

General Church Education



# The Lord Is the Word

John 1:1-18

## Lesson 33

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 4: The Lord Is the Hero

For ages 9-10

# The Lord Is the Word

## John 1:1-18

### Teacher Background

The Lord created us so He could love us, be joined with us, and make us happy. The Most Ancient people accepted the Lord's love and lived in innocence and delight, but eventually they turned away from the Lord and to their own minds for guidance. Next, the Lord raised up the Ancient Church. This church had a written Word, the Ancient Word. Eventually that Word was lost. In order to preserve the name Jehovah, the Lord formed the Israelitish church, to which He gave the Word of the Old Testament containing the Ten Commandments. The hells progressively grew so strong that they threatened to block the flow of love from the Lord to the world. So the Lord came to earth as a baby, as the Word made flesh. In coming, the Lord gave humankind a new revelation, the New Testament containing the Two Great Commandments, and a new covenant, the Holy Supper. He later gave us the Writings through Emanuel Swedenborg.

The Lord came to *our* earth because writing has existed here since ancient times. The Written Word is for people on earth and angels in heaven. The Lord has provided for later inventions such as the printing press and the internet so that all people may read the Word.

### Key Ideas

- The Lord came to our earth because writing exists here which can preserve the Word for all time.
- We learn about the Lord and about how we should live by reading the Word.
- We cannot love the Lord without being able to picture Him in human form.

### From the Writings

There are a number of reasons why the Lord was pleased to be born on our planet and not another, and to take to Himself the Human. The main reason was for the sake of the Word, which was able on our planet to be set down in writing. Then, having been written, it could be disseminated to all parts of the planet, and, once it had been disseminated, it could be preserved for all future generations. In this way the truth that God had become Man could be made plain, even to all in the next life.

The Word is God's truth itself which teaches people about the existence of God, of heaven and hell, and of life after death. Above all it teaches them how they must live and believe in order to enter heaven and so be happy for evermore. Without revelation, thus without the Word in the case of this planet, all these things would have remained totally unknown.

The art of writing has existed on our planet since most ancient times. This was provided by the Lord for the sake of the Word. In this way, the truth that God had become Man could be made plain, this being the first and most essential truth for the sake of which the Word exists. For nobody can believe in and love a God whom they cannot picture in some shape or form. See *Arcana Coelestia* 9350-9356.

# The Lord Is the Word

## John 1:1-18

### Vocabulary

**manuscript**—words written out by hand

**testament**—covenant

### Why the Lord Chose Our Earth

Imagine how different your life would be if writing did not exist. Writing lets us tell others what we are thinking, what we love, and what we do. Reading lets us discover what others think, love and do. The Lord can be with us in His Word because we have writing. The Lord talks to us in His Word. In fact, the Lord was born on our earth, and not any other earth, because there is writing here.



The Word is the Lord with us. The Word teaches the most important things we need to know:

- that there is a God
- that there is a heaven and a hell
- that there is a life after death
- how to love and care for each other
- how to become angels of heaven one day and be happy forever.

### The Written Word

The first people on earth did not have writing. They were close to the Lord and angels and knew what was good and true. They did not need a written Word because the Word was written on their hearts. They learned about heaven from things around them that corresponded to heavenly things.

After a time, people no longer had the Word written on their hearts, and so the Lord gave a written Word, called the Ancient Word. This Word could be understood by angels as well as people on earth. Most of this Word is now lost, but parts of it are in the Old Testament. The Ancient Word prophesied that the Lord would be born on earth.

Later, the Lord revealed a new Word for the Jewish people. Like the Ancient Word, it was written in

correspondences so angels in heaven as well as people on earth could understand it. This Word is called the Old Testament. It was written in Hebrew, the language of the Jewish people. The Old Testament contains the Ten Commandments, which are the Lord's rules for people to live by. When we read the Old Testament the angels around us understand precious ideas about the Lord within it.



The Lord was born on earth as the Word made flesh. The words He spoke were Divine Truth. The Lord taught how we should love and care for each other. He taught that there is a life after death.

Read John 1:1-18.

The Lord gave a new covenant or Testament when He was on earth. It was that we are to love one another as He has loved us. The part of the Word the Lord revealed through His life on earth is called the New Testament. The New Testament was first written in Greek. The New Testament was written down by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John after the Lord's resurrection. If the Word had not been written, if people just re-told the stories again and again, the stories might slowly have been changed or forgotten. It was important for the Lord's teachings to be written down so that everyone on earth would be able to learn about Him.

### **The Lord Chose Our Earth Because Here the Word Could Be Spread**

The Lord wants His teachings to be spread throughout the world. He wants people to read the Word and do what it teaches, because that is how we can know Him and learn to live a life that leads to heaven.

Inventions on this earth have made the spread of the Word possible. Long ago, monks copied the Word by hand. Their work was very beautiful, but it could take a monk a lifetime to complete one copy of the Word. The pages were decorated with beautiful borders. These special copies are called illuminated manuscripts. Very few people could have a copy of the Word because they were so valuable. The invention of the printing press brought a great change. Many copies of the Word could be made quickly, and more people could have their own copies. The Word was also translated into different languages so people could read it themselves and understand the Lord's message.

People also discovered ways to travel from country to country. The Romans built fine roads that made travel easier throughout their large empire. Ships allowed people to sail all over the world. By these means the Word could be spread from one nation to another. The Lord's truth could be taught everywhere.

Later, the Lord revealed the Writings for the New Church through His servant, Emanuel Swedenborg. The Writings were written in Latin. In Swedenborg's time, most educated people knew

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Latin even though they all spoke their own languages, such as English, French or Spanish, as well. This third and last part of the Word tells us much more about life after death. It helps us know more about the Lord and His life on earth. It tells us more about the way to heaven.

And what about today, and in the future? Parts of the Word have been translated into more than 1500 languages so people from all over the world can read it. What part do you think computers and the internet might play in making the Lord's Word available to all people? What inventions are yet to come? People of this earth continue to develop new ways to record and spread the Word so it will be preserved.

### **The Lord with Us**

The Lord is with us when we read His Word, and He is even closer to us when we do what the Word teaches. When we do this the Lord is born into our lives.

### **Discussion Questions**

- The Lord rules over the entire universe, so why did He choose to be born on our earth?
- Some cultures have a tradition of storytelling. In what ways is writing different than storytelling? Why is it important for the Word to be written, and not simply passed from one generation to another through storytelling?
- What important covenant did the Lord give to us in the Old Testament?
- What new covenant and sacrament did the Lord give to us in the New Testament?
- What important true ideas do the Writings tell us that we cannot learn from the Old or New Testaments?
- In what languages was the Word originally written?
- What inventions have helped spread the Word to all peoples of the earth?
- The Lord came on earth as the "Word made flesh". What does that mean?
- Why is reading the Word important?

# Activity Overview | The Lord Is the Word Christmas Lesson

## Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

The people who walked in darkness  
Have seen a great light;  
Those who dwell in the land of the shadow of death,  
Upon them a light has shined. Isaiah 9:2

## Projects

Choose one or two activities.

- Christmas: The Lord Is the Word Pop-up
- The Lord with Us in His Word Hanging
- Picture to Color—The Word of the Lord

## Additional Activity Ideas

- Watch a video of a story or song from the Word celebrating the Christmas story. Choose from a variety of videos online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resources/?q=Christmas&scope=all&type=12&age=&auth=&lang=123>.
- Illustrate a book about the Lord's Word. This activity is online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/project-make-a-book-about-the-word.pdf>.

## Activity 1 | Christmas: The Lord Is the Word Pop-up

The Lord was born on our earth as the living Word. Create a pop-up book that places the baby Lord in the written Word, along with the Lord's words from John 1.

### Materials Needed

*Book Template*

*Baby Template*

piece of red paper slightly larger than *Book Template*

colored pencils or markers

scissors

tape

*Optional:* glitter, glue stick



### Directions

1. Fold the *Book Template* on dotted line, with writing showing on the outside. Re-fold in the opposite direction with the printed sides together.
2. Fold a piece of red paper in half to create a cover. Place the *Book Template* inside the folded cover. Staple the two pieces of paper together along the dashed center line in one or two places.
3. Color the rays of light around the baby Lord on the *Baby Template* using colored pencils or markers. *Optional:* Use a glue stick to put glue on the rays of light. Sprinkle glitter on the glue. Allow to dry.
4. Carefully cut out the two pieces of the baby Lord on the grey lines. Take care not to cut off tabs A and B. To strengthen the movement of the pieces, use tape to reinforce the back of A and B where the pieces will come together. Trim away extra tape, if needed.
5. Bend Tab A on the dashed line. Place Tab A on top of the semi-circle labeled A on the *Book Template*. Tape in place on both sides of the tab.
6. Repeat for Tab B.
7. Gently slide piece B over piece A in the slit. The pieces should lock together to form a complete baby Lord. When you shut the book, the baby Lord will fold up and lay flat inside the book. The baby will pop up when you open the book to remind you that the Lord is with you in His Word.



In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.  
He was in the beginning with God.



All things were made through Him,  
and without Him nothing was made  
that was made. In Him was life,  
and the life was the light of men.  
And the light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness did not comprehend it.  
John 1:1-5



## Activity 2 | The Lord Is with Us in the Word Hanging

The Lord was born on our earth and not any other planet because there is writing on our earth. The Lord is especially present with us when we read His Word and do what it says. Make a hanging that shows the Lord connecting with people on earth through the Word.

### Materials Needed

*The Lord Is with Us in the Word*

colored pencils or markers

scissors

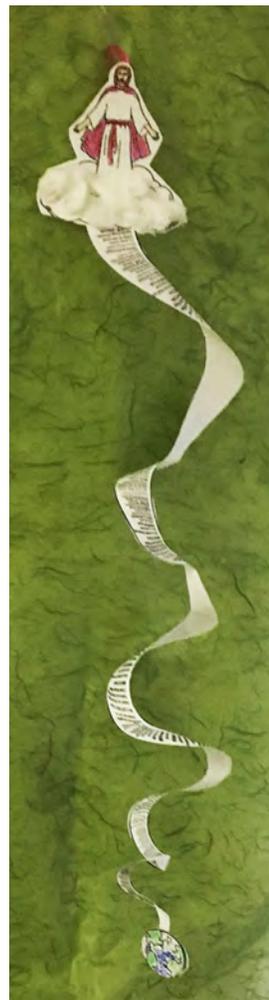
tape

ribbon for hanging

*Optional:* cotton balls, glue

### Directions

1. Look at *The Lord Is with Us in the Word* template. The project pieces are pictures of the Lord, the earth, and a spiral. The words on the spiral say “The Word of the Lord” in many different languages. How many languages do you recognize?
2. Start by coloring the Lord’s hands, face and clothing.
3. Color the world.
4. Cut out the pieces on the dark lines, taking special care with the spiral.
5. Tape the two sides of the earth together.
6. Tape the earth to the thin end of the spiral.
7. Place the Lord on top of the wide end of the spiral. Tape the pieces together on the back.
8. *Optional:* glue cotton ball “clouds” on top of the clouds under the Lord’s feet.
9. Tape a loop of ribbon to the back of the Lord’s head to hang your finished project.



The Lord Is with Us in the Word



