

General Church Education



Emanuel Swedenborg

Deuteronomy 29:29

Lesson 24

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 2: The Lord Is Our Shepherd

For ages 7-8 years

Emanuel Swedenborg

Deuteronomy 29:29

Ideas for Parents & Teachers

During his life Swedenborg learned so many things that he is often called one of the most brilliant people who ever lived. His accomplishments were amazing. He studied physics and mathematics, navigation, astronomy, geology, mining, crystals and many other things. He especially studied human anatomy. During the time Swedenborg was studying and writing about things in this world, he was also serving as a member of the Swedish government and earned recognition from the king of Sweden.

All this learning was preparation for the most important work of Swedenborg's life. Emanuel Swedenborg was truly a servant of the Lord. From childhood he was always studying the Word. In his adult life Swedenborg served the Lord by receiving the truths of the Heavenly Doctrine of the New Jerusalem in his mind, writing them down, and publishing them. This tremendous task lasted through the last twenty-seven years of Swedenborg's life. He had no typewriter or computer but wrote with a quill pen, made from a goose feather, sharpened with a knife. Swedenborg gave up his own goals in life and turned his life completely over to the Lord for this great work.

Ideas for Children

- The stories of the Old and New Testaments contain hidden messages or an internal sense.
- The Lord wants everyone to come into heaven and provides the truth needed.
- There is a natural world and a spiritual world. People have natural bodies and spiritual bodies.
- Emanuel Swedenborg, servant of the Lord, was conscious of both worlds at the same time in order to accomplish a most important task for the Lord—His second coming.

From the Writings

Of the Lord's Divine mercy it has been granted me now for some years to be constantly and uninterruptedly in company with spirits and angels, hearing them speak and in turn speaking with them. In this way it has been given me to hear and see wonderful things in the other life which have never before come to the knowledge of any person. *Arcana Coelestia* 5

It should be recognized that I have not used the eyes of my body to see those I have spoken to in the next life, but the eyes of my spirit. I have seen them as clearly, and sometimes more clearly, than with my bodily eyes, for in the Lord's Divine mercy the sensory powers of my spirit have been opened. *Arcana Coelestia* 4622

I am well aware that many will say that no one can possibly speak with spirits and angels so long as he lives in the body; and many will say that it is all fancy, others that I relate such things in order to gain credence, others will make other objections. But by all this I am not deterred, for I have seen, I have heard, I have felt. *Arcana Coelestia* 68

Emanuel Swedenborg

Let's think about our eyes for a moment. What do your eyes do for you? How would you walk across the room without bumping into things if you did not use your eyes? Our eyes help us see people, animals, colors, and read books. Our eyes are very important to us, aren't they? Do you know you also have spiritual eyes? With our spiritual eyes we can see the wonders of heaven. Sometimes, if there is a good reason for it, people's spiritual eyes are opened by the Lord while they live on earth. For example, do you remember people in the Christmas story who had their spiritual eyes opened to see angels? (Mary, Joseph, the shepherds and Zacharias.)

Amazing Spiritual Eyes

Our story today is about a man whose spiritual eyes were opened when the Lord had an important job for him to do. This man's name was Emanuel Swedenborg. He wrote many books for the Lord which are called "The Writings" or "The Heavenly Doctrine." Through these Writings, the Lord told people the truths that are hidden in the Old and New Testaments.



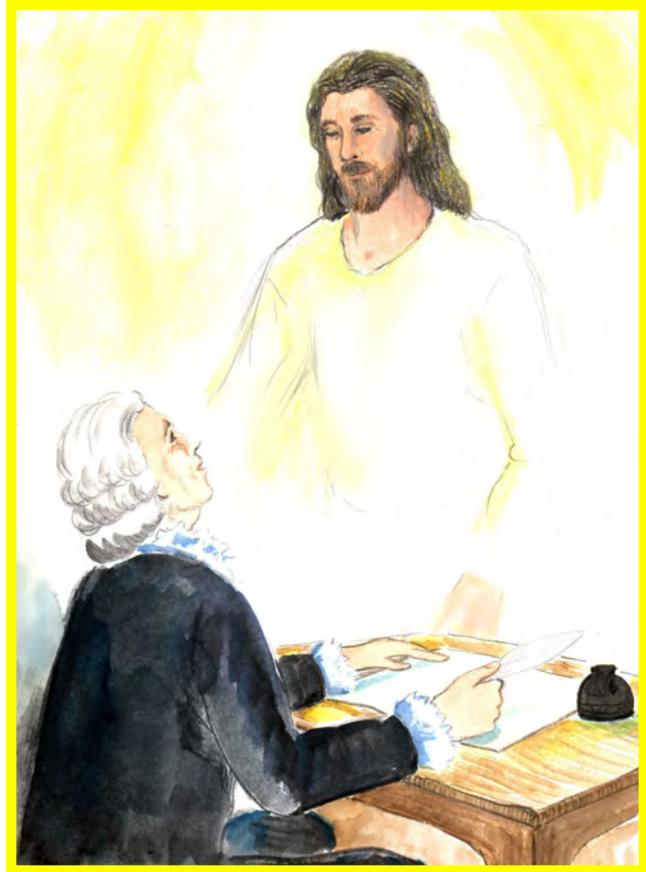
Emanuel Swedenborg was born over three hundred years ago on January 29, 1688 in Stockholm, Sweden. "Emanuel" means "God-with-us." Emanuel grew up reading the Word. He believed in one God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he tried to live by the Ten Commandments. He was always interested in how things worked and what caused things to be the way they were. He was a very good student and his education prepared him to be a scientist. A scientist uses his eyes and looks carefully at things. Swedenborg was a good observer and investigator. In his adult life he became a great and well-known scientist.

Swedenborg was also a philosopher. He was fascinated with ideas about the way we think and know things. He also served his country and was given honors by the king of Sweden. He was a kind, gentle man.

Swedenborg had made good use of his natural eyes but the Lord had even more important work for him to do. When Swedenborg was fifty-six years old, the Lord opened the eyes of his spirit.

For the next twenty-seven years, until his death, Swedenborg could see, hear and live in the spiritual world at the same time as he lived in this world. This was not always easy, and Swedenborg suffered hardships because of it. But he humbly and willingly served the Lord, writing down everything that the Lord showed him. Let's read from one of Swedenborg's books to learn why the Lord allowed this.

“It has pleased the Lord to show Himself to me, and to send me to teach those things which will belong to His New Church. For this purpose He has opened the interiors of my mind or spirit, whereby I have been permitted to be in the spiritual world with angels, and at the same time in the natural world with people, and this now during twenty-seven years.” *True Christian Religion* 851



Who in the Christian world could have known anything about heaven and hell, if the Lord had not opened the sight of someone's spirit, to show and teach him? What did the Lord want Swedenborg to learn about? (Heaven and hell and other things “that belong to His New Church.”)

The Lord Himself appeared to Swedenborg and told him to write down what he saw in the spiritual world so that people on earth would know about life after death. You see, when Swedenborg lived, people had forgotten or confused the teachings the Lord gave when He came on earth. Some doubted there was any life after this one. So the Lord came again, a second time, through the Writings, to tell people how to live the kind of life that leads to heaven. The Lord wants everyone to know these things so that they can be happy forever.

Read John 16:13. What things did the Lord say the Spirit of Truth would tell? (The Spirit of Truth would tell about things to come.) The Spirit of Truth is another name for the Lord.

The Lord told Swedenborg what to write. For the rest of his life Swedenborg saw and wrote about the spiritual world so that everyone could know about “things to come.” As the eyes of his spirit were opened, he saw the wonders of heaven and also the sad sight of those in hell. The Lord wanted people to know that life is eternal and how to live a life that leads to heaven.

While Swedenborg was seeing marvelous sights in the spiritual world, he was also carefully reading the Old and New Testaments. The Lord guided him to understand the wonderful truths that are hidden there. The time had come for the Lord to reveal what was hidden in the stories of the Word. Let's find out why the Lord wanted the hidden things to be revealed.

Read Deuteronomy 29:29. Why were secret things revealed? (So people could understand and follow the Lord's laws.)

Just as the Lord revealed the meaning of parables, He showed Swedenborg the hidden messages or "internal sense" of many parts of the Word. The whole Word is like a parable with hidden messages about important spiritual things. The Lord revealed these things to Swedenborg when people on earth were able to learn the new truth. The Lord came on earth a second time as the Spirit of Truth in the truths He revealed to Swedenborg. Now people could understand the deeper heavenly teachings of the Lord. This was the beginning of the New Church.

A Hidden Treasure

Before you can read you need to learn the alphabet and know the meaning of words. If you see words on a page but cannot read, it is like having a locked box and not knowing whether it contains precious stones or something harmful. But we can only truly understand something when we are ready. You can understand more things as you grow older.

The Lord provides the world with the truths we need when He knows that people are ready to use them. He knew that people on earth were ready to learn the hidden messages stored up in the stories of the Word and so He told Swedenborg to write the books that contain these heavenly secrets. In these wonderful truths we will find the Lord God Jesus Christ speaking to each of us. We can be very thankful that Emanuel Swedenborg was such a good and faithful servant.

Discussion Questions

- What is the difference between the first and second coming of the Lord? (The Lord came first as a Baby and grew up and taught people while He was on earth. He came the second time through the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.)
- The Word looks like any other book, but can you remember in what ways it is different from all other books? (The Lord gave us the Word, while other books are written by people only. The stories of the Word have hidden messages about heaven in them.)
- How do you think Swedenborg's preparation in early life was important for the work he would do at the end of his life? (Swedenborg was a trained scientist who wanted to look at things and observe how they worked. He was a good man who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.)
- What do you think it would be like to have your spiritual eyes opened?

Activity Overview | Emanuel Swedenborg

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

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

Songs

Teach Us O God to Listen to Your Word

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-teach-us-o-god-to-listen-to-your-word/>

Activities

Choose one or two.

- Activity 1 | Observe Like a Scientist
- Activity 2 | Make Heavenly Flowers
- Picture to color

Additional Activity Ideas

- Swedenborg invented many useful things when he worked as a scientist. He wrote down many of his ideas in journals. Use your imagination and invent a new machine, or a new way to travel, etc. Write or draw about your invention.

Activity 1 | Observe Like a Scientist

Swedenborg practiced observing things he saw in the natural world. After his spiritual eyes were opened he was able to observe many wonderful things in the spiritual world as well. Practice observing like Mr. Swedenborg. Choose one experiment to see what happens!

Eggshell Geodes

Watch crystals form in eggshells as water evaporates from salt solutions.

Materials

clean eggshells
1-2 water (and a way to heat it to boiling)
salt (table or rock) or Borax
small heat proof container (such as a coffee cup)
spoon
food coloring
egg cartons and wax paper or mini muffin tins

Directions

1. Crack eggs as close to the narrow end as possible. Clean the eggshells out using hot water. Remove *all* the membrane. (Membrane left in the shell may cause mold to grow, turning the crystals black.)
2. Put clean eggshells into an egg carton lined with wax paper or mini muffin tins to hold the eggs upright.
3. Heat the water to boiling in a saucepan.
4. Pour $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of water into your heatproof container. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of salt or Borax to the hot water and stir until it dissolves. Once the salt is dissolved, *continue adding small amounts of salt until no more salt will dissolve and the water is super-saturated.*
5. Add food coloring.
6. Pour the solution into the eggshells, filling them as full as possible without causing them to overflow or tip.
7. Set the eggshells aside in a ventilated safe place while the water evaporates. Crystals will form inside the eggshells as the water evaporates over several days.
8. Observe what is happening as the crystals form. How long did it take for crystals to form?
9. Are all the crystals the same size, or are some larger than others?
10. Try putting one eggshell on a windowsill where there is more sun and evaporation is faster. Compare crystals that form faster with crystals that form more slowly. Are they the same or different?

Activity 1 | Observe Like a Scientist

Balloon Inflator

Watch a balloon inflate with carbon dioxide gas when baking soda and vinegar are combined in a bottle. Experiment to see if changing the ratios of vinegar and baking soda change the results!

Materials

small plastic water or soda bottle, empty

balloon

4 tablespoons vinegar

1 teaspoon baking powder

teaspoon

optional: funnel with narrow spout for putting the baking soda into the balloon

} *increase quantities for a larger bottle*

Directions

1. Pour the vinegar into the empty bottle and set aside.
2. Put the baking soda into the balloon using a spoon or funnel.
3. Stretch the balloon over the mouth of the bottle being careful to keep the baking soda in the balloon clamped off with a finger and thumb.
4. When you are ready, release the baking soda from the balloon into the bottle.
5. Observe what happens when the baking soda and vinegar mix.
6. Since this experiment works quickly, try doing it again with different ratios of vinegar to baking soda. Does having more or less vinegar make a difference to the experiment? Does having more or less baking soda make a difference to the experiment?

Activity 2 | Make Heavenly Flowers

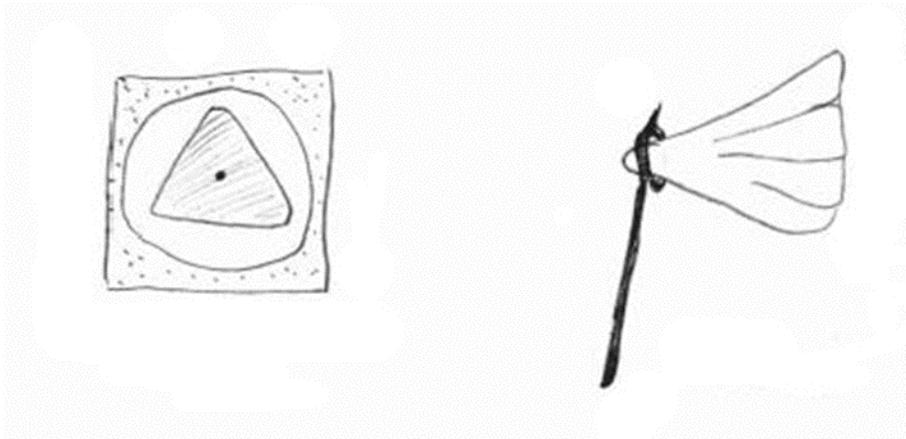
When the Lord opened Swedenborg's spiritual eyes he saw that heaven is a beautiful peaceful place and that it is always springtime there. Make "heavenly" flowers to decorate your home, reminding you of the wonderful flowers Swedenborg saw in heaven.

Materials

several colors of tissue paper
pipe cleaners (green, if possible)
scissors

Directions

1. Cut out pieces of tissue paper in a variety of shapes, such as 6"x6" (15x15cm) squares, 4" or 6" (10 or 15cm) ovals, triangles or random shapes.
2. Layer two or three different colors and shapes of tissue paper together and place in the palm of one hand. With the other hand, use your finger to make a center for the flower and close the bottom hand around it, folding the tissue paper up to make a flower shape.
3. Tie the layers together with the pipe cleaner, which will be the stem of the flower.
4. Make more flowers to form a bouquet or attach them together to create a garland.



Layers

Side view

