

Lesson 34: THE MARRIAGE GARDEN *Conjugal Love 316*

Lesson 34-A

READING:

Read to the students *The Marriage Garden*, by Melinda Riley Friesen (based on *Conjugal Love 316*). (The text of this story is included with this lesson.)

PROJECT

Preparation

1. Ahead of time, get a poster board (white or light blue), large pieces of green construction paper, and a supply of many colors of paper. Letter stencils would also be useful.
2. Make the grass by cutting and gluing on large pieces of green paper. The grass should go at least half way up the poster, and be rounded into gentle hills at the top.
3. Out of white or light gray paper, cut and glue on a path to go through the garden. Keep in mind that the children might want to make a house at the end of the path.

Note: Steps 2 and 3 may be done with students during Sunday School but will take more time.

Procedure:

1. Remind the children that everything in this marriage garden appeared in pairs. The fruit trees that were along either side of the path (or avenue) had their branches intertwined. These fruit trees formed a wall on either side of the avenue.
2. Have the children draw, cut out, and glue on things to go in the garden.
 - a) Remember that the trees on either side of the avenue were fruit trees, and had their branches intertwined.
 - b) Remember that everything in the garden came in twos, to represent marriage (pairs of flowers and shrubs).
 - c) If any students are willing, it would be nice to place a house in the garden, with a bride and groom in front of it.
 - d) Have someone use the stencils to draw and cut out letters for form a title: **A Marriage Garden** to glue across the top of the poster.
 - e) Find a good place to glue on the quote from *Conjugal Love 316*.



Lesson 34-B

READING:

If there are children who were not there last time, maybe re-read *The Marriage Garden* so they know what the project is about.

Read aloud *The Angel Visitors*, retold by Michèle Bongers Smith, as another description of marriage in heaven. (The text of this story is included with this lesson.)

Emphasize the wonderful truth that the Lord has a special partner for *everyone*. Some find that person on earth, and others find that person in heaven.

PROJECT:

Now work with the children to finish the poster project started last time.

They may want to add pairs of animals to the garden scene. (Just make sure they are nice animals, such as would appear in heaven.)

When I first did this project, students also added a pair of clouds and a double rainbow.

Make a copy of the quote below. Cut it out to use on the poster.

Quote for Poster

Swedenborg was invited into a garden in which a wedding was taking place.

"The avenue by which I entered was an avenue of fruit trees joined together by their branches, thus forming a continuous wall of trees on either side. Through this avenue I passed into a small garden which breathed a pleasant fragrance from its shrubs and flowers. The shrubs and flowers were in pairs, and I heard that gardens of this kind appear around houses where there are or have been weddings..."

Conjugal Love 316:2

The Marriage Garden

Adapted from *Conjugal Love* 316, retold by Melinda Riley Friesen

Conjugal love from its Divine origin is celestial, spiritual, holy, pure, and clean, above every other love which is from the Lord with the angels of heaven and the people of the church (*Conjugal Love* 64).

It was a beautiful day in heaven. Swedenborg was feeling very peaceful, and he decided to go for a walk. In the distance he saw a lovely grove of trees. In the middle of the grove there was an avenue leading to a palace. He saw young men and women, and also husbands and wives, entering the avenue.

Standing at the entrance was a gatekeeper. Swedenborg asked him, "May I go in, too?" The gatekeeper looked at him very carefully. Swedenborg asked, "Why do you look at me like that?"

The gatekeeper told him, "Beyond this avenue is a small garden. Inside the palace you see in the middle of the garden, there are two newly married partners. Today all their friends are coming to wish them happiness. I don't know all the people who are coming, but I was told that I would know them by looking into their faces. You see, in heaven you can tell what is in people's hearts by looking at their faces."

The gatekeeper then said, "So, if I see the delight of conjugal love in your face, then I will know that you may enter the garden." Because Swedenborg had been thinking of marriage and feeling happy for the newly married couple, he was welcomed into the garden. He walked along the avenue. On either side were fruit trees with their branches joining. Next he entered a garden that smelled beautiful. All the flowers were in pairs. This kind of garden appears whenever there is a wedding in heaven. That is why they call it a marriage garden.

Swedenborg came to the house of the married couple. The pair was holding hands and talking to each other. Swedenborg could clearly see love truly conjugal in their faces and hear it in their voices. Along with many others, Swedenborg walked up to the pair and wished them happiness in their life together.

Going back out into the garden, Swedenborg saw a group of young men. Everyone was going toward them to hear what they were saying, because they were talking about conjugal love. There was a wise man in the center of the group. He said that the happiness of heaven comes from the delights of conjugal love. He also said that the Lord knows that one man and one woman are meant to be together. He makes sure that they find each other.

The wise man continued, "When a couple who will marry first meet each other in heaven, they know immediately that they are just right for each other. The young man thinks to himself, 'She is mine.' And the young woman thinks to herself, 'He is mine.'"

The man went on, telling how after getting to know each other for a time, the young man and woman then share with each other how they feel. They become betrothed, which means they tell each other of their special love, and promise to be married. And after the wedding they live together to eternity as one angel looking to the Lord.

After hearing this, everyone went home filled with the delight of what they had learned about heavenly marriages.

The Angel Visitors

A Memorable Relation from Conjugal Love 42, retold by Michéle Bongers Smith

Tell the inhabitants of the earth among whom you live that there is such a thing as truly conjugal love, offering a million delights scarcely any of which are yet known to the world. But they will be discovered when the church betroths itself to her Lord and becomes His bride and wife (*Conjugal Love* 293).

A chariot came down from heaven. From far away it looked as if one angel were in it. But once it was closer you could see two angels. The chariot was beautiful and shiny. Two horses, as white as snow, led it.

The angels were husband and wife. They held two turtledoves in their hands. They had lived in heaven for a long time and never got old. They shone with love and you could see how happy they were from their faces.

They were in conjugal love. That means their love was pure and very, very strong. They loved the Lord more than anything else.

The husband was very handsome. His eyes and face shone because he was wise and full of love. He wore a long robe and had a ruby and two sapphires on his belt. The wife was so full of love for her husband that she shone with a very bright light. It was so bright that you could not see her! But when she turned partly away from her husband...you could see her better.

No words could tell how beautiful she was. Her eyes were lit with flames of light and she glowed with amazing colors. Flowers made of diamonds were braided in her hair. As she moved around her husband, her clothes changed color.

When they spoke, something amazing happened. While the husband spoke, it sounded as if his wife were also talking! When she spoke, it seemed as if her husband were talking as well! They were so deeply in love that they spoke as if they were one person. Their voices even sounded like conjugal love, full of peace and innocence.

At last they had to leave. They left in their chariot and followed a road to heaven. On both sides of the road were flower beds, olive trees, and orange trees. As they got near their heaven, young women came out to meet them and led them in.

Then another angel came from heaven. In his hand was a scroll. It told all about conjugal love. It was a gift for the people on earth.

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