

General Church Education



# Family Lesson: Genesis 2

# The Garden of Eden

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## Family Lesson 1-C

*The Garden of Eden*  
*Genesis 2*

Family Talk:  
THE GARDEN OF EDEN - PARADISE  
Rev. Donald Rose

The subject of this chapter is that Garden of gardens, which was called Eden. Everyone knows the word Eden. It is a Hebrew word that makes one think of a garden of the highest delight. Although it is called Eden in Hebrew, in Greek it is called Paradise, and this, too, is a name that is very well known. Once the Lord said to a man who was dying, "Today you will be with Me in Paradise." And there is a promise in the book of Revelation to those who try to do what is right: "To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God" (*Genesis 2:7*).

You know that the Lord is Love, and you know what love wants to do. It wants to make others happy. That wish of the Lord's that people shall have happiness, enjoyment and delight, is pictured in the garden with the name of delight - the Garden of Eden.

**"The Lord planted a garden eastward in Eden...and out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The Tree of Life was also in the midst of the garden..."**  
(*Genesis 2:8,9*)

Here is a picture of what the Lord likes to give each day and each night. Do you know that people who lived on our earth long ago were given dreams when they slept, called paradisaal dreams? Even today the angels wish us pleasant dreams, and when we watch a little child sleeping with a look of peace, we can imagine that the angels are giving an Eden-like dream — a little paradise.

Are there gardens in heaven? Of course there are, as heaven is what the Lord wants to give everyone. At the entrance of heaven there are paradisaal scenes of beauty. And there are gardens there, one of which you will learn of now.

What you are about to hear is true. Pay attention as you listen to it. You will notice particularly that in the heavenly garden there is a tree which some call the Tree of Life. Notice that at first the garden itself was not seen. An angel finally told visitors to heaven that they would see it, and when they did, the angels were happy for them. Listen to what happened and to what the angels said:

Then the angel said to them, "It isn't noon yet. Come with me into our prince's garden, next to his palace." And off they went. At the entrance, he said, "Look! The most magnificent garden in this heavenly community!"

But they answered, "What are you talking about? There's no garden here. We see just one tree, with fruit like gold on the branches and the top of it, and leaves like silver with emeralds around the edges. And there are children under the tree with people taking care of them."

At this the angel said excitedly, "This tree is in the middle of the garden. We call it the Tree of our Heaven, and some people call it the Tree of Life. But go on, and get closer, and your eyes will be opened, and you'll see the garden."

They did so, and their eyes were opened and they saw trees filled with delicious fruit, and entwined with the shoots of vines. The treetops with their fruit were bending towards the Tree of Life in the middle. These trees were planted in an unbroken line that went out and spread into unending circles or curves like a continuous spiral. It was a perfect spiral grove. The different kinds of trees followed one after another according to the value of their fruits. The beginning of the big spiral was separated from the Tree in the middle by a large space, and the space glittered with a bright light that spread out from the first trees to the last, making them all shine. The first trees were the best of all, overflowing with plump fruit. They are called Trees of Paradise. They have never been seen because they do not and cannot exist in the lands of the natural world. After them came olive trees, and then grape vines. Next came sweet-smelling trees, and last of all, trees with wood good for building.

Here and there in this spiral of trees there were seats. The backs of them were made by bending and intertwining the branches of trees, and they were decorated with lots of their fruit. In the endless circle of trees there were gates that opened into flower gardens, and from these into green lawns, laid out in parks and flower beds.

When the companions of the angel saw these things, they cried, "Look! The very picture of heaven! Wherever we turn our eyes, something too wonderful for words flows in from this heavenly garden."

The angel was very glad to hear this, and he said, "All of the gardens of our heaven are representations or models that show where the blessings of heaven come from. These blessings flowed in and lifted up your mind, so you cried, 'Look! The very picture of heaven!' But this paradise just looks like a forest to people who don't let these blessings flow into them. These blessings flow into everyone who loves to be useful. But people who love glory, and not use, don't accept those blessings." Afterwards he explained and taught them what each thing in the garden represented and meant.

Note: This special translation of *Conjugal Love 13* is part of a book of translations for children called *Heaven's Happiness* by Rev. John Odhner (illustrated by Linda Simonetti Odhner, published in 1985).

**The Garden of Eden**  
**Genesis 2**  
**LEVEL 1 – DRAWING THE GARDEN**

**MATERIALS NEEDED**

School Paste  
Scissors  
Crayons

**DRAWING THE GARDEN**



This project can be done a few different ways:

Your child can draw pictures, or cut out magazine pictures, to make a garden on the sheet of paper with the printed boy and girl (page 3).



OR

Your child can color the garden picture included in this lesson (page 2). Then cut out the boy and girl, and paste them on the left-hand bottom corner of the garden picture.



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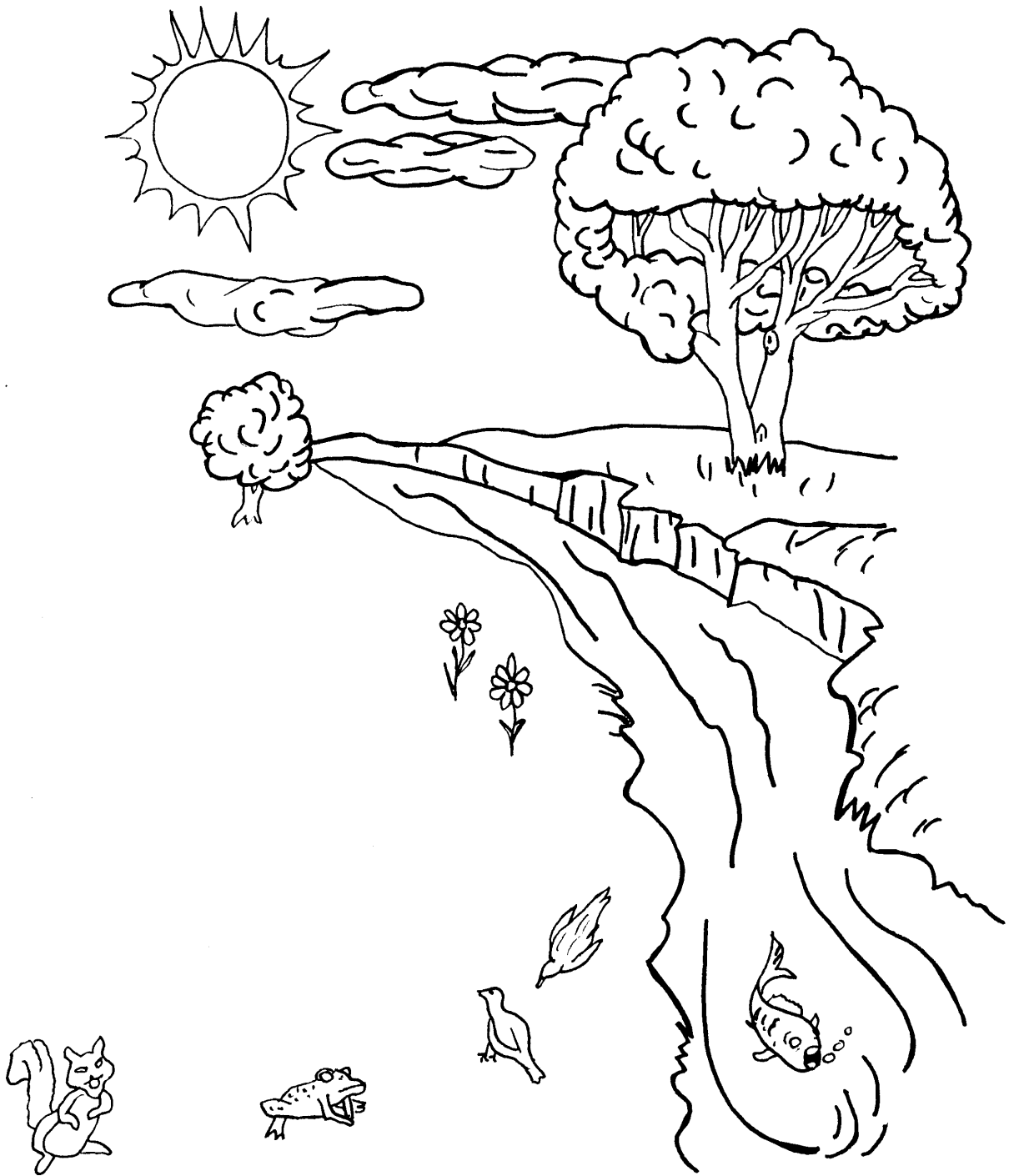


***While doing this project, talk to the children about the beautiful Garden of Eden. Tell them that the Lord made this beautiful garden for people to live in long ago, that the Lord wanted them to take good care of the garden. He told them that they could enjoy the garden and all the fruit except the fruit of one tree.***



***You might want to add that little children can take good care of their garden by listening to their parents and sharing with others.***







## **The Garden of Eden**

### **Genesis 2**

### **LEVEL 2 – MODELING THE GARDEN**

#### **MATERIALS NEEDED**

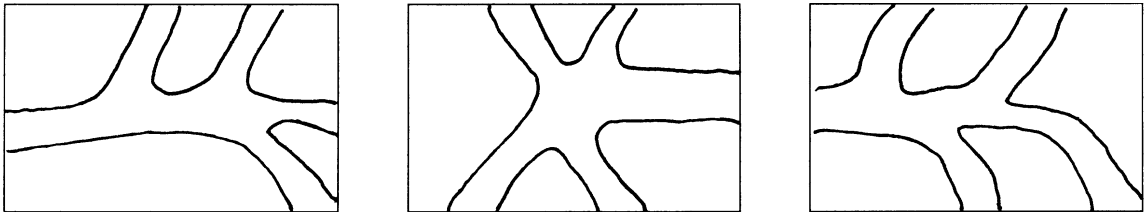
Aluminum tray, Glue, and wire  
Soil, clay  
Blue cellophane  
Rocks, moss, bark, berries



Probably every one of us can remember playing in the sandbox as a child. Perhaps many can picture themselves creating a Garden of Eden in a sand table.

This can be an individual or group project, with the whole family entering in. There is any number of ways to do it, but here are a few suggestions. ♦

1. Find a large tray or cookie sheet with one or two-inch sides. The disposable aluminum pans available in hardware or grocery stores are a possibility. Fill the tray with clean soil or builders' sand and separate it into areas that leave the bottom of the pan to form a river divided into four parts, like one of these:



2. Cut some strips from the blue cellophane and lay the strips in the "rivers", pushing the sand over the edges so the "water" looks natural.
3. Go outside and find rocks, moss, bark, bits of evergreen and whatever appeals to you. Dampen the sand and arrange your treasures to make a miniature garden. Tiny clusters of real or artificial flowers can add a lot.

The two trees can be formed from small evergreen leaves wired together for a trunk. Various berries or buds can be glued to the upper branches. Or tiny cut paper "fruits" can be added. Press the trunk of the tree into a lump of clay, bury the lump in the sand, and support it with rocks to give stability.

4. Model Adam and Eve and some animals in clay or homemade play dough (recipe on next page), or invest in some dimestore plastic animals and figures, which can be moved around to show episodes from the story.
5. Keep the garden watered and allow it to be played with as long as there is any interest shown. A project such as this can hold great meaning for a child.

## HOMEMADE PLAY DOUGH for GARDEN MODEL

½ cup salt  
3 Tablespoons powdered Alum  
2 Cups water  
3 Cups flour (or more)

Mix salt and water and bring to a simmer. Remove from fire and add Alum immediately. Add flour. Knead together. May be kept for long periods if kept tightly wrapped in a plastic bag.

**Suggestion:** Mix part of flour into hot mixture. Knead rest of flour into mixture, as with bread.



**The Garden of Eden**  
**Genesis 2**  
**LEVEL 3 – THE TREES OF EDEN**

**MATERIALS NEEDED**

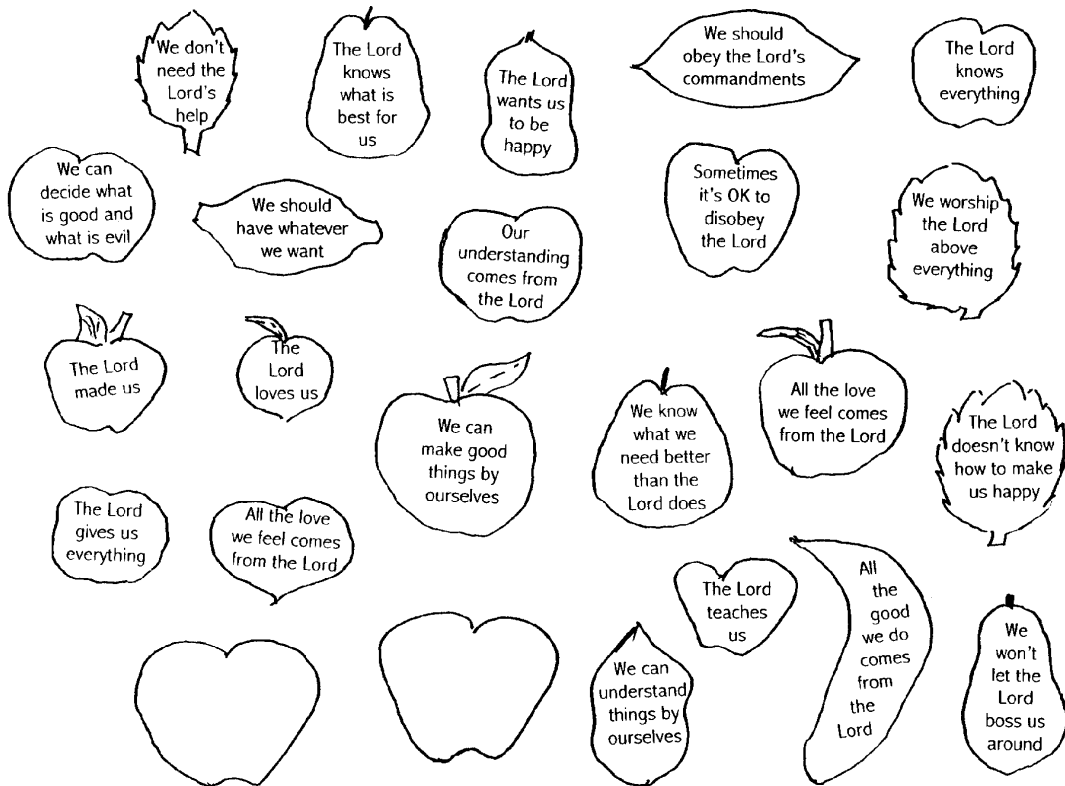
Crayons or markers  
 Glue and Scissors

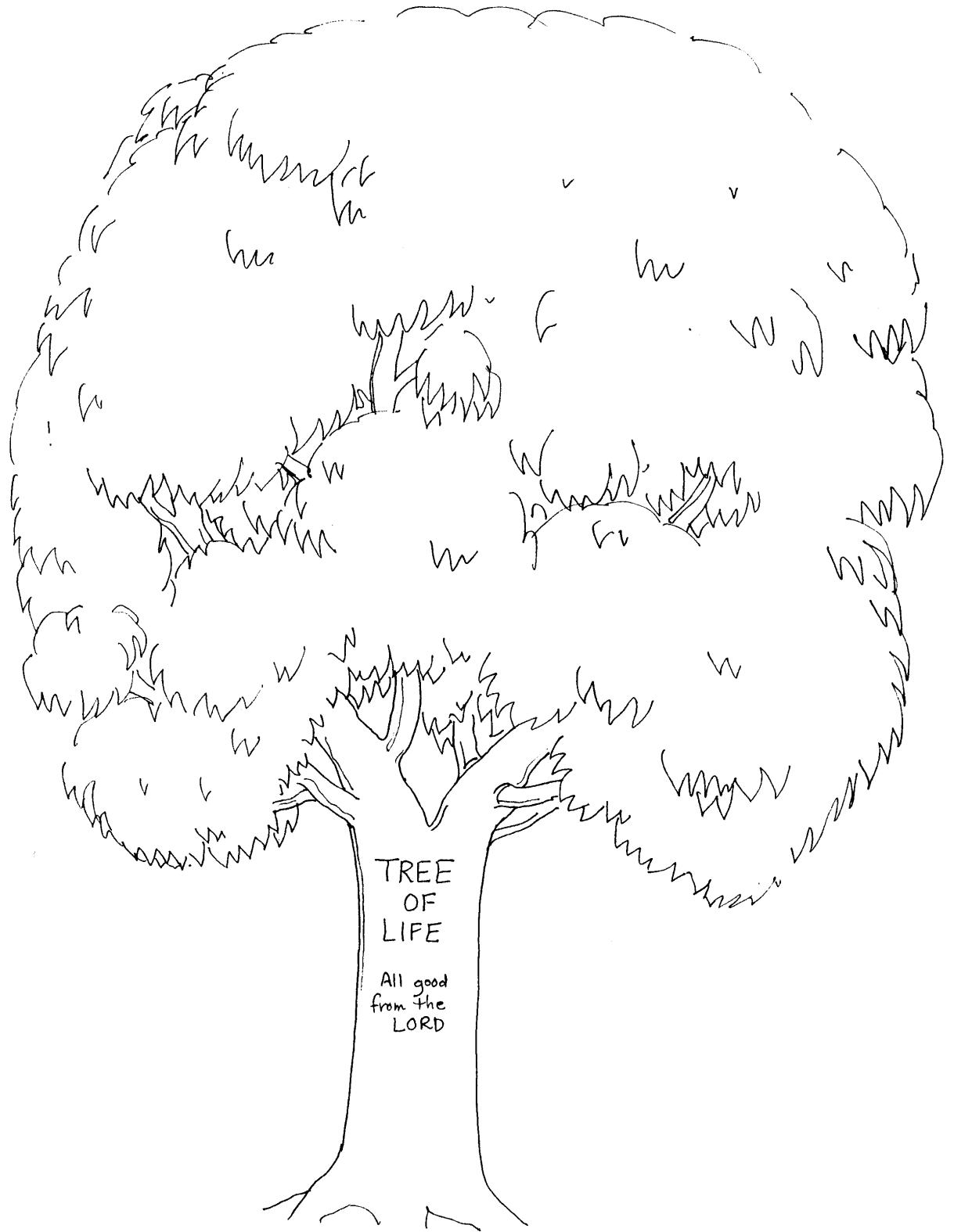
**THE TREES OF EDEN**

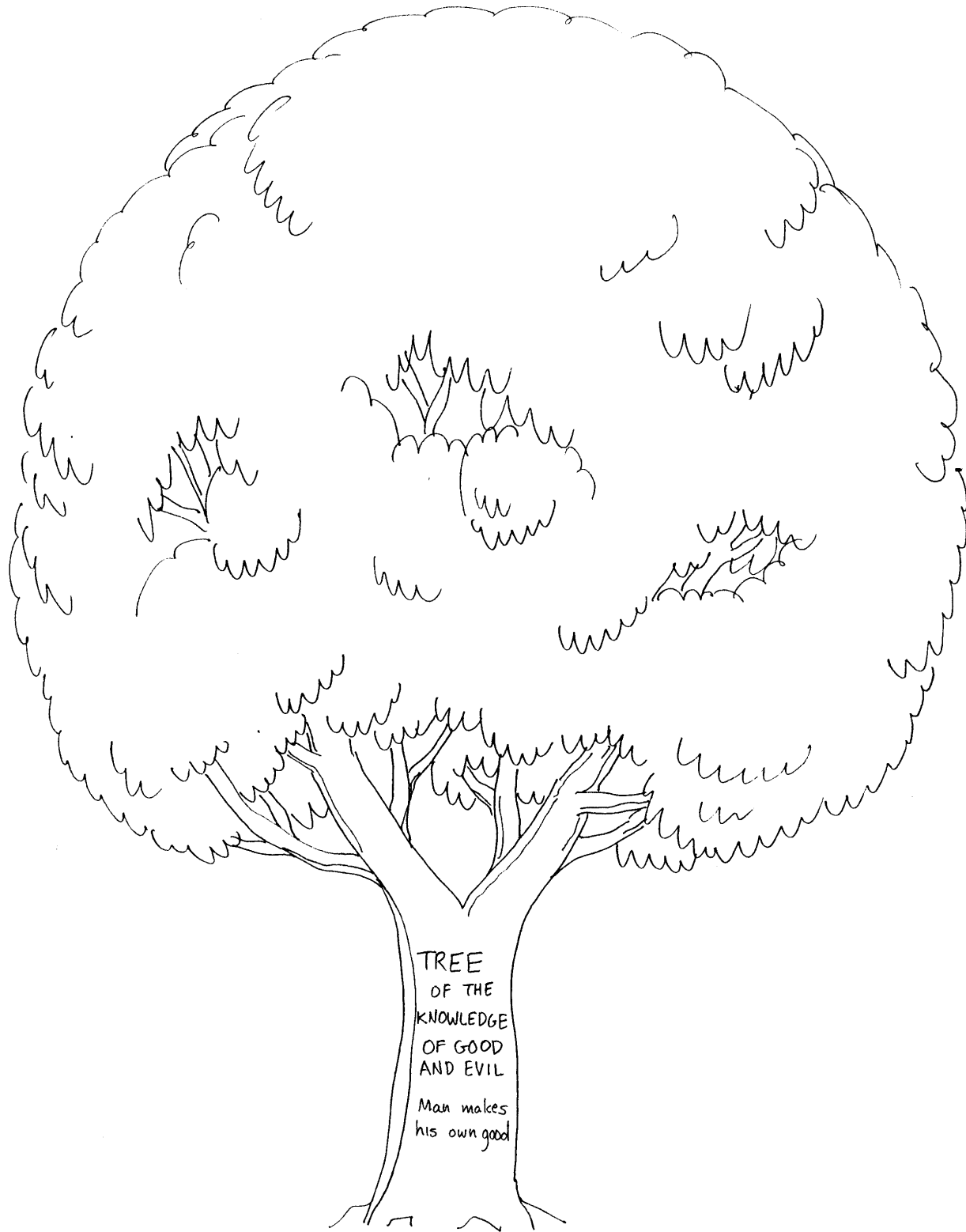
In the story of the Garden of Eden, the Lord told Adam that he could eat the fruit of the Tree of Life and all the other trees, but not the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

In this story the Tree of Life means everything good is from the Lord, and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil means putting ourselves above the Lord.

The fruits below contain various statements about the Lord and ourselves. Some of them belong on the Tree of Life, and some on the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Cut out the fruits. Decide which tree each one belongs on and then glue each fruit onto the correct tree. You can color the fruits and trees first, if you like. There are two blank fruits for you to make up your own statements, if you wish.







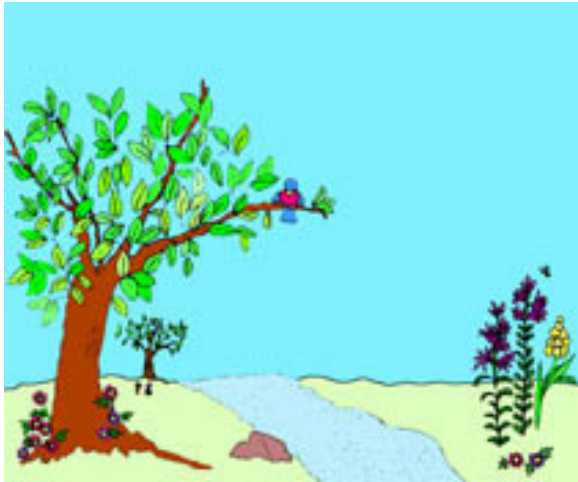
## *The Garden of Eden*

### *Genesis 2*

## **LEVEL 4 – CORRESPONDENCES OF THE GARDEN**

### CORRESPONDENCES OF THE GARDEN

When the Lord wanted to teach men in the world about heaven, He gave them a picture of natural things which symbolize heavenly ideas. So we read:



*“The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed.*

*And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*

*Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads.”*

*(Genesis 2:8-10)*

There was a time when people knew how to see the spiritual ideas in the natural picture, but that skill was lost.

The Lord has told us that we can learn it again if we study the Science of Correspondences. Correspondences are the connection between a spiritual idea and its symbol. Many people know some of them, like:

Red = Love

Lamb = Innocence

### **Application**

The spiritual story of the Garden of Eden is a story about our minds and spirits.

When you do the activity on the next page, remember that the inner story is about how our minds and spirits grow and change on our journey closer to the Lord and to heaven.

The words “**east**” and “**river**” are part of the story of the Garden of Eden.

We are told that the **EAST** means the **LORD**.

The “East” is mentioned many times in the Word.

Look up these verses in your copy of the Word.

See if you can understand just a little how “East” means the Lord.

Exodus 14:21	Ezekiel 8:16	Ezekiel 40:6
Ezekiel 43:2	Hosea 13:15	Genesis 12:8
Zechariah 14:4	Matthew 2:1,2	Revelation 7:2

*Choose the verse that helps you the best to think of the Lord as the “East.”*

*Copy the verse:*

We are told that **RIVER** means truth from the Lord

Here are a few of the many verses where the word “river” or “rivers” appear in the Word.

Look up these verses in your copy of the Word.

See if you can understand just a little how “river” means truth flowing from the Lord.

Genesis 2:10	Exodus 4:9	Ezekiel 30:12
Psalms 46:4	Psalms 78:16	Isaiah 41:18
Isaiah 43:19	Isaiah 30:12	Jeremiah 2:18

*Choose the verse that helps you the best to think of the Lord’s truth as a “river.”*

*Copy the verse:*

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## **The Garden of Eden** **Genesis 2**

### **LEVEL 5 – GIFTS FROM THE LORD**

#### GIFTS FROM THE LORD



#### The Garden That Is Around You And Is You

In the second chapter of Genesis we read of the production of a garden full of beautiful things. You are probably aware that this beautiful garden is a way of picturing outwardly the beautiful things that were within the minds and hearts of the people of the Most Ancient Church.

If you were to paint a picture of a wonderful person—a person with outstanding talents, brilliant thoughts and strong, good feelings—you might want the picture to have beautiful and striking things surround this person as a way of saying that there are many good things within. Your project is to put yourself into a picture with appropriate surroundings. But first you need the teaching of a very impressive passage in the book *Divine Love and Wisdom* about the surroundings in the spiritual world and how they reflect the character of those who are there.

Angels' surroundings wonderfully represent what they are like inside. The very trees, flowers, plants, birds, and animals of an angel's environment are a reflection of what the angel is like inside. When an angel leaves, his surroundings no longer appear. When another angel comes the surroundings change again.

**“These phenomena take form and change...because they all exist in accordance with the affections and consequent thoughts of the angels. For they are correspondent forms.” (DLW 322)**

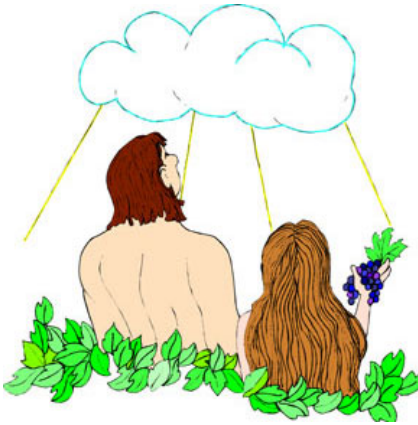
Swedenborg witnessed special moments when the Lord allowed an angel to realize how fully this is so.

**“I have been given to see that when angels have their eyes opened by the Lord and view these phenomena from the perspective of their corresponding uses, they recognize and see themselves in them.”**

It is almost as if the character of the angel creates the scenes around. But of course it is the Lord who brings them into existence through the angel (DLW 326). This is true of “the trees, and fruits...the flowers and seeds in the garden, the fields, the herbs and grasses, also the kinds of animals and birds.” (DLW 322). And so with every angel the story of Genesis 2 comes true.

**“The Lord God planted a garden...and out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight... Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air and brought them to Adam...” (Genesis 2:portions)**

## Project



**Gifts from the Lord.** You are going to do a project about yourself that will help you to focus on the gifts the Lord has given you—your interests, abilities and good qualities.

Look at the sample picture on page 3 to give you an idea of one way to do this project. In the center of the page draw a picture of yourself or glue a photo of yourself. Around it, draw pictures to show things about yourself.

**Representing your own characteristics** with just the right kind of animals and plants would be very difficult.. This could be done to some extent with a kind of inner strength being represented by a lion and a kind of insight by a sharp-eyed bird. But not even the angels can see in a full and detailed way how their inward nature is depicted by each species of plant and animal.

**Make your imagery very simple.** Use common objects to show your interests and strong points (sometimes call “virtues”). For example, if you enjoy writing, represent this by putting a pen somewhere in the picture. If there is a field of study that specially interests you, just draw a book with a word written on it (like “math”). You could indicate a special love of sports by drawing a soccer ball or other sports symbol. If you are a prompt person, a hard worker, or someone who likes to organize things, indicate that. If you are friendly and good at making people feel at ease, indicate that. Do not worry if you “can’t draw”. Beautiful artwork is not the point. Even writing words rather than drawing pictures is okay.

**Here is another way to do this project.** Find pictures in magazines that show your interests, abilities and qualities. Cut them out and glue them onto a piece of poster board to make a collage about “you”. You could display the collage somewhere, perhaps on your bedroom wall, and add to it from time to time as you find more pictures or become aware of new things about yourself.

**This is by no means a childish exercise.** It is quite possible that doing this, even in a simple way, will help you to find out things about yourself that you do not as yet fully realize. At your age it is very common not to have realized some of your most important assets. One student who was very good at languages did not even realize, after two years of college, that he was especially talented in this area. Some teachers brought it to his attention. An illustration of this in the world of athletics is that a man who became the world record holder in throwing the javelin did not know at the age of seventeen that he had any particular talent in that direction.

**Each one of us will perform a use in heaven** that will fill us with delight and which we will do in a way no one else can. Virtually everyone is still unaware of this unique talent in themselves.

**Finding out something about yourself** is just one possible outcome of taking this activity seriously. Its main use is to awaken and emphasize an awareness that the Lord has given us all the good things we have to cultivate and develop. Another use is to get you thinking that the story of the Garden of Eden is full of meaning for each individual on earth or in heaven.

