Make: Twelve Sons of Jacob Mural

At a Glance:
The Heavenly Doctrines for the New Church tell us that the 12 sons of Jacob represent qualities of people who are trying to follow a life of religion at different stages. Using a chart, students will read selected passages about each son, and learn about his name's meaning in Hebrew and in the inner sense of the Word as revealed for the New Church. They will finish by creating a circular mural of symbols for the 12 sons, either as a group or individually.

Supplies Needed:

- Bibles or Words (ideally, one for each student)
- *The Twelve Sons of Jacob* chart for each student
- markers or colored pencils
- scissors
- clear tape
- *Group Project:*
  - 12 Large Edge Pieces
  - 1 Large Center Piece
- *Individual Project:*
  - 3 Small Edge Pieces for each student
  - 1 Small Center Piece for each student



Teacher Preparation:

- Decide whether you will be doing the group project or the individual project and prepare the needed materials.
- If doing the group project, decide how you will assign the sons.

Directions:

1. Introduce the activity: The twelve sons of Jacob represent various qualities of people who are trying to follow a good life, a life of religion. Today, you will read a few passages about one or more of the sons, learn about the meanings of their names in Hebrew and in the inner sense of the Word. Then, we will make a mural, representing the twelve sons with symbols that are associated with each of them.

© 2020 General Church of the New Jerusalem

Make: Twelve Sons of Jacob Mural continued

2. Hand out the chart of *The Twelve Sons of Jacob* and the copies of the Bible or Word.
3. Explain the Chart: The first column shows some symbols that are have been used for these sons in different ways for centuries. For example, some synagogues have mosaics with these symbols incorporated into them. The state of Israel used versions of these symbols on a set of stamps. These symbols relate to the names of the sons or to something their father Jacob said about them near the end of his life. Years after the story we are currently studying, Jacob called all his sons together and gave them his blessing before he died. The second passage listed for each son on the chart is what Jacob said at that time.
4. Assign each student to look up and read the passages about one or more sons.
5. Note: some additional information is needed for students to understand what Jacob says about his three oldest sons. Reuben is likened to troubled water because he slept with one of his father's concubines (Genesis 35:21-22). What is said about Simeon and Levi refers to them killing all the male inhabitants of a city in revenge for them taking their sister Dinah (Genesis 34:25-31).
6. Hand out the project pieces. Have students write the name and the birth order number in the spaces shown in the picture above.
7. Students draw symbolic pictures using the first and last columns on the chart for ideas.
8. *If doing the group project*, have students agree on a color scheme for the borders so they will all match.
9. Cut out all the edge pieces. *For the individual project don't cut apart the four segments that are on the same page.*
10. Do not cut out the center pieces. Instead place the edge piece around the circle and tape them in place. *For the individual project you will need to snip off the corners of the center piece of paper.* Find a place to display the group mural.
11. If time allows, conclude by asking students if they see connections between the natural meanings of the names and their inner spiritual meanings.

The Twelve Sons of Jacob

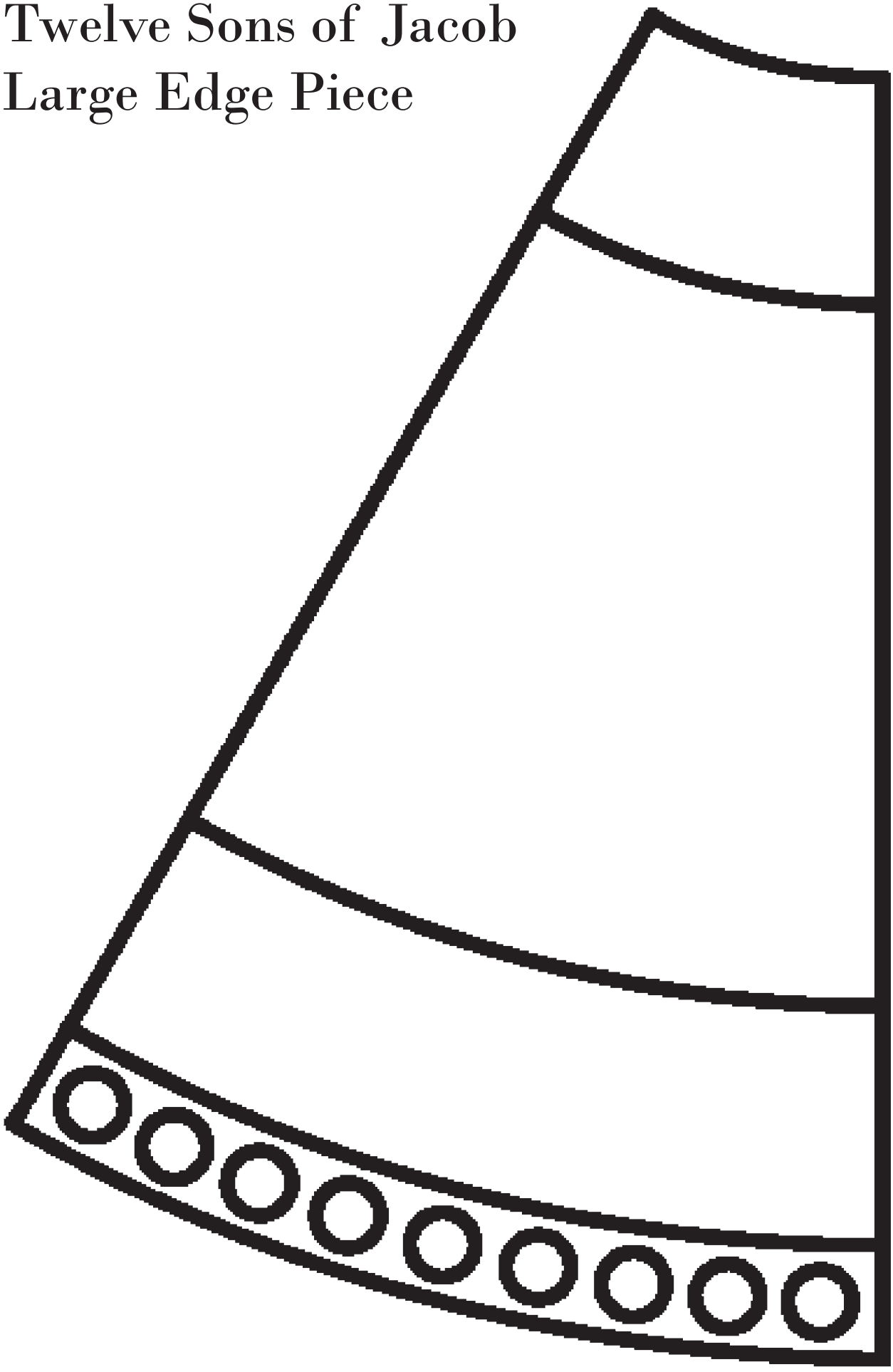
	Son	Passages	Meaning of Name Itself	Spiritual or Inner Meaning	Picture Ideas
	Reuben	Genesis 29:32 Genesis 49:3-4	see, a son	faith – seeing truth	troubled water
	Simeon	Genesis 29:33 Genesis 49:5-7	hearing	obedience to truth	sword, ear
	Levi	Genesis 29:34 Genesis 49:5-7	joined, attached, associated	charity	sword
	Judah	Genesis 29:35 Genesis 49:8-12	Jehovah be praised, praise	loving the Lord	lion cub (whelp)
	Dan	Genesis 30:5-6 Genesis 49:16-18	judge or judgment	temptation about what is true and what is false	snake or scales (for judgment)
	Naphtali	Genesis 30:7-8 Genesis 49:21	struggle, wrestling	temptation about what is good and what is evil	deer
	Gad	Genesis 30:10-11 Genesis 49:19	a troop of warriors, good fortune	doing good things	soldiers or tents
	Asher	Genesis 30:12-13 Genesis 49:20	blessedness	happiness	bread
	Issachar	Genesis 30:17-18 Genesis 49:14-15	a hired person	love for other people – mutual love	donkey
	Zebulun	Genesis 30:19-20 Genesis 49:13	dwelling	knowing truth combined with caring for others	shoreline or ship
	Joseph	Genesis 30:22-24 Genesis 49:22-24	increasing, fruitful	love or caring that leads to insight and understanding	branch with fruit
	Benjamin	Genesis 35:16-18 Genesis 49:27	son of sorrow (Ben-oni); son of the right hand (Benjamin)	insight or under-standing that supports a wise love for others	wolf

The Twelve Sons of Jacob
Large Center



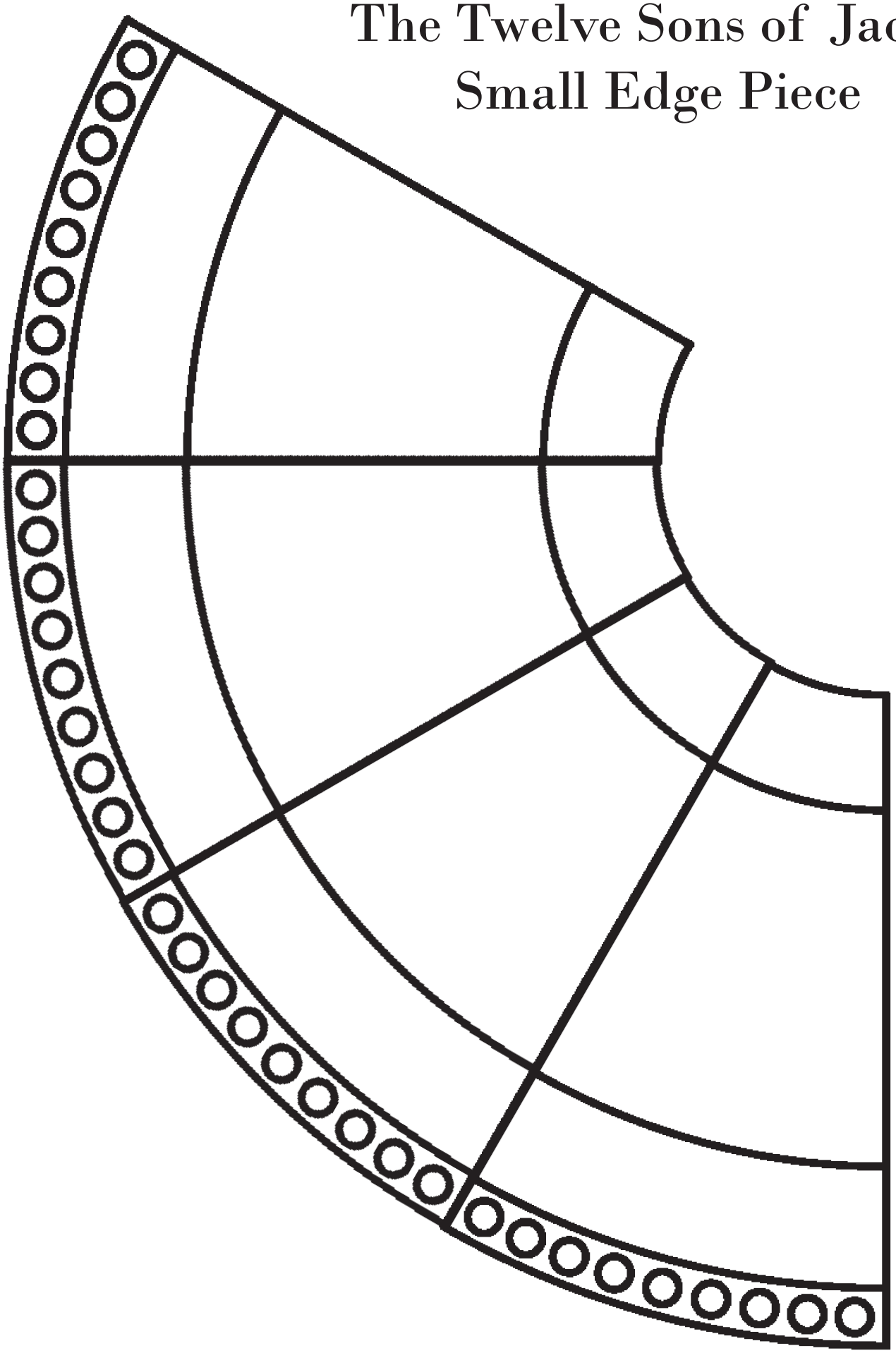
© 2020 General Church of the New Jerusalem

The Twelve Sons of Jacob
Large Edge Piece



© 2020 General Church of the New Jerusalem

The Twelve Sons of Jacob
Small Edge Piece



© 2020 General Church of the New Jerusalem

The Twelve Sons of Jacob
Small Center



© 2020 General Church of the New Jerusalem