Explore:
The Gateway to Heaven

At a Glance:
Jacob woke from his dream and announced "This is the gate of heaven." Students will explore the idea of gates and gateways by reading passages from the Word, and discussing and answering questions.



Supplies Needed for Each Student:
- copy of *The Gateway to Heaven*
- copy of *Gateway to Heaven Readings*
- pencils or pens

Directions:

1. Distribute pages to the students.
2. Start the activity by encouraging brainstorming about gateways. Gateways play a significant part in many cultures, e.g. triumphal archways, city gates. Many churches and commercial companies use the term gateway as part of their names. What is significant about a gateway?
3. Read the *Gateway to Heaven Readings* aloud together.
4. Discuss the answers to the questions as a group.

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The Gateway to Heaven



The *Gateway to Heaven Readings* page provides teachings from the Word to use as a reference when discussing the following questions.

1. Gateways provide access to many kinds of things. Brainstorm as many types of gateways as you can.

2. What do gates and gateways do?

3. The children of Israel marked entryways in their homes with the Ten Commandments to remind them of the law of the Lord as they went in and out of their homes. What protects the thoughts of our minds as they come and go through the doorway of our minds?

4. Jacob saw a stairway reaching to heaven with angels ascending and descending on it. This vision changed Jacob's outlook and he recognized that he was at the "gate of heaven." In what way is the Word the gate of heaven?

5. What does *standing* at the gate of heaven mean?

6. How do we *enter* the gate of heaven?

7. Why might the way to heaven seem narrow or difficult and the way to hell broad and easy?

8. Some spirits once saw the broad and narrow ways described in Matthew 7 in the life after death. As their spiritual eyes were opened they saw new things. In what ways can knowing the truth open our eyes to see different things?

9. While Jacob rested his head on a stone he had a vision of a ladder rising to heaven. The book of Revelation offers a new heavenly vision for the New Church: a holy city descending from heaven with gates that are always open set on a foundation of precious stones. Compare these visions. Look for similarities and differences. In what ways might this point to a new faith in the New Church?

10. When Nathanael became a disciple the Lord promised him that he would "see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man" (John 1:51). In what way can this be a reality in our own lives?

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The Gateway to Heaven TEACHER COPY

1. Gateways provide access to many kinds of things. Brainstorm as many types of gateways as you can. The following examples may help to get the students thinking. Encourage them to tell you instead of reading the list to them.

   physical doors, gates or entryways
   knowledge is a gateway to new awareness
   an education is a gateway to a career
   breaking a bad habit is a gateway for a new start
   new experiences are a gateway to knowledge
   a job application can be a gateway to a new job
   there are gateways on the internet

2. What do gates and gateways do? give access, protection, a sense of security, connect two different things or states, etc.

3. The children of Israel marked entryways in their homes with the Ten Commandments to remind them of the law of the Lord as they went in and out of their homes. What protects the thoughts of our minds as they come and go through the doorway of our minds? conscience, true ideas from the Word

4. Jacob saw a stairway reaching to heaven with angels ascending and descending on it. This vision changed Jacob's outlook and he recognized that he was at the "gate of heaven." In what way is the Word the gate of heaven? it is where earthly ideas expressed in natural language meet heavenly ideas; it is where we meet God

5. What does *standing* at the gate of heaven mean? knowing true ideas but not yet acting on them

6. How do we *enter* the gate of heaven? by putting true (heavenly) ideas into action; making God part of our lives

7. Why might the way to heaven seem narrow or difficult and the way to hell broad and easy? it can feel difficult to put our own desires aside for the sake of what is right

8. Some spirits once saw the broad and narrow ways described in Matthew 7 in the life after death. As their spiritual eyes were opened they saw new things. In what ways can knowing the truth open our eyes to see different things? it enables us to distinguish between good and evil

9. While Jacob rested his head on a stone he had a vision of a ladder rising to heaven. The book of Revelation offers a new heavenly vision for the New Church: a holy city descending from heaven with gates that are always open set on a foundation of precious stones. Compare these visions. Look for similarities and differences. In what ways might this point to a new faith in the New Church? the gates to the holy city are always open; Jacob's ladder was seen at night, the holy city is always light; Jacob's rested his head on a rock, the holy city has gemstones at its foundation

10. When Nathanael became a disciple the Lord promised him that he would "see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man" (John 1:51). In what way can this be a reality in our own lives?

Gateway to Heaven Readings

GATES

These words which I command you today shall be in your heart….You shall write them on the **doorposts** of your house and on your **gates**. (Deuteronomy 6:6-9)

The holy Jerusalem…had a great and high wall with twelve **gates**, and twelve angels at the gates…. (Revelation 21:10,12 parts)

JESUS SAID….

I am the **door** of the sheep. (John 10:7)

See, I have set before you an open **door**. (Revelation 3:8)

Behold, I stand at the **door** and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. (Revelation 3:19)

Enter by the narrow **gate**; for wide is the **gate** and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the **gate** and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. (Matthew 7:13,14)

When the disciple Nathanael declared his belief in Jesus, Jesus promised he would "see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man" (John 1:51).

FROM THE HEAVENLY DOCTRINE…

By means of the Word there is a communication between heaven and earth…the Word deals with goodness and truth, by which a person is enabled to live in eternal happiness (*True Christian Religion* 200).

When a person does what the truth teaches, truth enters his or her intentions, and from these his or her actions, and so the entire person. True ideas that are simply known facts are not part of a person's will or life since a person's will or intentions are his life. When a person is intent on truth it stands at the **gateway** into his life; and when he is both intent on it and practices it, that truth is present within the entire person. (see *Arcana Coelestia* 4884).

People who are being regenerated by the Lord ascend from the world into heaven. People are raised from outward things to inward ones, because they are raised from the level of the natural person, where outward things exist, to that of the spiritual person, where inward things exist. Moses represented this kind of ascent when he took on the representation of the outward holiness of the Word. For the outward holiness of the Word is the **gateway** to the state of good, and so to heaven (see *Arcana Coelestia* 9435).

Spiritual matters occupy the highest region in the human mind, like the soul in the body. They occupy that place because it is the **gateway** through which the Lord enters a person (*True Christian Religion* 482).

I once watched as the **broad road** and the **narrow road** mentioned in the Word were shown to some spirits. The broad road was planted with trees and flowers and looked beautiful. But various types of snakes which they did not see were hidden there. The narrow road had no trees or flowerbeds but looked sad and dreary. Yet along that road angel children were among lovely tree and flower gardens, which those spirits however did not see. At that point they were asked which road they wished to take. They said, The broad one. Suddenly their eyes were opened and they saw the serpents along the broad road, and the angels along the narrow one. They were then again asked which road they wished to take. They remained silent. As long as their sight was opened they said that they wished to take the narrow road; but as long as it was closed they said that they wished to take the broad one (see *Arcana Coelestia* 3477).

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