

General Church Education



Temples in Heaven

Matthew 21:12,13; Revelation 1:12-16; *Conjugal Love* 23-24

Lesson 25

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 3: The Lord Is Our Lawgiver

For ages 8-9 years

Temples in Heaven

Matthew 21:12,13; Revelation 1:12-16; *Conjugal Love* 23-24

For Parents and Teachers

Worship plays an important role in heaven as well as on earth. The use of external worship—praying, singing hymns, listening to the Word—is to stimulate internal worship, that is, love and a delightful perception of truth (*Arcana Coelestia* 1618). The Lord’s love is infinite and He desires to bring everyone to heaven. And yet we are free to worship and follow Him or not. The angels in heaven worship regularly and see deeper truths as they continue to learn more and more from the Word to eternity. This brings them ever greater happiness. The temples and tabernacles in heaven vary in appearance according to every angel’s reception of the Lord into their hearts, minds and lives. But the Word is always at the center in a place of worship because of the power of the Word to bond us to heaven and the Lord. More beautiful details can be found in *True Christian Religion* 387.

Ideas for Children

- There are temples in heaven for angels to worship the Lord.
- The Word is always in the center of the temples.
- Worshiping the Lord brings happiness to the angels and to us.

From the Writings

The existence of the real light that enlightens human minds and forms the understanding is not known in the world, even though people attribute vision and light to the understanding, and even though very many times in the Word the Lord is called the Light. Real light is what enlightens human minds, and Divine Truth radiating from the Lord as the Sun is that Light. *Arcana Coelestia* 10569

Angels declare that all their wisdom comes through the Word; for the light they enjoy depends upon how deep is their understanding of the Word. The light of heaven is Divine wisdom, which is visible to their eyes as light. In the temple where a copy of the Word is stored, the light is flame-like and brilliant, surpassing in intensity any light in heaven outside it. *True Christian Religion* 242

Temples in Heaven

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Words to Understand

temples, tabernacles, churches—different kinds of places to worship

sermon—a talk by a minister that explains part of the Word

pulpit—a raised platform from which a minister or priest preaches in church

cherubim—a winged heavenly being or angel

foundation—the base on which something rests

sanctuary—a particularly holy place within a church or temple

A House of Prayer

After wandering in the wilderness for forty years, the ancient Israelites settled in the land of Canaan. They built permanent homes, and eventually they built a permanent temple in Jerusalem. Its plan was similar to that of the tabernacle.

Many years later when Jesus entered the temple in Jerusalem, He exclaimed that the people had made the house of God a den of thieves because of all the buying and selling that was taking place in it. Read from Matthew to find out what Jesus said about the temple. **Read Matthew 21:12 and 13.**



What did Jesus say the temple should be? (“A house of prayer.”) Jesus was quoting Isaiah 56:7. In addition to praying, what else do people do in a temple or church? Think about the kinds of things you do when you go to church to worship the Lord. The minister reads from the Word and gives a talk. He often gives a longer talk to adults called a sermon. We have been taught by the Lord that we are to learn from His Word on the Sabbath. The people praise the Lord by singing songs of gratitude and joy. Compare this to the following descriptions of temples in heaven. **Read *Conjugal Love* 23-24 (parts following):**

“At dawn they heard a cry proclaiming, ‘Today is the Sabbath.’ They asked the angel, ‘What does this mean?’ The angel said it was a call to worship the Lord, proclaimed by the priests. ‘The worship takes place in our temples,’ he said.

‘It lasts about two hours. Come with me, if you like, and I will take you there.’ So they prepared, and went with the angel.

The temple was huge. It held three thousand people. It had a semi-circular shape with seats set in a curve, with the back seats higher than the front. The pulpit in front of the seats was a little back from the center.

The newcomers entered with their angel guide. The angel showed them where to sit, saying, ‘Everyone who comes into the temple knows his own place by instinct. He cannot sit anywhere else. If he sits elsewhere, he hears nothing and understands nothing. It would also disturb the order of things. The priest would not be inspired.’ Then a priest went up into the pulpit. He preached a sermon full of the spirit of wisdom. He spoke of the holiness of the Word. The Lord is present in the Word. He is with people in heaven and on earth through His Word. Then the priest said a prayer and came down.”



Did the house of worship sound similar to ones you have seen? Was there anything different about the service of worship? In most churches people sit in rows that go from front to back. This temple was semi-circular. In our churches people can sit where they like. In this heavenly temple all the angels recognized their own place by an inner knowing and sit there every time. In fact, we are told that if a person sits somewhere else, he will be confused about what he is hearing. In fact, it will disturb everything and the priest will not know what to say.

Another Temple in Heaven

There is another heavenly temple described in *Arcana Coelestia* 508. When Swedenborg saw it, he described the temple as “magnificent.” Try to picture it in your mind. The temple was built in a square shape with an arched roof that looked like a crown. Its walls were all windows made of crystal and its door was like a pearl. Inside was a pulpit with the open Word on it. A blaze of light surrounded the Word and brightened the whole area. In the center of the temple was a sanctuary with a veil before it. Behind the veil stood a golden cherub with a sword turning in all directions in his hand.

This radiant temple pictures how we are now able to understand the inner meaning of the Word. The beautiful light surrounding the Word pictures the truth that the Lord God Jesus

Christ is the one God of heaven and earth. Swedenborg saw this temple because he wanted to understand the Word. He was serving the Lord by writing down what he saw so that we could know these things too.

A Tabernacle in Heaven

Another time Swedenborg saw a tabernacle in heaven (*True Christian Religion* 187:3, 4). Although it looked simple, it was magnificent in the light of heaven. In heaven the greater our love for the Lord, the more beautiful our place of worship will be. Inside the temple, a foundation-stone was seen under the Word. Precious stones set in it spread a brilliant light on the walls with a glow of many beautiful colors. Pictures of cherubim were seen on its walls. When light came from another part of heaven, where the angels love the Lord above all, the temple vanished. In its place the Lord alone stood on the foundation-stone, which was the Word. He looked as He did when He appeared to John in the book of Revelation. **Read Revelation 1:12-16.**



What was the Lord's face like? (Like the sun shining in its strength.) What surrounded the Lord? (Seven golden lampstands.) This vision is full of light!

The Word Is Always in the Center of Worship

Did you notice what is the same in the temples of heaven? The Word was in each one. Although temples look different depending on who is looking at them, the Word is always in the center. Some angels see simple buildings, some grand ones. The highest angels see the Lord standing where the temple would be. They understand that the Lord is the church. The light that shines from the Word stands for the truth that shows the way to heaven. Walking in this light by keeping to the Lord's laws in our daily lives is the way for His light to shine in us every day.

Discussion Ideas

- People sometimes wonder how to act rightly. Encourage children to make a habit of asking what choices the Lord would have them make.
- Discuss ways to bring worship of the Lord into daily life.

Activity Overview | Temples in Heaven

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:19-21

Song

Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem!

Listen to or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-pray-for-the-peace-of-jerusalem/>

Projects

Choose one or two activities.

- Activity 1 | Compare Worship on Earth and in Heaven
- Activity 2 | True or False?
- Picture to Color—A Temple in Heaven (See *Conjugal Love* 23-24)

Additional Activity Ideas

- There are New Church congregations all over the world. Each church building is unique and was designed to be to meet the needs of the congregation. Some churches are older, and some are newer. Take a look at churches all over the world at <https://newchurch.org/about/>. Choose a region to see pictures on various congregational web-sites.
- Design church. What important things should be there? What will the space be used for? What furniture will be needed?
- Design a heavenly church. In what ways is it different from an earthly church?

Activity 1 | Compare Worship on Earth and in Heaven

Read the numbered sentences about worship services. Decide whether the sentence describes worship practices on earth, worship practices in heaven, or worship practices that are on earth and in heaven. Put the number of the sentence in the correct box. Some numbers will go in more than one box.

1. Worship on the Sabbath.
2. Sit wherever you want in church.
3. Sit in the same place every time because you know it is your own.
4. The priest is not inspired if people sit in a place that is not their own.
5. Sing songs for worship.
6. Pray during worship.
7. The house of worship looks the same to everyone.
8. The house of worship looks different according to the love in your heart.
9. Worship usually lasts less than one hour.
10. Worship lasts about two hours.
11. A minister preaches a sermon.
12. The Lord is present in His Word.

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| A. People on Earth |
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| B. Both People and Angels |
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|----------------------------|
| C. Angels in Heaven |
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Answers
A. 1,2,5,6,7,9,11,12
B. 1,5,6,11,12
C. 1,3,4,5,6,8,10,11,12

Activity 2 | True or False?

Read each statement. Decide whether the statement is true or false, and put a “T” for True or “F” for False on the line before each statement.

- ___ 1. The Word is seen in heaven.
- ___ 2. All the temples in heaven look the same.
- ___ 3. Temples, tabernacles, and churches are all places for worship.
- ___ 4. A “pulpit” is a peach seed.
- ___ 5. A “sanctuary” is a holy place inside a church or temple.
- ___ 6. The Sabbath is meant to be a day of worship and rest.
- ___ 7. The Lord wants everyone to go to heaven.
- ___ 8. We can learn about heaven on our own.
- ___ 9. The angels in heaven keep on learning forever.
- ___ 10. The Lord teaches us about heaven in His Word.

Answers:
1. T
2. F
3. T
4. F
5. T
6. T
7. T
8. F
9. T
10. T

