

General Church Education



New Church Day: The Holy City Descending

Revelation 21:10-23

Lesson 36

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 2: The Lord Is Our Shepherd

For ages 7-8 years

New Church Day: The Holy City Descending

Revelation 21:10-23

Ideas for Parents & Teachers

John's final vision gives us a beautiful picture of heaven and the ideal for our church, the Church of the New Jerusalem. Children love to listen to the descriptions of this amazing city, and this can inspire their imaginations to develop a vision of the Holy City in their minds where the Lord can dwell. The internal sense of this story reveals that the essential quality of the New Church in heaven and on the earth is golden, that is, heavenly love—not just a natural kind of goodness, but a real internal love from the Lord. The city walls are made of jasper, which stands for truth from the letter of the Word when it is transparent or has the spiritual sense shining through. With the Lord's second coming, the internal sense now shines through the letter of the Word. It proclaims a profound message to all who want to understand the teachings of the Word in order to overcome self-centeredness in their lives, offer useful service to the neighbor, and worship the Lord God Jesus Christ.

Ideas for Children

- June 19th is the birthday of the New Church. It is celebrated as “New Church Day.”
- The Lord came a second time through the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.
- Through the Writings the Lord can lead us in special new ways.

From the Writings

The Lord has revealed to me [Emanuel Swedenborg] the spiritual sense of His Word, in which Divine truth is illuminated by its own light, and in this He is continually present. For it is through the spiritual sense and in no other way that He is present in the Word... It is clear from the following passages that the glory in which the Lord is to come (Matthew 24:30) means Divine truth in its own light, which contains the spiritual sense of the Word: In the beginning was the Word. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. He was the true light. And the Word was made flesh, and we saw His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father (John 1:1, 4, 9, 14). The glory of God will give light to the Holy Jerusalem, and the Lamb will be its lantern; and the nations who are saved will walk in its light (Revelation 21:23, 24).

The reason why the New Church is meant by the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven (Revelation 21) is that Jerusalem was the capital city in the land of Canaan. It was where the Lord was, and taught in its temple; and He afterwards there glorified His Human.

This New Church is the crown of all the churches which have up to now existed upon earth, because it will worship one visible God, in whom is the invisible God, as the soul is in the body.

There is a full description of what this church will be like in Revelation. This new church is described by the New Jerusalem and its wonders, and by its being the bride and wife of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7; 21:2, 9). *True Christian Religion* 780, 782, 787 and 790

New Church Day: The Holy City Descending

John's Last Vision

Our story for today is about heaven. Once more John was “in the spirit,” that is, his spiritual eyes were opened, and he saw another wonderful sight. Try to form a picture in your mind as you read about this vision.

Read Revelation 21:10-14. In this vision what was descending out of heaven from God? (A great city, the holy Jerusalem.) This city was glorious and bright, filled with light from the Lord.

What were the walls of the city like? (Great and high with twelve gates and an angel at each gate.) This city had strong walls because all in heaven are safely surrounded and supported by the Lord. The walls stand for the Word. Can you see how the Lord's Word protects and supports the angelic part of each one of us even while we live on earth? The twelve gates to the Holy City represent the many ways for good people to enter heaven. The gates of the city are always open because everyone who tries to live rightly is welcomed into heaven. Read on to find out the shape of the city and what it was made of.



Read Revelation 21:15-21. The angel had a gold reed and measured the city. What shape was the city? (A cube. The length, width and height were the same.)

Of what was the wall of the city made? (Jasper.)

Of what were the city and its streets made? (Pure gold, clear as glass.)

Of what were the foundations made? (Precious stones.)

Of what were the gates made? (Each gate was a pearl.)

The New Jerusalem is golden because gold stands for heavenly love. It is gold so pure that it is transparent like glass because the Lord shines through it into the life of the angels. All the angels are filled with the love and wisdom that shines forth from the

Lord. Everyone in heaven receives this light and so knows what is right. They enjoy being useful to the Lord and their neighbors.

In everything the angels do, they want to follow the Lord's commandments. That is why the foundations of the city are adorned with precious stones, picturing the beautiful truths that the angels have built their lives on.



Do you wonder why the measurements of the city are all equal distances? Just as a cube shape has all equal sides, so there is equal love and wisdom in the actions or deeds of the angels. The street where angels walk is also made of pure, clear gold. It forms a path of wise and loving words and deeds for the angels to follow. The next verses add another thought about heaven.

Read Revelation 21:22-23. Why were no temples seen in the city? (Because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.)

What was the source of light in the city? (The glory of God and the Lamb was its light.)

Do you remember we learned that “the Lamb” pictures the Lord? The wonderful bright light in heaven comes from Him. These verses are saying that no one in heaven has a divided mind. In other words, no one thinks one thing and does another. On earth people can worship in a temple or church where they learn what is right, but then they may not always live rightly. It takes time to change this but it must change before anyone can live in the Holy City which is heaven.

Now that you have a beautiful picture of the Holy City in your mind, can you see that this is where the joy of heaven is? There are no more bad feelings that come from just caring for ourselves. In fact, when we come to heaven, we won't want to put ourselves ahead of others anymore because we will have learned to be loving and wise!

The Church of the New Jerusalem

Our church is called the General Church of the New Jerusalem. It takes its name from this golden, heavenly city. The church is where people try to live heavenly lives like the angels. With His second coming, the Lord has given the New Jerusalem Church new truths to more fully understand the inner messages in the Word. We read that the Holy City New Jerusalem came

down from God. This tells us that we do not build the church ourselves. The church comes to us from the Lord as we learn from Him and follow Him.

We celebrate the birthday of the New Church on June 19th. That is the day when the Lord sent out His disciples into the whole spiritual world to tell everyone that the LORD GOD JESUS CHRIST REIGNS. The Lord did this on June 19th in 1770. The Lord reigns as the King of heaven. May He reign as King in your life as well.



Discussion Questions

- What do you think is the most spectacular thing about the Holy City New Jerusalem? (Answers may include that it is made of pure gold, filled with light from the Lord, is a place of peace and happiness.)
- Why do you think heaven is such a peaceful, happy place? (Answers may include ideas that the Lord is loved and obeyed there, that angels do not have divided minds anymore, that everyone is thoughtful and kind.)
- Why do you think there are gates on each side of the city? (So that people can come in from different directions. Each one follows the Lord's truth that they have learned in their own way.)

Activity Overview | New Church Day: The Holy City Descending

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. Revelation 21: 2-3

Song

Jerusalem the Golden

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-jerusalem-the-golden/>

Activities

Choose one or two.

- Activity 1 | Joyful Bride
- Activity 2 | Holy City Decoration
- Picture to color

Additional Activity Ideas

- Make a “Holy City” cake. Decorate with sugared almonds (pearls), and fruit flavored candies (gems). Enjoy the desert as part of your New Church Day celebration.
- Make a “Bride” cake. Bake a circular cake in a bowl to create a skirt-like height and fullness. Cut a hole in the middle of the cake and insert a plastic, burying the doll so that only the upper torso and head show above the cake. Decorate the cake with white frosting, silver balls, etc. Dress the doll’s torso with a white frosting top to match. Serve as part of your New Church Day celebration.
- Create a wedding bouquet from garden flowers.

Activity 1 | Joyful Bride

The Holy City New Jerusalem appeared “as a bride adorned for her husband.” Decorate a model of a beautiful and joyful bride.

Materials

stiff paper for printing

scissors

crayons, markers or colored pencils

tape

optional: large lace doily and glue to decorate the bride’s skirt

optional: glitter and glue to decorate the bride’s dress and crown

optional: small dried or artificial flowers to glue to the bride’s bouquet

Directions

1. Print the *Joyful Bride* page on stiff paper.
2. Color the bride and her bouquet.
3. Cut out the bride, including the tops of her shoulders, and her bouquet.
4. *Optional:* lay a lace doily over the bride’s skirt as a decoration and glue in place. Trim as needed.
5. *Optional:* decorate the bride’s crown and dress using glue and glitter.
6. Bend the skirt and tape the two straight edges together at the back, allowing the bride to stand.
7. Fold the bride’s hands down.
8. *Optional:* glue small dried or artificial flowers to the bouquet.
9. Tape the bouquet to the bride’s hands.
10. Display the bride as a New Church Day decoration.

Joyful Bride



Activity 2 | Holy City Decoration

Make a New Church Day decoration to display by itself, or to display in front of a candle to appear as if light is shining from within it.

Materials

Holy City page (*optional*: printed on yellow paper)

scissors

gold markers or crayons

optional: cotton balls or pillow stuffing as a decoration for the clouds

optional: candle (real or electronic) to put behind the decoration

Directions

1. Color the *Holy City* picture. Remember that the city is gold, and that the gates are pearls.
2. Cut out the picture.
3. Fold the flaps back along the dotted lines. Bend the decoration back so it can stand.
4. *Optional*: decorate the clouds with cotton balls or pillow stuffing.
5. *Optional*: place a real or electronic candle behind the decoration to make it shine!



