

# Explore: Doing It Ourselves?

People of all ages like to do things by themselves. Many people believe that they are the source of all the good things they do. Engage the students in a discussion to explore the difference between thinking that everything comes from ourselves and thinking that everything comes from the Lord.



### ***Supplies Needed for Each Student***

- copy of *Doing It Ourselves?* (see following pages)

### ***Activity***

1. Read *Doing It Ourselves?* aloud with the students and discuss the questions on the second page.

# Doing It Ourselves?

When children learn to do things by themselves they sometimes become upset if they are offered help. They might say, “Do it myself!” or “Go away!”. Older people like to do things by themselves too.

Many people think that they are the source of the good things they do—from kind acts for others to getting to heaven. What is wrong with this picture?

## *Doing things ourselves versus being in the Vine:*

The teachings of the New Church explain that people who act from the Lord have minds that are really quite different from people who believe that everything they do comes from themselves. When seen from heaven, the minds of people who act from the Lord look like beautiful gardens—watered by the Lord’s truth and in full bloom. From heaven, selfish minds look like deserts. Deserts are dry because water (truth) is scarce. Desert plants are dry and shrunken.

## *Read the following statements from the Heavenly Doctrine for the New Church:*

When a person repents, evil is removed and good is implanted. Before repentance good deeds are not done from the Lord, but from the person. Therefore the deeds do not have an essence of good but an essence of evil within them, even though they appear outwardly good. This is not recognized in the world, but it is after death. It can be heard in the tone of a person’s speech whether there is deceit, envy, hypocrisy, or even a desire for reward.

After repentance however goodness is quite different. It is a full good, open from the Lord Himself. It is lovely, innocent, pleasing, heavenly. There is the Lord and heaven in it, there is good itself in it. It is alive; it is formed out of truths though being from good, in good, and towards good. It is nothing else but some use to the neighbor; and hence it is serving. With every breath it puts away itself and its proprium, thus putting away evil. Its form is like the form of a lovely and beautifully colored flower, shining out brilliantly under the sun’s rays (see *Charity* 207).

Charity actually changes its nature depending on the belief to which it is attached or linked (*True Christian Religion* 450).

A person is like a garden when charity and faith in the Lord are linked in him. But when these are not linked, a person resembles a desert (see *Last Judgment* 39:13).

*Discuss the following questions:*

1. Can people do anything by their own power?
2. How does the Lord fit into what we do?
3. Why is it important to acknowledge the Lord?
4. What does it mean to be “in the Lord” (the Vine)?
5. What do these statements say about people who believe that the Lord saves them and makes them heavenly?
6. What do these statements say about people who believe that they are responsible for everything good they do?