



The World of Spirits

Lesson Overview

1. Game

Play Two Truths and a Lie.

2. Read

Discover changes a person must go through to be prepared for eternal life. pp.1-2

3. Activity & Discussion

Identify and separate good and evil actions. Discuss ways in which they must be separated before a person enters eternal life. p. 3

New Church Concept Paths to Heaven

When spirits have been prepared for heaven...they are clothed with angelic garments and brought to the way that leads upwards towards heaven, delivered to angel guards, and afterwards introduced into societies and into many blessings there. After this each one is led by the Lord into his or her own society in various ways, sometimes by winding paths. The ways by which they are led are known to the Lord alone. When they come to their own society their interiors are opened. As these are like the interiors of the angels in that society they are immediately recognized and received with joy. See *Heaven and Hell* 519

FaithBuilder 1 | Lesson 6 | Eternal Life

Two Truths and a Lie

Seat students in a circle. Each person thinks of three things to say about him or herself. Two statements should be true, and one should be false. Invite students to share the statements with the group. Others will guess whether the statements they have heard are true or false.

1. How easy was it to tell when someone was lying?
2. Why can lies be hard to detect?
3. Imagine playing this game soon after waking up after death in the world of spirits. How might the game be different there? Explain your answer.*

Read

The book *Heaven and Hell* tells us that people wake up in the part of the spiritual world that is called the world of spirits immediately after they die. The world of spirits is not where people live permanently after death; it is between heaven and hell, and is, in fact, where our minds live while we live in the natural world.

The world of spirits is neither heaven nor hell but a place or state between the two. It is where a person first arrives after death, being in due time either raised into heaven or cast into hell from it depending on our life in this world. The world of spirits is a place halfway between heaven and hell, and it is also our own halfway state after death. The hells were underneath it and the heavens above it. It is a halfway state because as long as we are in it, we are not yet in either heaven or hell. See *Heaven and Hell* 421, 422

This world looks like “a valley surrounded by mountains and cliffs, with dips and rises” (*Heaven and Hell* 429). We will see people we have known in the natural world—especially if we enjoyed a strong connection with them.

As soon as we arrive in the other life, we are all recognized by our friends and relatives and by people we have known in one way or another. Further, we talk with each other and continue to see each other in keeping with our friendship in the world.... It often happens that married partners meet and welcome each other joyfully. *Heaven and Hell* 494

After we have been in the spiritual world for a while, make new friends who care

* Immediately after death we will be able to say things that disagree with what we think or have done, but after living in the world of spirits for a while we will not be able to hide our true thoughts and feelings any more.

about the same things that we love most deeply. And we may see less of old friends who value different things than we do deep down inside.

Preparing for our Eternal Home

While we are in the world of spirits, we will be prepared for our eternal home in heaven or in hell. Angels will teach us about life there and gently examine our thoughts to see what we love most. We will no longer be able to hide our thoughts from other people, and we will start to be aware of our true inner hidden thoughts and feelings. We will behave in ways that show what we really think and love. While in this state:

...it is obvious what kind of people they really were in the world. They actually behave in accord with their own nature. People who were inwardly devoted to the good in the world then behave sanely and wisely, more wisely than when they were living in the world.... In contrast, people who were focused on evil in the world then behave foolishly and insanely... because they are in freedom and are no longer constrained. *Heaven and Hell* 505

Gradually people who are moving towards life in heaven separate from people who are moving towards a future life in hell. And people who will be more comfortable living in hell are drawn towards others like themselves. The movement towards or away from others is determined by what people love most in life, and it is confirmed by the many choices they made during life in the world.

To prepare people for life in heaven or hell, the Lord helps them put aside thoughts and feelings that do not fit with their ruling love. For example, good people choosing heaven will need to get rid of bad habits they may still be hanging on to. Angels teach these people about life in heaven, and when their preparation is complete, they are given angelic clothing and led by the Lord to a path going to a heavenly community that is suited to them.

People who prefer to follow the selfish path of hell will be prepared to move into the home they have chosen. How long we spend in this halfway place depends on how much preparation we need for the kind of eternal life we have chosen.

What's in Your Suitcase?

A Spiritual Task by Rev. Derek Elphick

"Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven...." Matthew 6:20

You've heard the phrase before but what are these "treasures" we're supposed to be storing up in heaven? Spiritual treasures are the spiritual values we put into practice and make a habit. Quite literally, we lay up treasures in heaven every time we act with sincerity, integrity, and honesty; whenever we make the effort to be kind, generous, and thoughtful toward others; whenever we use our talents and are useful to society. Of course, in order to lay up treasures in heaven you need to **A.C.T.**, that is, you need the right **A**ttitude, plenty of **C**ourage from the Lord, and an unshakable **T**rust in Him. So shun the negative, fearful, suspicious thoughts and feelings you may have, the "moth and rust" (evils) which destroy, and rest content knowing that you are laying up treasures in heaven.

When a person dies and enters the next life, his life may be compared to food which is received in a gentle manner by the lips and is then passed through the mouth, throat, and esophagus into the stomach, the whole process being conditioned by the character he formed during his life what he did.

At first the treatment most spirits receive is mild. They are kept with angels and good spirits. This is pictured by what happens to food, when it is touched gently by the lips and tasted by the tongue to see what it is like. Soft, sweet, and oily foods are received instantly into the bloodstream. Food that is hard, bitter, disagreeable, and has fewer nutrients is harder to break down. It is sent down through the esophagus into the stomach to be refined by various methods and violent actions.

Food that is even harder, less agreeable, and has less value is forced into the intestines and finally into the rectum where the first hell is situated, and is then finally expelled as excrement.

A person's life after death can be compared with this. At first he is confined to matters of an external nature. Because he has led a decent life externally, he is among angels and upright spirits. But once he ceases to be confined to them, what he had been like inwardly—what he had been like so far as his thoughts and affections were concerned, and at length so far as his ends in view were concerned—is revealed. Those ends determine the life that awaits him. See *Arcana Coelestia* 5175

Separating Good from Evil

While we are living in the world of spirits, our good and evil qualities will be separated to prepare us for either heaven or hell.

Identify Good and Evil Habits

In the following chart, mark habits that you think are good with a ✓ and habits you think could be bad or evil with an ✗.

complaining	cheerfulness	sharing
having courage	being “prickly”	criticizing
being sarcastic	usefulness	helping others
forgiving	being jealous	honesty
obeying laws	graciousness	laziness
hating others	kindness	meanness
swearing	appreciating others	saying kind words
stealing	making others afraid	being happy for others
lying	putting others first	hurting

Discussion

1. Choose a good habit from this list, or another good habit that comes to mind. What are the positive effects and long term consequences that may come from practicing this habit?
2. Choose a harmful habit, such as lying. What are the negative effects and long term consequences that practicing this habit could bring?
3. Can people “earn” their way into heaven by simply doing good deeds? Does it make a difference if someone appears to do something nice for another person, but their real goal is to get something out of it for themselves? Is this really doing good?
4. Everyone living in the world has a mixture of good and bad habits. How will these be sorted out in the world of spirits?
5. Do angels in heaven still have bad habits? Do people who choose to live in hell still have good habits? Why or why not?