

General Church Education



Swedenborg, Hero for the Lord

Heaven and Hell 31, 65

Lesson 31

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 4: The Lord Is the Hero

For ages 9-10

Swedenborg, Hero for the Lord

Heaven and Hell 31, 65

For Parents and Teachers

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) served the Lord by visiting the Spiritual World, the world everyone enters after death. He wrote down what he heard and saw. He kept a personal diary of his experiences, which was later published as the *Spiritual Diary* or *Spiritual Experiences*. It is an insightful record of his travels in the spiritual world. From the start of his work as a servant of the Lord, Swedenborg shared spiritual experiences in the Writings. In 1758 he published *Heaven and Its Wonders and Hell: Drawn from Things Seen and Heard*. This short work gives an overview of the life after death. It describes the process of waking up after death, and how the spiritual world is organized. After death, we will first awaken in the world of spirits. Heaven will be above us, and hell below. Through Swedenborg, the Lord revealed that there are three heavens. *Heaven and Hell* describes the Sun of heaven, daily life in heaven, angels' homes and surroundings, speech and clothing, marriages, and much more. Swedenborg also visited hell. It took great courage for him to go to dark caverns where those who reject the Lord live after death. He described monstrous evil spirits who love only themselves and worldly things. Through this work, the Lord revealed the nature of our choice to love Him and enter heaven after death, or to love ourselves and choose hell.

Ideas for Children

- Emanuel Swedenborg trained as a scientist.
- Observing and writing down what he saw were skills Emanuel needed to be a revelator for the Lord.
- Emanuel was a hero. He traveled throughout the spiritual world so we could know about it.

From the Writings

Since the whole heaven resembles one human and is a Divine spiritual human in the greatest form in its very likeness, so heaven, like a human, is arranged into members and parts which are similarly named. Moreover, angels know in what member this or that society is. This society, they say, is in the head or a certain province of the head, another in the breast or a certain province of the breast, that, in the loins or a certain province of the loins, and so forth. In general, the highest or third heaven forms the head down to the neck, the middle or second heaven forms the breast down to the loins and knees, the lowest or first heaven forms the feet down to the soles and also the arms down to the fingers, for the arms and hands are the ultimates of a human, although at the sides. See *Heaven and Hell* 65.

“The Divine which inflows from the Lord and is received in the third or inmost heaven is called celestial, and in consequence, the angels there are called celestial angels. The Divine inflowing from the Lord and received in the second or middle heaven is called spiritual, and in consequence, the angels there are called spiritual angels. Whereas, the Divine inflowing from the Lord and received in the outermost or first heaven is called natural.” *Heaven and Hell* 31

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Vocabulary

observation—an act of attentively watching

celestial—heavenly

Emanuel Swedenborg was born in Sweden in 1688. At that time most people lived in the countryside. Many were poor farmers who raised animals and grew crops. Few families were wealthy enough to give their children an education. Emanuel's father, Jesper Swedberg, worked as a military chaplain in Stockholm, Sweden's capital city. Jesper wanted his children to get a good education so they could help their country. Emanuel was tutored at home until he was old enough to attend the University of Upsala, at age eleven. University training prepared students to become pastors, join the military, or work for the government.

Swedenborg Became a Scientist

When it came time for Emanuel to choose a career, he decided not to do these jobs. He wanted to become a scientist. Science was a new and exciting field. So many discoveries were made when Emanuel lived that it is called the age of enlightenment. Many new scientific societies and universities started at this time to share the new ideas and inventions being discovered.

After finishing university, Emanuel traveled to England and Europe where he met some of the

world's best scientists.

From them he learned how to carefully examine rocks and fossils with a microscope. He learned to observe planets and stars. He tried to find a way to calculate longitude for ships at sea. On his way back to Sweden, he sent a letter to his brother-in-law describing plans for fourteen new inventions.

Swedenborg Helped His Country

Once Emanuel was home in Sweden he worked with other scientists. He



started Sweden's first scientific journal with scientist Christopher Polhem (1661-1751). The magazine published plans for some of Emanuel's inventions. Soon Emanuel started working for the Board of Mines, which was in charge of Sweden's mining industry. It was an important job because iron exports were Sweden's main source of income. Emanuel made trips to Europe to see how other countries processed metal ores. He wanted to improve Swedish mining techniques to increase Sweden's iron production. Emanuel used his mind to improve whatever he did.



Swedenborg Called by the Lord

Many years later, after faithfully serving his country, the Lord called Emanuel to a new use. The Lord asked him to bring a new revelation from heaven to the earth. To do this Emanuel would need to visit the spiritual world and faithfully write down everything he heard and saw so people could read it for all time. His training as a scientist prepared him well to travel to new places and make detailed observations about the people he met, the places they lived and their daily activities. Emanuel wrote down everything the Lord showed him.

Swedenborg Visited the Spiritual World

In the wonderful book *Heaven and Hell* the Lord revealed what it is like to wake up after we die. Many people are surprised to find they're still alive and have a body like the body they had on earth. They discover that the spiritual world is a real world, with gardens, mountains, seas, and rivers. Angels greet newcomers and teach them about the world they have entered, the world of spirits. Everyone stays in the world of spirits until they are ready to go to their eternal home in heaven or hell.

People who had loved the Lord and other people while on earth find their eternal home in heaven. The Lord Himself is the Sun there. His love and light fill each angel with joy. Angels wear beautiful clothes that are like the lovely thoughts in their minds. They keep busy with many kinds of useful work in service to the Lord and to others. Angel husbands and wives live in communities with other people who love the things they love. Nobody grows old. Angels are young and healthy to eternity. From a distance the whole of heaven appears as a Grand Man.

Read *Heaven and Hell* 65, on p. 2.

The Lord showed Emanuel that there are three levels of heaven. Celestial angels live in the highest heaven. They love the Lord most of all and experience the joys of serving Him in all they do. Spiritual angels live in the second heaven. They love and think about others and serve their neighbors. People in the third or lowest heaven, the natural heaven, love to obey the Lord.

Read *Heaven and Hell* 31, on p. 2.

Swedenborg Visited Hell

People who loved and cared only about themselves and their material things do not want to go to heaven. They rush away from their angel guides and shut out the light of heaven. They look for other people like themselves and choose to live with them in hell. The Lord never stops loving them, but He does not force them to become like the angels. If a person in hell went to heaven they would be in terrible pain until they returned to hell. Evil spirits in hell are not afraid of being punished. They love to do things that hurt others. Evil spirits look like monsters. Their ugly hateful thoughts make them appear to be ugly. They live in dark caves, in deserts, and all sorts of terrible places. From a distance hell looks like a grand (large) monster.

Swedenborg learned that there are three hells. Evil spirits in the lowest hell love only themselves and want to be worshiped like gods. They hate everyone. Evil spirits in the second hell love things they possess. They do not share anything, but keep it all for themselves. Evil spirits in the highest hell do not care about the Lord and love to disobey Him. The Lord cares about evil spirits and keeps them from hurting others and from doing worse things all the time.

Visiting heaven and hell took great courage. Emanuel was a hero. He went where the Lord asked him to go so that we could learn about the life to come.



Discussion Questions

- What skills did Emanuel Swedenborg learn as a scientist?
- How did Emanuel use his scientific skills to help his country?
- What important job did Emanuel do for Sweden?
- How did the skills Emanuel learned as a scientist help him serve the Lord?
- What kind of courage might it take to visit heaven and hell, as Emanuel did?
- What kinds of things do angels love doing?
- What kinds of things do evil spirits love to do?
- Why wouldn't an evil spirit be happy in heaven?
- Why might we call Emanuel Swedenborg a hero for traveling to heaven and hell?
- How might you respond if the Lord asked you to go to heaven and hell?

Activity Overview | Swedenborg, Hero for the Lord

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

Projects

Choose one or two activities.

- Emanuel Swedenborg Sees into Heaven Project
- Swedenborg's Rules of Life
- Picture to Color—Emanuel Swedenborg

Additional Activity Ideas

- Emanuel Swedenborg served his country as a member of the House of Nobles. Like other nobles, his coat of arms was displayed there. Print and color Emanuel's coat of arms. You will find it online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/project-swedenborgs-coat-of-arms.pdf>.
- Swedenborg did much of his work for the Lord in his garden summer house. Color a picture of Emanuel's summer house. You will find the project online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/project-swedenborgs-summer-house.pdf>.

Activity 1 | Emanuel Swedenborg Sees into Heaven

The Lord opened Emanuel Swedenborg's spiritual eyes and allowed him to see into the spiritual world. Color a picture of Emanuel Swedenborg with his earthly eyes closed. Hold the picture up to a window to see Swedenborg's eyes open in the spiritual world.

Materials Needed

Emanuel Swedenborg

Heaven

markers or colored pencils

stapler or tape

Directions

1. Color the picture of *Heaven*.
2. Color *Emanuel Swedenborg*'s portrait using very light colors on his closed eyes.
3. Lay *Emanuel Swedenborg* over the completed picture of *Heaven*. Staple or tape the pages to-gether to stay in place.
4. Hold the finished work up to the light.
Can you see that while Swedenborg appeared to be sleeping he could see into heaven with his spiritual eyes?



Heaven



Emanuel Swedenborg
Jan 29, 1688 - Mar 29, 1772



Activity 2 | Swedenborg's Rules of Life

When Emanuel Swedenborg died his good friend, Samuel Sandels (1724-1784), gave a speech about him in the Swedish House of Nobles on October 7, 1772. Sandels mentioned many wonderful things Swedenborg had done. In his speech Sandels said he had found Swedenborg's Rules of Life among his papers. He read Swedenborg's Rules of Life to everyone who had gathered to honor him. Others in England claimed to have found Swedenborg's Rules of Life too, but an original copy has not been found.

Swedenborg's Rules of Life give important ideas about how we should live from the Writings for the New Church. When Sandels spoke about Emanuel's character, he said these rules summarized how he had lived his earthly life. As you do this project, think about Emanuel's faithful service to the Lord.

Materials Needed

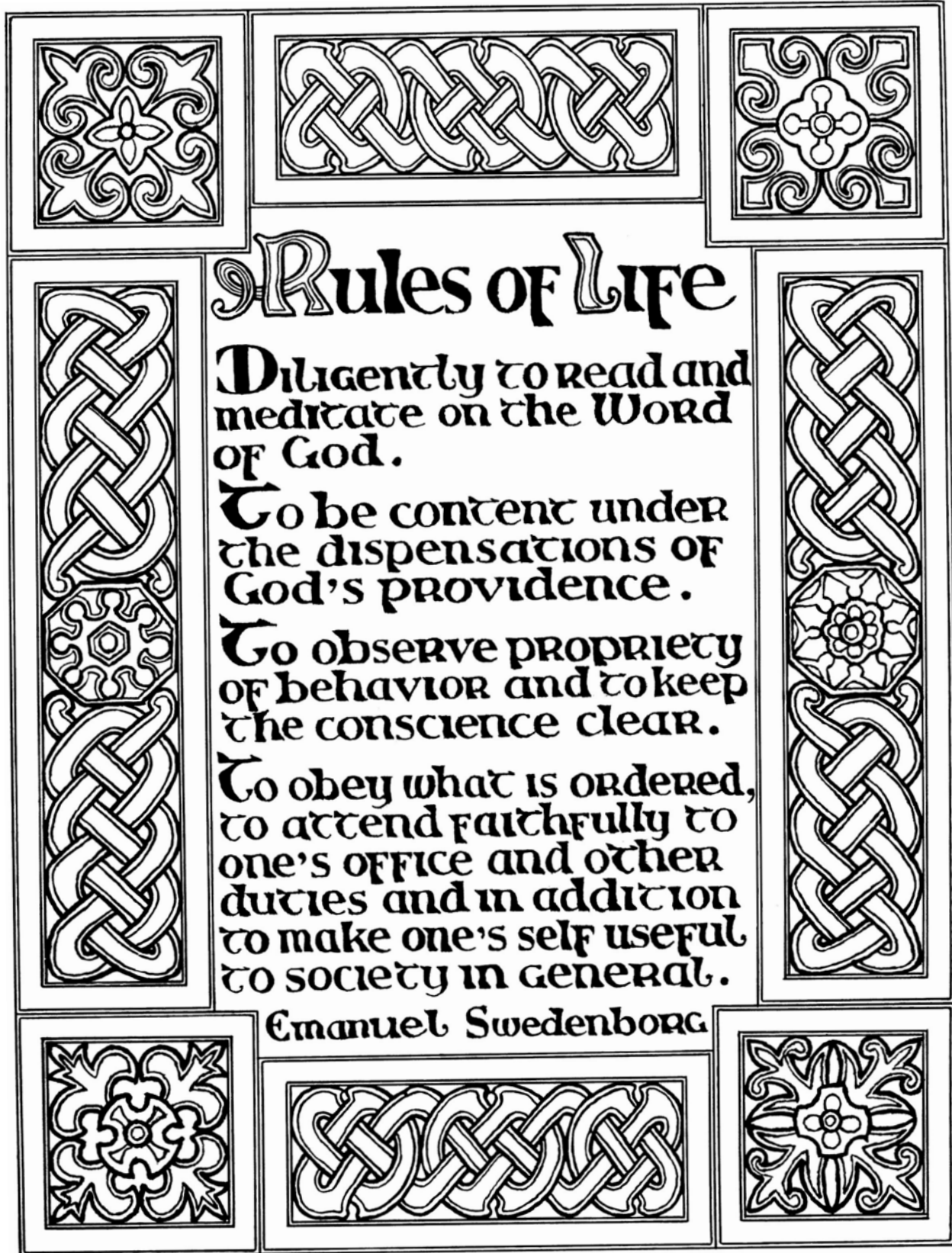
Swedenborg's Rules of Life

markers or colored pencils

optional: stiff paper for printing

Directions

Decorate *Swedenborg's Rules of Life* to display.



Rules of Life

Diligently to read and meditate on the Word of God.

To be content under the dispensations of God's providence.

To observe propriety of behavior and to keep the conscience clear.

To obey what is ordered, to attend faithfully to one's office and other duties and in addition to make one's self useful to society in general.

Emanuel Swedenborg

