone while he was reading the Word.
4. If there is time, have students draw a picture of a person who has just messed up, e.g. broken a glass. Draw an angel on one side and an evil spirit on the other side of the person. Title the picture, “Who are you going to listen to?”

Where Does It Come From?

If a person were to believe, as is the truth, that all goodness and truth originate from the Lord, and all evil and falsity from hell, he would not assign goodness to himself and make it deserving of merit, nor assign evil to himself and make himself guilty of it.... (People who understand this) simply reflect on the evils in themselves and cast them away from themselves back to hell from where they came. *Divine Providence 320*

What does this mean?

The truth is that everything good comes from the Lord, and everything bad from hell. It may not look this way, but that is what is actually happening. Neither good nor bad comes from us. If we really understand this, then we won't take credit for the good in our lives and we won't make ourselves guilty for the evil that comes into us from hell. Instead, we'll thank the Lord for the good, and when we notice the evil we find in ourselves, we'll send it back where it came from.

So, when a thought enters your mind,
ask yourself,
"Where Did It Come From?"

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