Explore:
Letting Love Lead

At a Glance:
Students will read selections from the Heavenly Doctrine describing the appearance of angels and devils and draw a cartoon depicting their spiritual qualities.



Teacher Background:

After years of separation Jacob and Esau are finally reunited. The brothers represent two parts of the human mind—the power of reason and the desire to act.

At the start of life a person tends to think about and love himself. To become heavenly a person must learn true ideas from the Word and then consciously live according to them. As these ideas are willingly put into action the person is in the process of being regenerated or made new by the Lord. They Lord will gradually give the person new motivations that re-structure his or her thinking.

After death people appear to others as a form of what they love. People who love the Lord and others appear in the beautiful form of the marriage of goodness and truth and become angels. People who love themselves and worldly possessions appear in the ugly form of the marriage between selfishness and false thinking.

Supplies Needed for Each Student:
- blank paper
- pen or pencil
- *Angels and Devils* page
- one copy of sample drawings page to show the class

Directions:
1. Read each of the following statements. Ask students to tell you whether each statement is true or false.
   - When we are alive in the natural world we do not necessarily act the way we think. (T)
   - After death, once we go to heaven or hell we will not necessarily act the way we think. (F)
   - After death we will only act the way we think. (T, once a person has left his first state of mind in the life after death—in the world of spirits)
   - After death others will know whether we really believe what we are saying. (T)

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continued

2. Today's story about Esau and Jacob pictures a time in our lives when what we believe is truly and honestly reflected in how we act.



3. This story follows a period in Jacob's life when he worked hard for Laban and became a wealthy man. This is similar to the work it takes to learn and live according to what the Lord teaches in His Word. The spiritual "wealth" we gain from this conscious obedience allows the Lord to form a new mental framework in our minds. As we delight in the truth and put it into action in our life, our new will develops and grows. From this new will the Lord gives us a "new understanding." People who choose this path become angels after death.

4. People who choose not to open their minds to higher spiritual thoughts remain in worldly and false ways of thinking. If false thinking goes hand in hand with selfishness or a love for worldly possessions a person is choosing a path that leads to a life in hell after death.

5. Hand out *Angels and Devils* student page. These passages from the Heavenly Doctrine describe the power and beauty of angels and the poverty and distortion of the selfishness of devils.

6. Read the passages. Choose whether you wish to focus on the qualities of angels or devils. Draw a cartoon to illustrate these qualities. Some cartoon examples are included for you to look at.

7. Encourage students to discuss their work and share it with others.

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The Form of Angels and Devils

We read that human beings were created in the image of God, according to His likeness (Genesis 1:26-27)….A likeness and image of God is clearly apparent in angels, for love shines from within in their faces, and wisdom in their beauty, beauty being the outward expression of their love (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 358).

For a person to be in the form of heaven he must be taught the laws of Divine order from the Word. To the extent that a person knows and lives according to these because it is the Lord's will, his internal person is opened and the order of heaven is formed there. When the Lord forms a person anew (regenerates him), He arranges all things in him in accordance with order or into the form of heaven (see *Heaven and Hell* 202).

Angels are given clothes according to their intelligence or the Divine truth they have received from the Lord. The garments of some angels blaze as if with flame and those of others glisten as if with light. Some have garments that are a radiant white and others have garments of various colors (see *Heaven and Hell* 179).

One single angel is more powerful than ten thousands of spirits in hell—not from himself, but from the Lord. He has power from the Lord to the extent that he believes he can achieve nothing from himself. He is able to have such a belief in the measure that humility and a love for serving others exist in him, in other words, so far as he loves the Lord and behaves charitably to others (see *Arcana Coelestia* 3417).

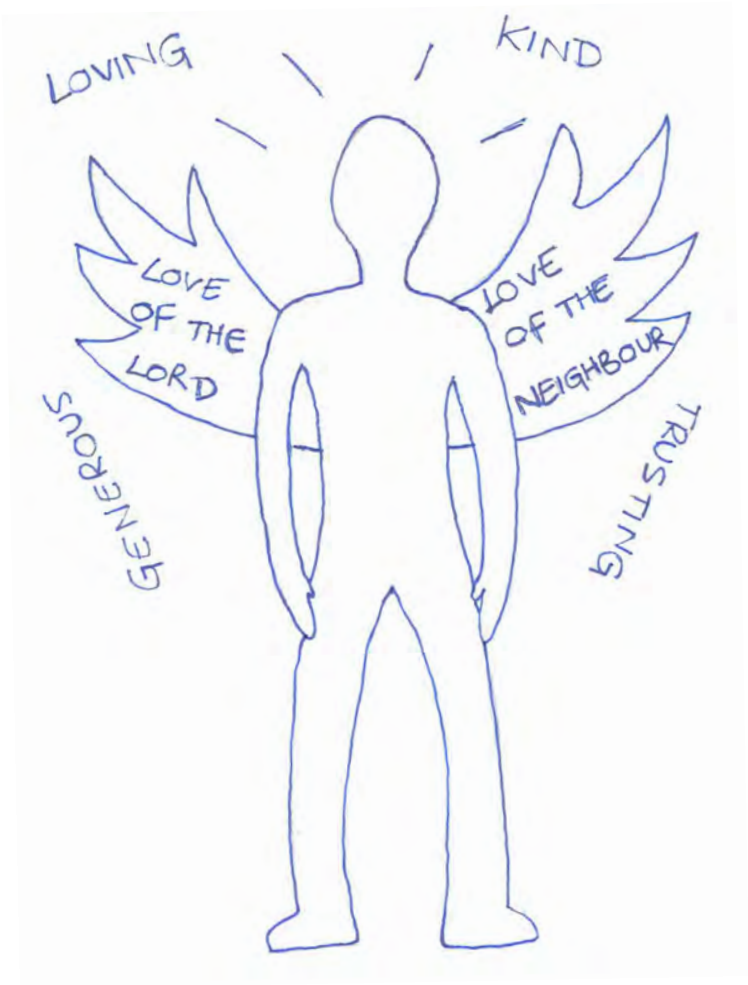
The love of self takes away from others and robs others of all delight, and directs it to itself, for it wishes well to itself alone. The love of the world wishes to possess what belongs to other people. These loves destroy or take away the delights of others and the joys of heaven (see *Heaven and Hell* 399).

People in hell, being the opposite of what is good and true, are horribly ugly, and in the light of heaven do not look like human beings but like monsters (*Arcana Coelestia* 5199).

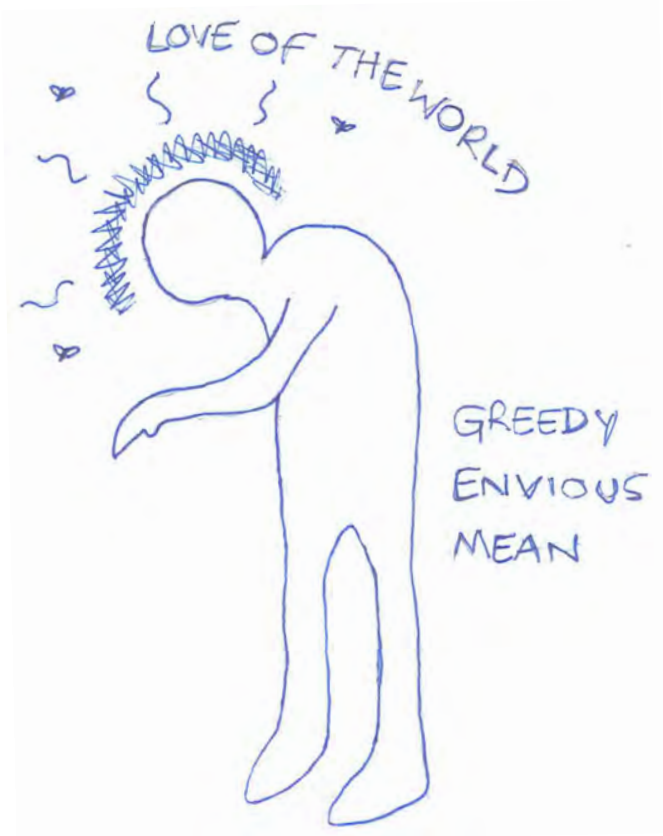
When love of the world forms the head, a person is merely hunchbacked; while if love of self forms the head, he is not like a man standing on his feet, but like one standing on the palms of his hands with his head down…but if the love of the world or of wealth forms the head, he appears from heaven with a pale face like that of a corpse, and a yellowish circle about the head. And if love of self, or of ruling over others, forms the head, he appears from heaven with a dusky-glowing face and a white circle about the head (*True Christian Religion* 507:2,3).

People are not aware that a spiritual sphere surrounds them. This sphere is determined by what they love. If a person is only interested in external things—from a perverse joy in hating others, revenge and cruelty, contempt for others, greed, deceit—the spiritual sphere which surrounds him stinks like the smell of dead bodies, refuse, and other things like this. Anyone who has been leading a life like this takes that sphere with him after death and lives in hell where such spheres belong (see *Arcana Coelestia* 4464:2).

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