

GLENVIEW NEW CHURCH SUNDAY MORNING PROGRAM
Primary Lessons: Phase 2, Lesson 18
Life in the Three Heavens

I. Underlying Ideas for the Teacher

- A. The Lord provides everything that the angels need.
- B. Angels are given homes, clothes, food and other things according to the uses they perform, i.e., the highest angels perform the highest uses and therefore have the loveliest possessions.
- C. The angels' clothes are given to them according to their intelligence, and their houses according to their good.
- D. The angels are not overwhelmed and taken up with the beautiful things around them. They think of these as extra and as the work of God, and they see the Lord's great power and mercy in them.
- E. The Lord is building our house in heaven every day according to the way we live on earth— according to what we think and love and do.

II. Story Circle

- A. Introduction
 - 1. Last time we began to learn about what it's like to live in heaven. We learned about the Lord in heaven and how He appears to the angels. Do you remember where the angels usually see Him? (In the sun of heaven)
 - 2. Did you know that there are three heavens? Today we're going to learn a little about what makes them different from each other and about what sorts of things we would find in each one.
- B. Tell/Read the Story
 - 1. Read the attached description, "Life in the Three Heavens."
- C. Ideas to Discuss
 - 1. Why are there three parts of heaven instead of only one? (Because angels who love different things live in different parts of heaven)
 - 2. What is the lowest heaven called? (Natural heaven)
 - 3. What do the angels in that heaven like to do? (Obey the Lord – do what He tells them to do)
 - 4. What are the natural angels' clothes like? (Many different colors)
 - 5. Which heaven is the most special because it is closest to the Lord? (Celestial heaven)

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6. What are the houses made of in the celestial heaven? (Wood)
7. What are the celestial angels' clothes like? (Often red or crimson, look like they're flaming with a fire of gold and precious jewels)
8. What do the celestial angels love most? (The Lord)
9. In the spiritual or middle heaven, what are the angels' clothes like? (Of linen and silk shining with silvery light)
10. What are most of the spiritual angels' homes built of? (Stone)
11. What do the angels in the spiritual (middle) heaven love most? (To help other people)
12. Some of the angels in the spiritual heaven live in magnificent palaces, like the prince we heard about today. Can you describe his palace for me? (Dark purple stone, six lapis lazuli [blue] columns in front of door, roof of gold, clear crystal windows, beautiful decorations in each room)
13. Do you remember what the prince was wearing? (Red robe with embroidered silvery stars, shining light blue silk shirt, shining gold community badge encircled with diamonds depicting eagle brooding over young in treetop)
14. Does everyone in heaven have a palace like the prince's, and do they all wear the same kind of long crimson robe that he had? (No; angels in one community wear different clothes from angels in another community; and the houses are different in different parts of heaven, too.)
15. When you get to heaven, you will find a house that the Lord has made for you and you will love everything about it. The furniture and curtains will seem just right, all the colors will suit you perfectly, and you will feel that every room--the dining room, the living room, all the bedrooms-- are exactly what you'd have chosen. And your house will be different from all the other houses in heaven because you will be different from every other angel in all of heaven!
16. If an angel has a house that he loves and feels is perfect for him, do you think he feels jealous of another angel who has a fancier one? (No; the Lord gives each angel a house that matches the love he has inside him. The house feels comfortable to the angel-- it fits him. A fancier home wouldn't match his love, so he wouldn't feel at home there; the fancier house wouldn't "fit" him, and he wouldn't like it.)
17. Do you think an angel wears the same garment (piece of clothing all day, every day? (No, angels have different things to wear just as we do, and they change their clothing according to what they are doing -- some clothes for work, some for play, some for sleeping, some for holidays.)
18. The clothes that an angel has are given to him to keep. Who give them to him? (The Lord)

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19. An angel has clothes that match his intelligence, or wisdom. The wiser the angel, the nicer his clothing. Every dress, every shirt, every pair of pants or shoes is made by the Lord especially for one particular angel to show what that angel's wisdom is like. So no two garments in heaven are ever exactly the same! Since every angel is different, his clothes are different from everyone else's in all of heaven.
20. It doesn't matter too much which heaven you go to, does it? The Lord will lead you to the place in heaven that suits you perfectly; the place where you will live as happily as you possibly can, forever.
21. Now, think a moment: if the Lord gives you clothes, a house, and so on to match the kind of love you have inside you and to show how wise you are, what kinds of clothes and houses do you suppose the evil spirits in hell would have? (Hear the children's ideas; tell them we'll talk more about this another day when we learn about life in hell.)

III. Enrichment Activities

A. Music

1. "You Shall Love the Lord Your God With All Your Heart and Mind," FIRST SONGS FOR LITTLE CHILDREN, p. 7.
2. "Angel Song," Lori Soneson (Odhner). (Sheet music attached to Lesson #4; you can listen to it on LORI'S SONGS II, Side 2, near the end of the tape.)

B. Activities

C. Project

1. Palace Collage

- a. *The Prince's Palace:* Provide the children with materials they will need to recreate the prince's palace as described in this lesson: Gold foil for roof; blue (lapis lazuli) shiny paper or construction paper for columns; dark purple for stone exterior; clear plastic (Handiwrap or other) for clear crystal windows. They will need glue, scissors, and a 12 X 18 sheet of white drawing paper for background. Show them pictures of different palaces/castles from books and magazines to help their imaginations get going about basic design of their structure.
- b. *Other Palace:* Provide the children with materials from (a) above, but add sequins, glitter, other colors of foil paper, and let them make up the most wonderful palace they can imagine— a place where a very good and wise angel would live.

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2. Collage of Your Home in Heaven

- a. Remind the children of the different kinds of homes in each of the three heavens. Have them "build" the kind of home in heaven that they would like to have. Provide materials that will look like wood (brown) and stone (different colors— not all stone is alike). Do the best you can to help them decide which heaven they think their house would be in according to its appearance in order to underscore the main idea of the lesson---that things in each of the three heavens are different from each other-- but, of course, de-emphasize the idea that one child has chosen to be "better than" another by building a celestial house instead of a spiritual one!

IV. Teaching Aids

- A. Illustrations from *Life if Forever* by Peter Buss, No. 14 (A Husband and Wife at Home in Their Garden) and No. 16 (Houses in the Three Heavens)
- B. Illustrations from *Heavenly Happiness* retold by John Odhner, pp. 29 (carved ceiling in palace), 31 (children under trees), and 33 (prince in his robe). (Photocopies of any of these could be given to the children to color when they finish their projects or to take home.)
- C. Pictures of palaces/castles to inspire children for project (see III.C.1.a)

V. Further Reading for the Teacher

- A. *The Spiritual World* by Hugo Odhner, Chapter 13, "The Three Heavens," pp. 216-230.
- B. HH 185, 361.

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LIFE IN THE THREE HEAVENS

There are three parts of heaven. The lowest one is called the natural heaven, the middle one is called the spiritual heaven, and the highest one is called the celestial heaven.

The natural heaven--the lowest one--is a lovely place. The angels there live in very nice houses on low hills with beautiful trees and flowers all around. They wear lovely clothes of many different colors. The angels who live in the natural heaven want to do what the Lord tells them, and they are very happy.

The spiritual heaven--the middle heaven--is a wonderful place. The angels live on high hills with beautiful orchards and gardens all around them. Most of them live in houses made of stone such as marble. Some of them live in magnificent palaces in which everything shines with precious stones. Their clothes are made of linen and silk, which shine with a beautiful silvery light. The angels in the spiritual heaven love to help other people, and they are always thinking about how to make other people happy.

The celestial heaven is the most special place to live in the spiritual world because it is the closest to the Lord. The angels there live on beautiful mountains with gorgeous flowers and trees about them. Some of them live on little farms with gentle lambs and sheep and deer. Their homes are very beautiful and made of wood. Their clothes look like they are flaming with a fire made of gold and precious jewels, and they often wear red or crimson clothing. The celestial angels love the Lord more than anything or anybody. They are close to Him in their hearts and in heaven. They are aware of all that He does for angels and men, and they want to help Him.

All of heaven is wonderful. There are three parts of heaven because there are different kinds of angels just like there are different kinds of people on earth. And the houses and clothes are different in different parts of heaven because in the spiritual world the Lord makes your home, clothes, and the way you look match the love you feel inside you.

Would you like to learn more about life in heaven? Sometimes the Lord invites people to visit heaven before they are ready to live there. He wants them to see what a wonderful place heaven is so that they will want to live there. Listen now as I tell you about one of those visits.

Once the Lord invited ten people to spend a few days in heaven. They had just come from earth to the world of spirits. An angel guide led them up onto a mountain to the community of heaven they were invited to visit.

One of the first things they saw was a magnificent palace that belonged to the prince or ruler of that society. It was a large palace built of a dark purple stone. And in front of the door were six tall columns of lapis lazuli [laz'-yoo-li], a precious stone that is blue. The roof was made of gold and the windows of clear crystal. Inside there were beautiful decorations in each room. And there were tiles of silver and gold with useful things on top of them, which were made of precious stones.

Later the visitors went into the prince's garden. There was a tree in the middle of the garden called the Tree of Life. The leaves were like silver with

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emeralds around the edges, and the tree had fruit like gold on its branches. There were children under the tree with people taking care of them. And there were other trees filled with delicious fruit. All the treetops were bending toward the Tree of Life in the middle. There were also wonderful flower gardens and a lovely green lawn.

The ten visitors finally met the prince at dinner. He was wearing a long red robe embroidered with silvery stars. He wore a shining light blue silk shirt under his robe. And he wore the badge of his community, which was made of shining gold in a circle of diamonds. It showed an eagle brooding over her young in the top of a tree.

The prince invited them to have dinner with him, and it was a great feast. There were all kinds of wonderful food. They had sweet-cakes, wine, and many other things. The serving dishes were made out of gold, the plates of silver, and the cups of clear jewels.

After dinner, the visitors talked with the prince. Later, some wise men came to tell them what angels do in heaven. Do you remember the wedding in heaven we learned about a while ago? The ten visitors were invited to that wedding! And the day after that, they went to church and worshipped the Lord.

When their visit was over, they went back to the world of spirits. They thought about how wonderful heaven was, and they prayed to the Lord to take them there.

(This material is condensed and adapted from *Life is Forever* by Peter Buss, pp. 36-37, and *Heavenly Happiness* [retold by John Odhner], pp. 27-32.)