

GLENVIEW NEW CHURCH SUNDAY MORNING PROGRAM
Primary Lessons: Phase 2, Lesson 22
We're Free to Choose Heaven or Hell

I. Underlying Ideas for the Teacher

- A. The Lord maintains a balance between heaven and hell so that people can be in freedom.
- B. It is the Lord's will that all people go to heaven, but He leaves us in freedom to decide for ourselves.
- C. Everything good is from the Lord. Everything evil is from hell.
- D. Every person is associated with a community in heaven and a community in hell through spirits in the world of spirits. (HH 600, 601)
- E. Angels from heaven and spirits from hell are attached to every person. Each of us has two guardian angels and two evil spirits from hell with us at all times. The angels and evil spirits are not aware of who we are or of what we're doing, but they are aware of our spiritual states.
- F. The angels perceive nothing more delightful than to remove evils from a person and lead him to heaven. (AC 5992)
- G. Evil spirits believe that they are powerful, but they can win against only those who are in evil.
- H. A person's ruling love guides him along a road that leads to his home in heaven or in hell.

II. Story Circle

- A. Introduction
 - 1. Do you remember learning about the world of spirits? That's the place in the spiritual world where people stay for a while before they go to heaven or hell.
 - 2. Today our story is about two friends in the world of spirits, about the choices they've made about loving good or loving evil, and where those choices lead them.
- B. Tell/Read the Story
 - 1. Read the attached story, "Tyler's Choice."

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C. Ideas to Discuss

1. Where were Stephen and Tyler living at the beginning of the story? (In the world of spirits)
2. Why is Stephen worried about Tyler? (He seems to have bad friends, and he asks for money too often.)
3. How does Stephen try to help Tyler? (He tells Tyler that he is worried about him.)
4. Does Tyler want help from Stephen? (No)
5. What happens to Stephen on a trip out of town? (Robbers attack him, steal his money, and try to hurt him.)
6. What do the robbers look like? (Black from head to toe, and a black cloud around them)
7. What did Stephen do when he saw that Tyler was among them? (Asked why Tyler was with them and why he was doing this. Told Tyler evil actions bring punishment, not happiness.)
8. Why did the robbers want to kill Stephen? (They didn't like listening to his good talk, and they hated hearing him say the Lord's prayer.)
9. Who rescued Stephen? (An angel sent by the Lord)
10. In the end, where does Tyler make his home in the spiritual world? (Hell)
11. What is it like for him? (He has to work for food and clothing, was given a few small coins which he treasured, and which he had to give up if he misbehaved. He wasn't truly happy, but he was where he wanted to be.)
12. Where does Stephen make his home? (Heaven)

D. Further Ideas

1. Where did Stephen's good feelings come from, such as wanting to help his friend, Tyler? (From the Lord)
2. Where did Tyler's bad feelings come from, such as wanting to rob people? (From hell)
3. Each of us has the Lord's angels as well as evil spirits near us. When we choose to do something good, we are listening to the angels. When we do something wrong, we are listening to the evil spirits.
 - a. What do the evil spirits want to make us love? (Bad things)
And where do they want to lead us to live? (In hell)
 - b. What do the angels want to help us love? (Good things)
Where are they helping the Lord to lead us to live? (In heaven)
4. Sometimes the evil spirits attack us, just as the robbers attacked Stephen. If we do the bad things that they want us to do, then we have chosen to let the evil spirits win the fight. And we won't feel very happy. But we can choose to tell the evil spirits, "No, go away!" just as the angel did in the story. When we say that, we are listening

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to the Lord and His angels, and we are letting them win the fight. Then our guardian angels can drive away the evil spirits, and we will feel safe and happy again.

5. Can you think of an example of when you could choose to listen to the Lord's angels instead of the evil spirits? (Have children suggest several sets of circumstances and the good and bad alternatives they could choose. Some examples, if needed, to get them going:
 - a. Child sees money on parent's dresser. Angels want him to leave it there because stealing is wrong. Evil spirits want him to take it because he wants to buy candy, and his parents won't miss it, don't really need it.
 - b. Child accidentally knocks over a lamp, and it breaks. He is afraid he will be punished. Angels want child to tell his parents the truth. Evil spirits want him to lie and say the dog did it.)
6. Evil spirits can hurt us only if we let them. They can't hurt anyone in the world or in heaven who loves what is good. The Lord gives us power against the evil spirits when we ask for His help.

III. Enrichment Activities

A. Music

1. "You Shall Love the Lord Your God With All Your Heart and Mind," FIRST SONGS FOR LITTLE CHILDREN, p. 7.
2. "Heavenly Father, Lord of Mercy," Hymnal 165.

B. Activities

C. Project: Choosing to Listen to Angels or Evil Spirits

1. Have children draw a picture of themselves, full front view (or provide male and female templates or pre-cut figures).
2. Draw a line down the center of the face, and make half the face happy and the other half sad or angry.
3. Attach the figure to a sheet of construction paper with a paper fastener near the middle of the figure, so the figure can be rocked a bit, left and right.
4. Have the children draw 2 angels on the background paper toward which the happy side of the face can turn; and have them draw 2 evil spirits toward which the sad/angry side of the face can turn.
5. Glue on text slips or have children write, "We're Free to Choose Heaven or Hell" on the project.

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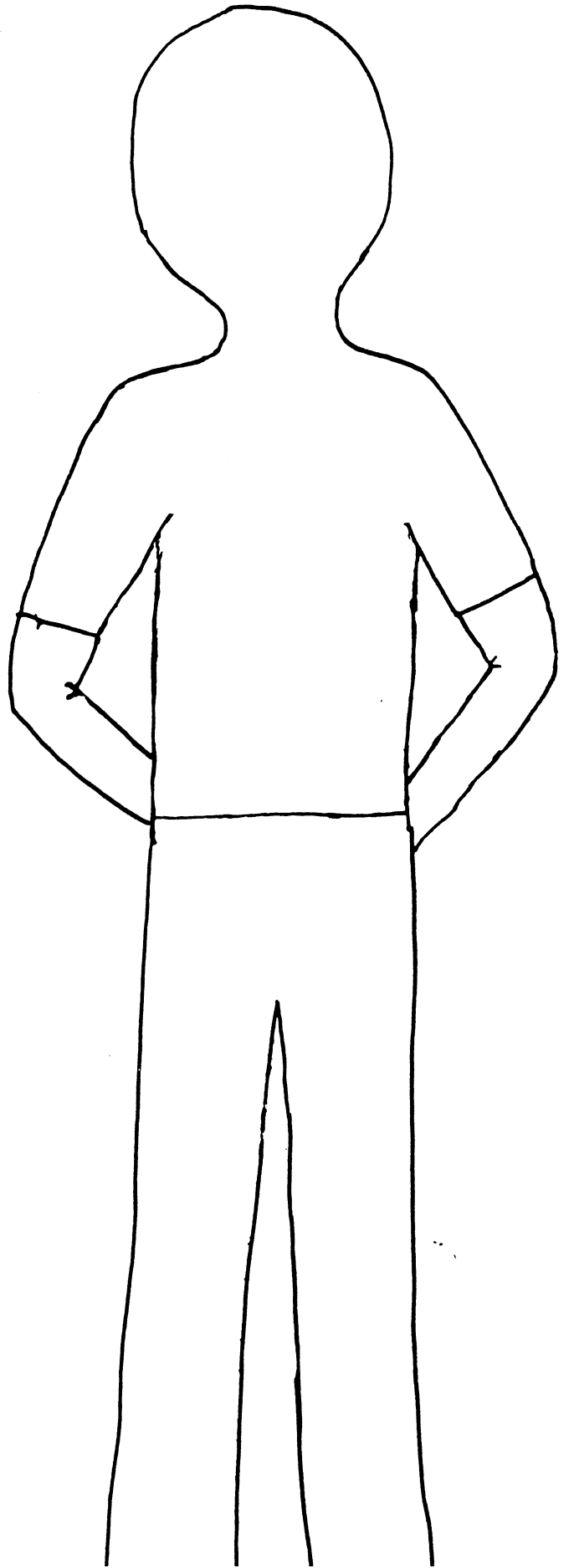
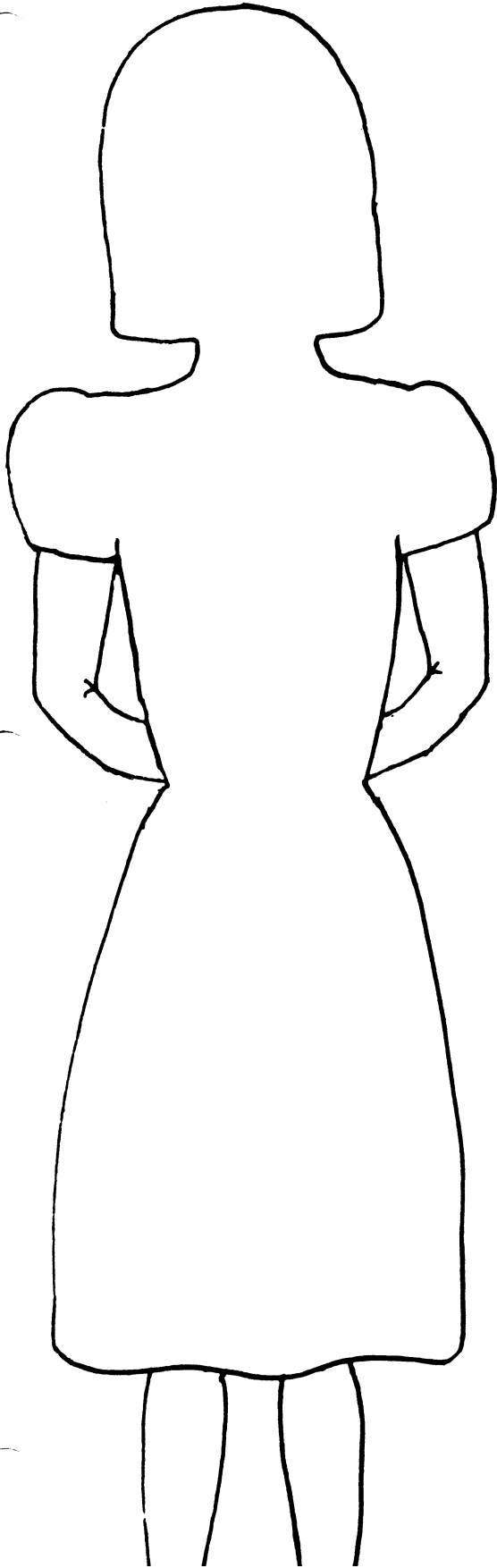
IV. Teaching Aids

V. Further Reading for the Teacher

A. *Heaven and Hell*, Chapter 33, "Heaven's Bond with the Human Race," and chapter 63, "Man is in Freedom by Means of the Balance Between Heaven and Hell."

B. SD 3525; AC 904:1, 1880, 5470, 5848-5849.

C. *Spirits and Men* by Hugo Odhner, Chapter 4, "Our Spiritual Guardians."



TYLER'S CHOICE

"Hey, Stephen! Can I borrow some money?"

Stephen turned around to see his friend, Tyler, hurrying toward him. "But I lent you money just yesterday, Tyler. Why do you need so much?"

"Never mind," Tyler answered huffily. "I thought you were my friend."

Stephen pulled some money from his pocket and gave it to Tyler. Tyler smiled. "Thanks, Stephen. I knew you'd come through." And he hurried off again.

Stephen walked home thinking about Tyler. When Stephen came to the spiritual world, he was happy to see his old friend again. At first, they had seen each other fairly often. But lately Tyler was spending more and more time with new friends, and Stephen wasn't sure they were good people. Now Tyler was asking him for money whenever they met. Stephen was worried about him.

It was a week before he saw Tyler again. Stephen had been very busy helping people find books at the library all morning. After work, he enjoyed visiting with his many friends, but he couldn't stop worrying about Tyler. On his way home, he saw Tyler talking with two men on a street corner. As Stephen walked closer, he realized that Tyler was arguing with them.

One of the men said, "I know you're the one who robbed me outside of town today!"

"Not me," said Tyler. "I haven't been out of town for weeks!"

The other man insisted, "You look just like the man who stopped us on the road before we were robbed!"

"Sorry," said Tyler. "You must be mistaken." As the men left, grumbling, Stephen walked up to Tyler.

"I'm glad I've found you," he said. "I've been worried about you, Tyler."

"Ah, you worry too much," Tyler answered. "I'm doing very well now. I have a new job, so I won't need money from you any more."

Stephen looked carefully at Tyler and asked, "What is your new job, Tyler?"

"I can't really say," Tyler replied.

"Does it have anything to do with your new friends?" Stephen persisted. "Just how well do you know them, anyway?"

"Never mind about my friends," Tyler said angrily. "They suit me fine." He hurried away, and Stephen watched him go. There was something different about Tyler now; even his face looked different. Stephen walked home slowly, sad that he couldn't do anything to help his friend.

It was about a month later that Stephen was robbed. He was on a trip out of town when the robbers attacked him. They were black from head to toe, and there was a black cloud around them. Stephen recognized them; they were Tyler's friends. Then he realized with a shock that Tyler was one of them! Stephen hardly recognized him, his face was so black and ugly.

"So, Stephen," laughed one of the robbers wickedly, "Are you surprised to see Tyler here? Want to give him a lecture?" He laughed louder, and the others joined in.

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Stephen looked at Tyler. He was very sad to find his friend here. "Tyler, why are you here among the robbers?" Tyler was silent, ignoring him. Stephen said loudly, "Tyler, why are you doing this?"

Tyler came closer and said, "Life has always been easy for you, Stephen, but not for me. I've never had your kind of luck."

"But, Tyler," said Stephen, "this won't bring you happiness. Your evil actions will bring only punishment to you!"

The robbers became enraged listening to Stephen. "Let's kill him, Tyler!" they shouted. "We don't like him." Tyler shrugged and turned away. Stephen saw one of the robbers pull out a long knife. He squeezed his eyes shut and prayed to the Lord, "Our Father who art in heaven..." This made the robbers even angrier. Just as they were closing in around Stephen, an angel came floating down to them. He wore a shining white robe, and there were little stars around his head.

"Go away!" commanded the angel, and the evil robbers ran from the place.

The angel lifted Stephen up and carried him to his home. "Thank you," said Stephen. "You helped me just in time."

"It was the Lord who saved you," the angel said with a smile. "He sent me to rescue you." The angel made sure Stephen was all right, and then he returned to heaven.

Later, the angel came back to see him. "How are you, Stephen?"

"Fine, thank you. But I find myself thinking about Tyler. How is he?"

"He has gone to his spiritual home," said the angel. "He chose to live in hell."

Stephen was horrified. "Wasn't there any way to save him?"

"No," the angel answered, shaking his head, "he did not want to be saved."

"What is it like for him in hell?" Stephen asked.

"He works for food and clothing. And he is given a few small coins, which he saves and treasures greatly. If he misbehaves, he has to give up some of his coins. No one in hell is truly happy, but Tyler is where he wants to be."

"How sad," Stephen sighed. "I wanted my friend to find heavenly happiness."

"I know," said the angel. "But each person chooses for himself. Even while he was in the world, Tyler was making the choices that led him into hell." With these words, the angel left.

Stephen saw the angel a third time soon after that. The angel came to him, smiling with joy.

"The Lord has sent me to guide you to your home in heaven. You are to live in my society. Welcome, friend!" the angel exclaimed. And he led Stephen up into heaven where he lived happily forever.

(Adapted from *Conjugal Love* 268 and *True Christian Religion* 209:4)

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