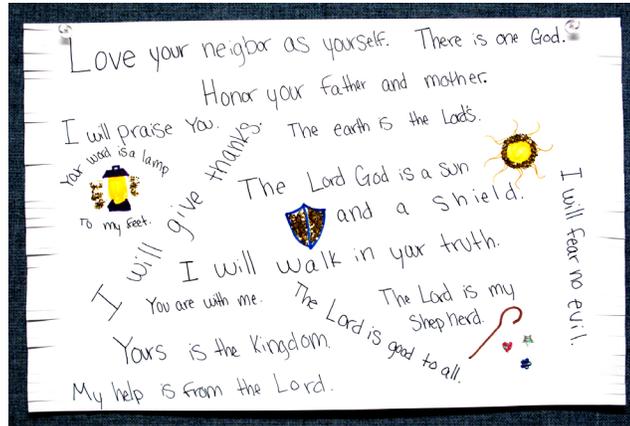


Make: A Mat of Truth

The sick man spent thirty-eight years lying on a mat by the pool of Bethesda. The Heavenly Doctrine for the New Church tells us that the mat pictures the ideas on which our actions are based. When these ideas come from the Word, our mat is strong. Each principle we hold is like a single thread. When all of the threads are woven together they form an underlying network of ideas that our minds rest on. The children will be looking at principles from the Word that can form a strong network of truth for healthy living.



Supplies Needed for Each Child

- piece of paper (larger than usual drawing paper if possible)
- crayons or markers
- scissors
- *optional*: glitter or special supplies such as plastic jewels to decorate the mat

Introduce the Activity

1. Why is your bed a comfortable place to sleep? (soft, warm, pillow, smells good, clean sheets, etc.)
2. Why is it uncomfortable to sleep in other places, for example on the floor? (hard, cold, dirty, etc.)
3. The man in our story today lay on his bed for thirty-eight years. Why would he lie there for that long without moving? Did he really want to move or not?
4. Do you ever get into a bad mood that you can't get out of? Perhaps someone has made you feel angry or sad. Part of you knows it's not right to stay in that mood, but part of you likes being angry. Staying in the bad mood is like lying on the mat not getting up.
5. When the Lord asked the man if he wanted to be healed, he made excuses about why it was difficult for him. These are like the excuses we make to stay in a bad mood. When we wish to stay in a bad mood, our minds are lying on a bed of false ideas that cannot bring us happiness.
6. Today we are going to picture true ideas that can make us happy. We will make a "mat" of beautiful teachings from the Word for our minds to rest on. When these ideas are the foundation of what we think and do, we can be truly happy.

Project Directions

1. Give each child a piece of paper to create their “mat.”
2. Have children write down ideas or draw pictures of ideas from the Word. Remind the children that these truths can be a firm foundation for happiness.
3. It is ideal for the children to write or picture true ideas that they know by heart, but you can use the quotations below if students need help thinking of ideas.
4. *Optional:* Decorate the mat with glitter and “jewels.”
5. Finish the mat by cutting the edge like a fringe.

Quotations

Love your neighbor as
yourself.

Honor your father and
mother.

Thine is the kingdom.

My help is from the Lord.

Love the Lord your God.

The Lord is my Shepherd.

The Lord God is a sun and
shield.

I will fear no evil.

The Lord is good to all.

You are with me.

I will give thanks.

The earth is the Lord’s.

There is one God.

Your Word is a lamp to my
feet.

Thy will be done.

I will praise You.

Forgive us our debts.

I will walk in Your truth.