

General Church Education



# The Word in Heaven

*True Christian Religion 162*

## Lesson 30

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 4: The Lord Is the Hero

For ages 9-10

# The Word in Heaven

## *True Christian Religion 162*

### Teacher Background

Emanuel Swedenborg visited heaven. He spoke with angels and learned that their language may be written down. Writing in the celestial or highest heaven is similar to Hebrew. It consists of symbols in heavenly forms that curve and bend. There are no straight lines. It expresses the loves from which the angels' thoughts flow. Amazingly, angels do not need to be taught how to write, they simply know how to do it, just as they know how to speak. Writing in the spiritual and natural heavens is more like writing in our world, but people on earth cannot understand it because it has nothing in common with our languages. There are many books, and even libraries in heaven.

As with writing on earth, the purpose of writing in heaven is for the sake of the Word. Angels read the Word daily. Ministers use the Word to write their sermons. Swedenborg once saw the Word in heaven in a beautiful room with gold walls. The Word lay on a table, surrounded by gem stones in lovely patterns. The gems shone and made beautiful patterns on the wall. The patterns changed depending on who was seeing them. Evil spirits who do not love the Lord cannot safely touch the Word.

### Key Ideas

- Angels in heaven have a written Word.
- Children growing up in heaven read the Word every day.
- The Word appears beautiful to angels, but can be dangerous for evil spirits who do not love it.

### From the Writings

Angelic spirits entered a room, the walls of which shone as if made of gold, and there they saw a table on which was laid a copy of the Word, surrounded by precious stones in a heavenly pattern. The custodian angel said: 'When the Word is opened, a light shines out from it of indescribable brightness, and at the same time the precious stones give a rainbow effect above and around the Word. When an angel from the third heaven comes near, the rainbow appears above and around the Word on a red background; when an angel comes from the second heaven and looks at it, the rainbow appears on a blue background; when an angel from the lowest heaven comes and looks, the rainbow appears on a white background. When a good spirit comes and looks, there is a variegated effect of light like marble.' They were given a visual demonstration of these effects. The custodian went on to say: 'If anyone approaches who has falsified the Word, first of all the radiance disappears; and if he comes close and fixes his gaze on the Word, the surroundings change to the color of blood. Then he is warned to go away, as it is dangerous.' See *True Christian Religion 162*.

An angel in violet-colored clothing conducted me to a city. And we saw some people with laurels on their heads, some holding palms in their hands, some with books under their arms, and some with quills. We entered an octagonal palace on a hill. There were eight recesses inside. In each recess was a library. See *True Christian Religion 692*.

# The Word in Heaven

## True Christian Religion 162

### Vocabulary

**custodian**—a person who takes care of something

The Lord was born on our earth because writing exists here. Writing makes it possible for us to share our thoughts with other people, and to discover what others are thinking. Writing exists on earth for the sake of the Word because that is how the Lord speaks to us.

Did you know that there is also writing in heaven? Angels use words to communicate and can write down anything they are thinking. They do not have to think hard about what they want to say or how they should say it. Their thoughts flow out easily in their writing. Angels can say more in a few words than we can in several pages.

### Books in Heaven

There are many books in heaven. Some are kept in libraries and shelved by subject, like libraries here on earth. People who had recently arrived from the earth were amazed to see all the books

there (*True Christian Religion* 694). A group of people once went to a large hall to discuss what was happening on earth. The building they were in had eight nooks. Each nook had library shelves filled with books on different subjects (*True Christian Religion* 692).



### The Written Word in Heaven

The angels of heaven have a written Word, and read it just as people on earth read the Word. The Lord speaks with angels through the Word. They read the Word every day and hear it when they go to church. All their wisdom comes from the Word, and, as they do what it teaches, they become ever more perfect angels.

### Children and the Word

Like adults, children in heaven read the Word every day. Once, two girls

could not find their copy of the Word. The girls thought hard and finally remembered they had not read the Word for ten days. When they realized what had happened, they looked for the Word, and it appeared. After this they read the Word every day (*Spiritual Diary* 5618).

Some other girls growing up in heaven were given lovely clothes every day. Each girl kept her clothes in a closet. The girls also had gardens where beautiful flowers grew. If they saw spots on their clothes or their flowers withered, they knew they had said or done something unkind. But when they forgot to read the Word, the clothes in their closets disappeared, and their gardens completely vanished (*Spiritual Diary* 5666).



### **Rainbows Around the Word**

Each heavenly temple has a special place where the Word of the Lord lies open. It is filled with a brilliant, flaming light, much brighter than anywhere else in heaven.

Once Swedenborg saw the Word on a table in a room with shining gold walls. Precious stones lay all around the Word in heavenly patterns. When the Word was opened a light shone out. The light shone so brightly that Swedenborg could not find words to describe it. Rainbow patterns from the precious stones glowed on the gold walls. The rainbows appeared differently to angels from different parts of heaven. This was because everything we see around us in heaven is a picture of what we are like inside. Angels from the natural or lowest heaven saw rainbow colors on a white background. Angels from the spiritual or second heaven saw them on an blue background, and angels from the celestial or highest heaven saw the rainbow colors on a red background. Good spirits preparing for heaven saw the rainbow colors on a marbled background.

### **An Evil Spirit Touched the Word**

When a spirit who had used the Word to teach false ideas came near the Word, the rainbow vanished. It looked as if there was blood all around the Word. An angel warned him not to touch the Word, but he did not listen. When he touched the Word, fire and smoke burst from it, and there was a loud explosion. The man was thrown into a corner where he lay still. Angelic spirits were surprised by what happened, but the angel explained that the explosion had happened because of the way the spirit had treated the Word.

Read *True Christian Religion* 162 on page 2.

# Activity Overview | The Word in Heaven

## Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

In the beginning was the Word,  
And the Word was with God, and the word was God. John 1:1

## Projects

Choose one or two activities.

- A Heavenly Closet
- An Evil Spirit Touches the Word Moving Picture
- Picture to Color—The Word in Heaven

## Additional Activity Ideas

- For a project about The Word in Heaven shining like a sun or star, go to <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/project-the-word-in-heaven-shines-like-the-sun.pdf>.
- Learn who can see the beauty of the Word in the spiritual world through doing a project that is available at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/project-who-can-see-the-beauty-of-the-word.pdf>.

## Activity 1 | A Heavenly Closet

In heaven, Swedenborg saw some girls who were given beautiful clothes to wear every day. But when the girls forgot to read the Word, their clothes disappeared! When they read the Word again, the clothes would reappear in their closets. This makes sense when we know that clothes represent the truths of faith which we can gain from reading the Word (see *Arcana Coelestia* 5248). In this activity, students create a heavenly outfit that disappears and then reappears in a closet.

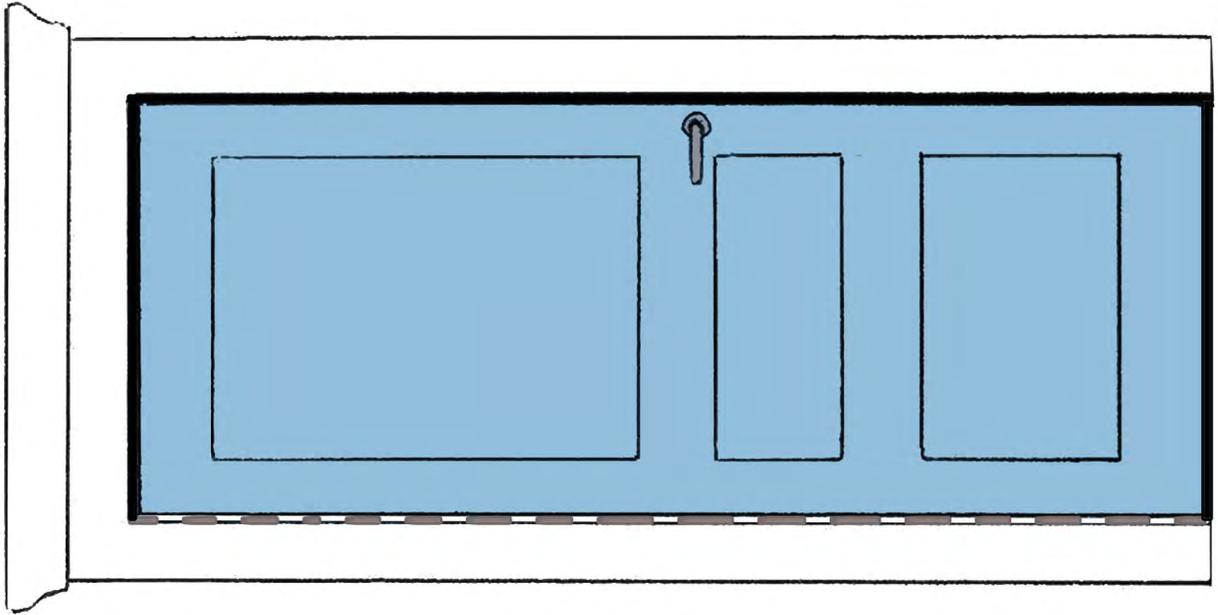


### Materials Needed

baking soda  
cotton buds (e.g. Q-tips)  
dark colored juice (e.g. grape, blueberry, etc.)  
paper cups, lids or saucers  
scissors  
tape  
copy of *A Heavenly Closet*  
*optional*: glitter, sequins, small stickers

### Directions

1. Cut the *Heavenly Closet* page in half along the black line in the middle of the page. Then cut three sides of the closet door so that it can be folded back to open as shown above.
2. Tape the two sides of the page together so that the bar with the hanger can be seen when the closet door is opened.
3. Mix equal parts baking soda and water together in small bowl. Dip a cotton bud in the mixture. Use the cotton bud to draw an outfit on the hanger in the closet. Draw something you think you would like to wear in heaven. It will be a bit hard to see.
4. Close the closet door and set the project aside for a few minutes to dry.
5. Open the closet door. Can you see your clothes? In a way, they have disappeared, just like clothes worn by children in heaven who forget to read the Word.
6. Dip a cotton bud into the dark juice and paint over the inside of the closet. The outfit you drew will reappear the way the clothes in heaven do when someone remembers to read the Word.
7. *Optional*: after the juice is dry, decorate your outfit with glitter, sequins, stickers, etc.



## Activity 2 | An Evil Spirit Touches the Word Moving Picture

Once when Swedenborg was in the spiritual world he saw the Word surrounded by precious stones. When angels looked at the Word they saw sparkling rainbows appear around it. The rainbows are like beautiful true thoughts in the angels' minds. Then Swedenborg saw an evil spirit come near the Word. His mind was full of false ideas. The beautiful rainbows vanished and red blood appeared around the Word. An angel warned the evil spirit not to touch the Word but he touched it anyway. The second he touched the Word, fire and smoke burst from it and there was a loud explosion. The evil spirit was thrown into a corner where he lay still. An angel explained to Swedenborg that the explosion happened because he treated the Word badly. Create a moving picture to illustrate this story.



### Materials Needed

*An Evil Spirit Touches the Word*

*The Evil Spirit*

heavy paper for printing project pages

scissors

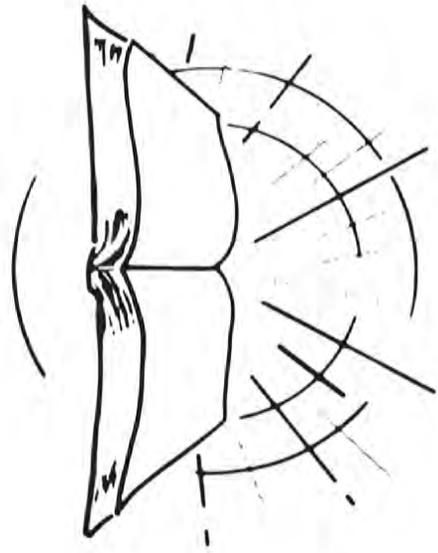
markers or colored pencils

stapler

### Directions

1. Print *An Evil Spirit Touches the Word*, and *The Evil Spirit* on heavy paper.
2. Start with the page *An Evil Spirit Touches the Word*. Choose whether to decorate the Word with gems and rainbows, as the angels saw it, or with red blood, flames and smoke, as the evil spirit saw it.
3. Using scissors, cut away the grey quarter circle. Set the page aside.
4. Color *The Evil Spirit* using markers or colored pencils.
5. Cut around *The Evil Spirit* on the grey line.
6. Trim the page on the grey line. Fold the page on the lines provided to create a sturdy handle for the evil spirit. Staple together.
7. Fold the handle in half and staple it to the back of the evil spirit at knee height so the handle hangs down below the body.
8. Insert the handle in the quarter circle cut from *An Evil Spirit Touches the Word* page. Act out the evil spirit touching the Word using the moving picture. As soon as the evil spirit touches the Word, move him down on his back to lay still.

An Evil Spirit Touches the Word



*The Evil Spirit*