

Lesson 11: DIFFERENT PATHS
Arcana Coelestia 3477

READING:

Read aloud “*Where Does This Path Lead?*” by Vivienne Riley, based on *Arcana Coelestia 3477*. (This book is out of print, so we have enclosed the text of this story.)

DISCUSSION:

Compare walking on the broad and narrow paths to some situations in life, such as:

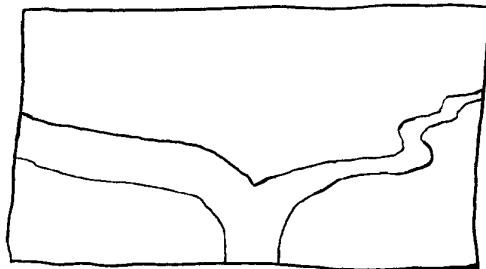
Making fun of people might look like great fun, just like the broad path looked pretty at first. But when you actually start walking down that path, which means actually making fun of people in your life, unpleasant things start to appear. You’ll find that eventually people can’t trust you, and can’t feel comfortable with you. You’ll end up making people angry, and even making enemies.

Being kind and tolerant of other people might look boring, just as the narrow path looked dull and gloomy at first. But when you start walking down that path, which means actually making an effort to be nice and patient with other people, and try to understand them and befriend them, beautiful things begin to appear. You’ll find that people can trust you and be comfortable with you. You’ll be known as someone who can make others feel good, and be a good friend.

PROJECT: Poster

Ahead of time:

You will need two white poster boards. Prepare one with a picture of two paths leading away -- one broad, and one narrow.



Supplies:

- prepared poster board and extra poster board
- scissors and Exacto knife
- glue
- colored pencils (or markers)
- white paper
- colored paper
- enclosed patterns for making flaps to glue onto the poster
- photocopy of the quote from *Arcana Coelestia 3477* (enclosed) for gluing on the poster

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Procedure:

Tell the children that their task will be to make flaps that open and reveal a picture underneath. When the flaps are closed, the poster will show what these paths looked like to spirits when their spiritual eyes were not opened properly. When the flaps are open, the poster will show what the paths looked like to spirits whose spiritual eyes *were* opened.

The broad path at first looked pretty, with lots of trees and flowers, but within were hidden ugly snakes and serpents. Using the patterns, cut out shapes of trees, bushes, and rocks from the extra white poster board. There will be a tab at either side of each shape. On the outside, use the colored pencils or cut out and glue from colored paper to make the trees and bushes look lush and beautiful, with pretty flowers. The rocks could have flowers growing in front of them. On the backside of the flaps, draw snakes and serpents, and color with dull, dreary colors.

The narrow path at first looked dreary and plain, but within were children playing, and beautiful flowers and colors. Using the patterns, cut out shapes of trees, bushes, and rocks from the extra white poster board. There will be a tab at either side of each shape. On the outside, color or decorate the shapes to look plain, dark, and dull. On the inside, make children playing, maybe climbing or swinging from the tree and having other kinds of fun. Color with bright, happy colors, and make lots of flowers and butterflies.

As the flaps are finished, you'll want to place them onto the poster picture, alongside of the appropriate path. To attach each flap, put glue onto the backside of one of the tabs, and press it onto the picture. You'll want to position each flap so that when it's opened, its position will still make sense in the picture. When it is dry enough to stay put, cut a slit with the exacto knife where the other tab can slip into. After this is done, you'll have a picture with flaps which, when their tabs are tucked into the slits, show how each path looked at first. When the flaps are opened, the picture will show how the paths looked when the people's spiritual eyes were opened.

To Finish Up:

- Glue the enclosed quote from *Arcana Coelestia* 3477 somewhere onto the poster.
- Fill in between the flaps with grass, sky, or whatever else you think might make it look more finished.

Extra Ideas:

- Make a title of large letters that says: "DIFFERENT PATHS"
- Use cutout pictures from magazines to decorate inside and outside the flaps, and the rest of the poster.
- Display the poster at church, or some other place that it can be enjoyed.

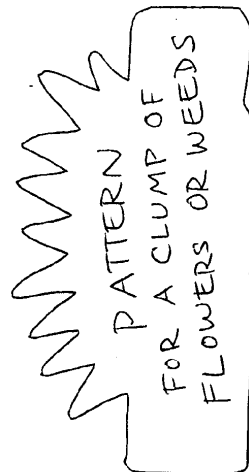
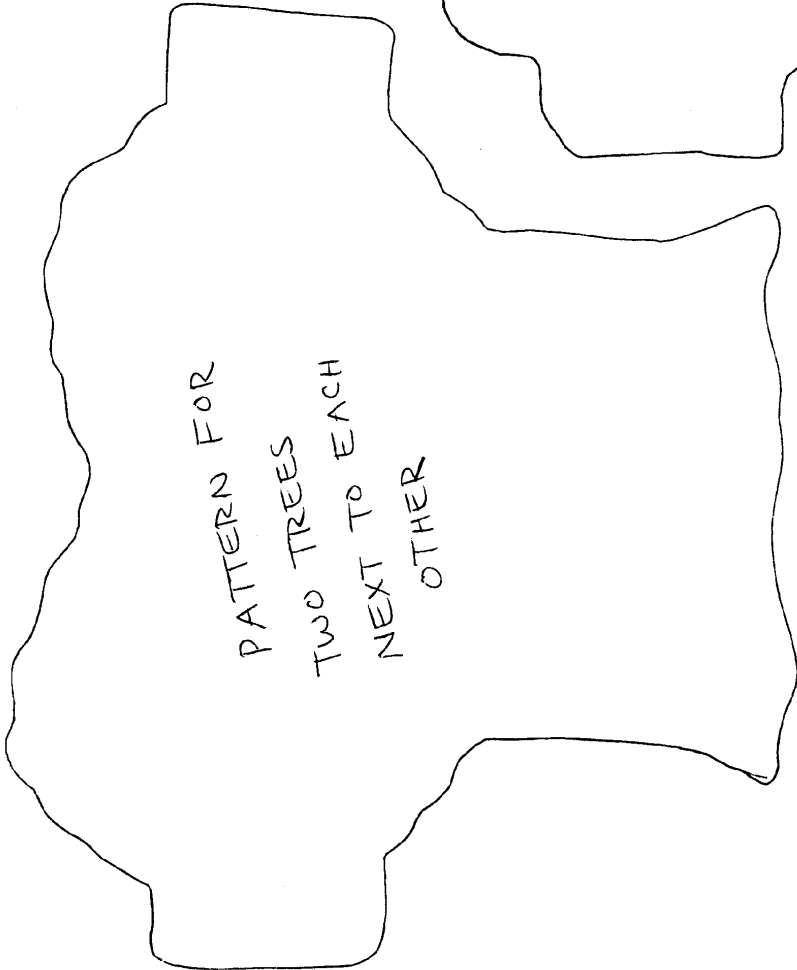
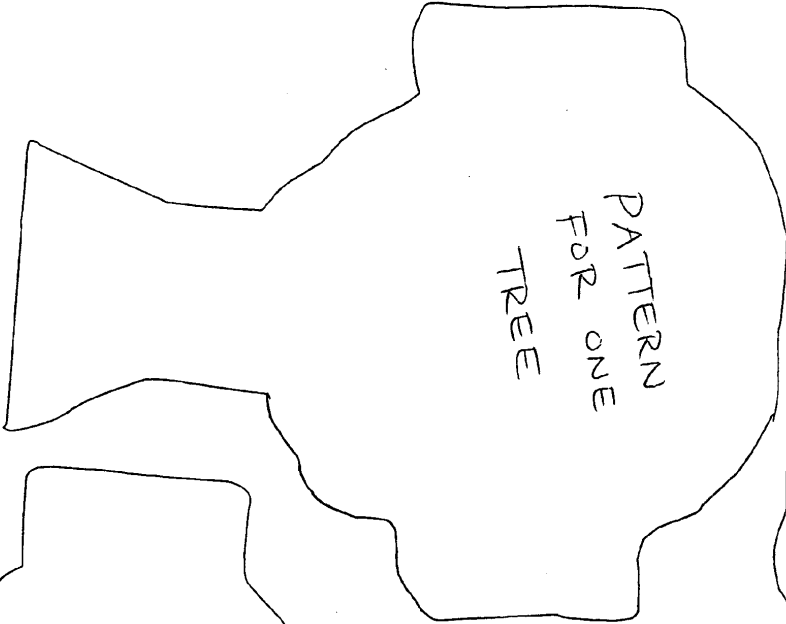
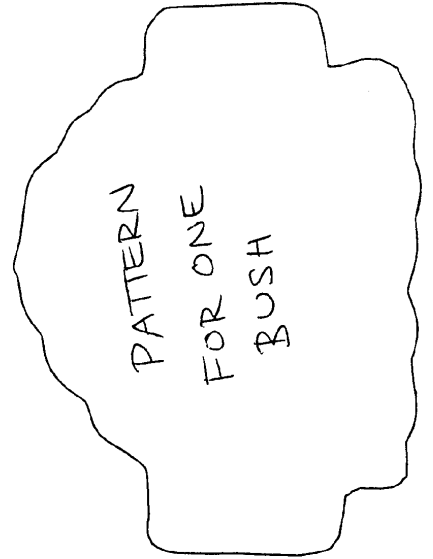
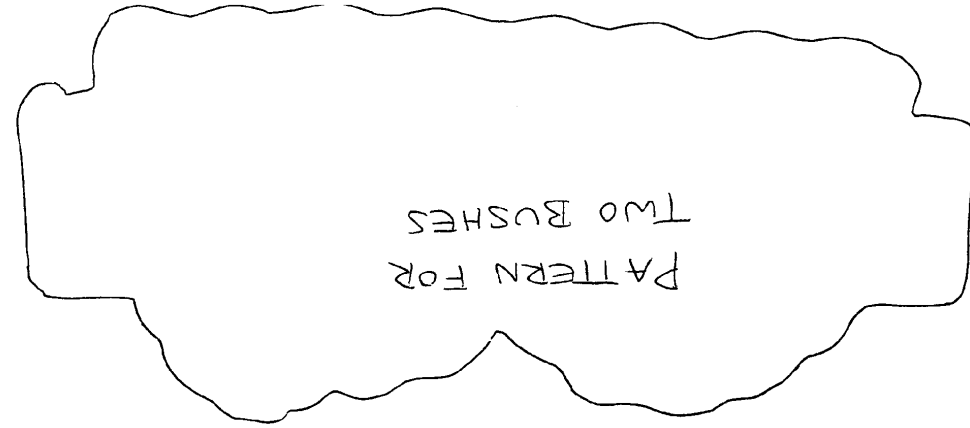
Text for Poster

(Photocopy this passage and then cut it out to glue onto the poster.)

DIFFERENT PATHS

There were represented before certain spirits...a broad way and a narrow way such as are described in the Word; a broad way which led to hell, and a narrow way which led to heaven. The broad way was planted with trees, flowers, and the like that in outward form appeared beautiful and delightful, but unseen snakes and serpents of various kinds were hidden there. The narrow way did not seem to be so much adorned with trees and flowers, but appeared sad and dark; and yet there were in it angel infants most beautifully adorned, in delightful paradises and flower gardens, which the spirits did not see. They were then asked which way they wished to go. They said, "The broad way," when suddenly their eyes were opened, and in the broad way they saw the serpents, but in the narrow way the angels. They were then again asked which way they wished to go, whereupon they remained silent and so far as their sight was opened, they said that they wished to go the narrow way; and so far as their sight was closed, that they wished to go the broad way.

Project Patterns



Where Does This Path Lead?

Based on *Arcana Coelestia* 3477

Retold by Vivienne Riley

“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)

Long ago, a man named Emanuel Swedenborg was called by the Lord to do a very special job. The Lord wanted Swedenborg to learn beautiful truths from heaven and to write them down so that other people could also learn about them. While Swedenborg was learning, the Lord often opened his spiritual eyes so that he could see into the spiritual world and visit there. This story is about something which happened during one of his visits.

Swedenborg once watched some spirits in the spiritual world. Spirits are people from this world who have died and passed into the spiritual world, but who have not yet gone to heaven or to hell. The spirits were shown two paths. One path was very wide and the other was very narrow. As you will soon see, these two paths were very different.

The spirits looked at the wide or broad path. It seemed very beautiful. There were trees and lots of bright flowers planted along its sides. It looked so wonderful and so easy to walk along that everyone wanted to follow it. But Swedenborg did not want to follow it. Do you know why?

There was something about this beautiful path which the spirits could not see but which Swedenborg could see. Hidden amongst the beautiful flowers and trees were ugly snakes and serpents. With his spiritual eyes opened, Swedenborg could see them.

Then the spirits looked at the narrow path. It did not seem as pretty as the broad path. It was dark and looked rather sad. In fact, it really didn't look friendly at all. It looked like a lonely and scary path to follow. But once again, there was something the spirits could not see just by looking. What do you think was hidden in those dark shadows?

There were little angel children, wearing beautiful clothes and smiling happily! They were sitting in lovely gardens where the flowers were brighter than the ones which grew along the broad path! This is what Swedenborg saw, and it probably made him feel very glad.

You might want to know why the spirits with Swedenborg could not see the things hiding in the paths. Their spiritual eyes weren't properly opened like Swedenborg's were. It was as if they could not see clearly. They could only see what was right in front of them. They looked

Where Does This Path Lead?

for the easiest way. So when they were asked to choose between the two paths, they chose to follow the broad path, which looked so pretty. What do you think happened next?

After the spirits made their choice, the Lord suddenly opened their spiritual eyes so that they could see more clearly. Along the broad path, they no longer saw flowers and trees. Now they saw the mean serpents. And along the narrow path they saw the beautiful angel children.

Then the spirits were again asked which way they wanted to go. At first they didn't say anything. But the more their eyes were opened, the more they said they wanted to follow the narrow way. And the more their eyes were closed, the more they said they wanted the broad way.

Now what do you think this story means? You might have guessed that the broad path led to hell. In fact, the ugly snakes and serpents were from hell. The hells like to hide behind beautiful things so that they can try to trick you into following them. The narrow path led to heaven. And the angel children in the narrow path were from heaven. They are pretty but you can't see them unless you really want to.

It can be easy to find the way to heaven, even though, like the spirits, our spiritual eyes are closed. The first step is deciding to follow the Lord. Then we should try every day to choose to do what we know is right, even if it sometimes seems to be the hard way. If we try hard and pray to the Lord, He will help us. The Lord wants us to be happy. So if we try to listen to Him and follow Him, He will let us see the way to heaven more and more clearly. Then one day our own spiritual eyes will be opened and we ourselves will see heaven.

Here is a prayer we can say,

O Lord, we are Your children. Please help us to follow the narrow path which will lead us to heaven. Help us to choose to do what's right so that Your angels will surround us and guard us against evil. Thank You for making heaven a beautiful place where we can go to be with You forever. Amen.

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