

## THE LORD LEADS US BY MEANS OF ANGELS AND SPIRITS

The Lord has provided that there should be angels and spirits with each individual, and that a person should be ruled by the Lord through these.

(Heaven and Hell 247)

The Lord wants to give every person a home in heaven when they enter the spiritual world, but He leaves us all in freedom to choose whether to live in heaven or in hell. Our choices and actions are part of the process that determines our eternal home. The Lord hopes that we will choose life in heaven, and He is always ready to help. There is a beautiful passage in the *Apocalypse Explained*: “The Lord leads a person as if by the hand, permitting and withholding as far as he is willing to follow in freedom. If a person looks to the Lord, he is brought by continual steps out of hell, up towards heaven, and into heaven” (1174:2). One of the many ways the Lord leads us is by means of angels and evil spirits so that we are in complete freedom or equilibrium, able to turn our step toward heaven or toward hell.



### READ: Inspiring Quotes About the Lord’s Leading

#### PROJECT: Picture the Lord Holding Your Hand

Picture the Lord holding someone’s hand—perhaps your hand or that of someone you love. Show the Lord leading this person upwards toward heaven.

#### PROJECT: Let’s Be Creative: Make an Angel Mirror

This project illustrates the truth that the Lord sees all of us as potential angels.

### SING: I Pray Thee, Lord, to Guide My Ways

## ELIJAH AND THE ANGEL

And the angel of the Lord came back the second time, and touched him, and said, “Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you.”

(1 Kings 19:7)

Elijah was a prophet who faced the wrath of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel when he did as the Lord told him. After fleeing for his life, Elijah felt like giving up. But the angel of the Lord came to Elijah, giving him food, water, and encouragement. While guardian angels are with us always, they are especially active when we are experiencing a spiritual crisis. This is beautifully illustrated by the story of the angel helping Elijah.

### READ: “An Angel Helps Elijah” a family talk by the Rev. Kurt Horigan Asplundh

**FAMILY WORSHIP: Elijah and the Angel of the Lord**

After giving some background (that Elijah had challenged the prophets of Baal to a contest and won, proving that the Lord is the one God and that Baal was a false god, and also infuriating the wicked rulers, Ahab and Jezebel), read the story from 1 Kings 19:4-8. The letter of the Word provides several points for discussion:

- *Elijah talked or prayed to the Lord before lying down to sleep.* The Lord knows our thoughts, but it helps us to turn our thoughts to Him in prayer. In this prayer, Elijah is acknowledging that he needs the Lord's help, in effect turning over his problems to the Lord.
- *Elijah "slept under a broom tree."* Our problems often seem smaller after we get some sleep. This is partly because the evil spirits like to worry us when we are tired, but the Lord and the angels help us see things differently after we get some rest.
- *The angel provided a cake of bread and a jar of water for Elijah to drink.* Angels help us remember the truths that we have accepted (water) and our love for these truths (the bread), so that we can be strengthened by these in times of spiritual conflict. If we read the Lord's Word and apply it to our lives, then it is easier for the angels to help us.
- How can we apply the teachings of this story?

**PROJECT: Picture the Angel Helping Elijah**

Make a picture of the angel helping Elijah, giving him bread to eat and water to drink. Show Elijah in the wilderness, wearing a simple robe and lying down under a bush called a broom tree (a kind of juniper). Show the angel standing nearby, and give the angel a shining white robe, perhaps gluing pearlescent glitter onto the robe or use a yellow crayon to indicate the light around the angel. The angel has provided a jar of water and a cake of bread, baked on the coals of a fire.

**COLORING PAGE: Helping Elijah** by Marguerite L. Acton

**JOURNAL PAGE: Arise and Eat**

Read the story about Elijah's despair and how the Lord sent an angel to comfort and nurture him in 1 Kings 1-8. Elijah despairs because the forces of evil symbolized by the wicked Jezebel are threatening him. Elijah actually prays for death. And what is the Lord's response? An angel touches Elijah and tells him to "Arise and eat" (1 Kings 19:5). Then the angel touches Elijah a second time and tells him to "arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you" (1 Kings 19:7). Look back on a challenging time in your life and reflect on (or write about) how the Lord and His angels may have been giving you the encouragement and spiritual nourishment you needed. Or you could draw on the message of this story and the quotes about guardian angels to write encouraging words to read over when you next experience a difficult time.

**ELISHA AND THE HOST OF ANGELS**

*"Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them."  
(2 Kings 6:16)*

This miraculous event pictures the way the Lord protects us from evil spirits as long as we resist their influence in our lives. The Lord gives the angels power over evil spirits, and they are always ready to defend us if we truly desire His help.

**READ: "Elisha and the Syrian Army" by the Rev. Karl Alden**

**PROJECT: Make a Wax-Resist Picture of the Host of Angels**

Use yellow and orange wax or oil-pastel crayons on white paper to draw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire that Elisha saw. Use other colors to picture Elisha with his servant. The young man sees the Syrian army, surrounding the city of Dothan with men, horses, and chariots. Go ahead and show some of the Syrian army if you wish, but be sure to leave lots of room to show what Elisha sees—angels ready to protect him. When you have finished drawing the picture, brush blue or green poster paint (thinned with water) or watercolor paint over the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire. The dark paint will make the angelic army visible. Title the picture with Elisha’s words, choosing either: “Those who are with us are more than those who are with them” (2 Kings 6:16) or “Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see” (2 Kings 6:17).

**COLORING PAGE: Chariots of Fire** by Marguerite L. Acton

**PROJECT: Those Who Are With Us—A Folding Picture**

This project lets you fold down a flap of paper to show what Elisha’s servant saw, then lift it up to show the angels that Elisha saw.

## **OUR GUARDIAN ANGELS**

*Angels are sent to people to watch over them and to lead them away from evil affections and thoughts, and to inspire them with good affections if they will freely receive them.*

*(see Heaven and Hell 391)*

The Lord provides that everyone has at least two guardian angels to help him or her along the journey of life. To serve the Lord in this way brings great joy to the angels. For they are like the shepherd in the parable of the lost lamb who rejoices over the sheep that is saved (Luke 15:6). The Heavenly Doctrine teaches that nothing gives the angels greater delight and happiness than to remove evils from a person and lead him to heaven. But they can only do this if we choose to cooperate.

**READ: “Guardian Angels”** by the Rev. Kurt Horigan Asplundh

**STORY: “The Princess Angiola and the Ivory Tower”** by Amena Pendleton Haines

**COLORING PAGE: Guardian Angels** by Marguerite L. Acton

**BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS:**

*The Unseen Companions* written and illustrated by Bridget Swinton

Introduces the idea that spirits, both good and bad, are always with us, influencing the choices we make. Imaginative illustrations of angels, demons, and the humans they accompany.

*The Golden Heart and Other Stories* by Amena Pendleton Haines

A collection of stories based on New Church teachings of the afterlife, including stories about princes, princesses, dragons, and robbers.

**Here are some projects to help children remember the angels that are with us all:**

**Angels with You Project**

**Conical Paper Angel Project**

**Mobile of Angels**

**Angel Snowflake Project**

**SING: Give, O Lord, This Child Thy Blessing**

This song is sometimes used when a child is baptized. The lyrics include this phrase: “Send Thine angels near to guard *him/her*.”

## **THE EVIL SPIRITS**

*In hour of conflict, evil spirits are present who absolutely hate everything that is good and true, that is, every element of love and faith in the Lord.*

*(see Arcana Coelestia 59)*

Evil spirits hate the Lord and all that is good and true, so their goal is to lead people to hell. Without the protection that the Lord provides, we would have no hope of making our eternal home in heaven. For the malice and cunning of the evil spirits would overwhelm us. One might wonder why the Lord allows evil spirits to influence people. The answer is that it gives us the ability to choose between good and evil, heaven and hell. Only in freedom, can we truly come to love the Lord and willingly adopt a heavenly life.

**READ: “Angels and Spirits” by the Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith**

Is there any truth in the claim that “the devil made me do it?” Explore how the evil spirits try to distort our thinking so that we will do what is wrong and justify our actions. Learn how the angels inspire us with uplifting thoughts to counterbalance the influences of hell.

**STORY: “The Casket of Jewels” by Amena Pendleton Haines**

## **EQUILIBRIUM AND FREEDOM**

*The angels call forth good and truth with a person and set them opposite the evils and falsities activated by the evil spirits. As a result, the person is in the middle and is not conscious of the evil or of the good. And being in the middle he is in freedom to turn towards one or towards the other.*

*(see Apocalypse Explained 619:15)*

The Lord treasures our freedom, knowing that life in heaven must be freely chosen or it will not bring us happiness. So the Lord provides that every person has angels and evil spirits with him, ensuring spiritual equilibrium—the freedom to choose good or evil, turning to heaven or toward hell.

**READ: “Choice” by the Rev. Douglas M. Taylor**

**ACTIVITY: Inviting the Angels or the Evil Spirits**

Use figures of an angel and an evil spirit to dramatize what happens when we choose to do something wrong. Is it the angel or the evil spirit that can stay near us then? What if we do something good?

**PROJECT: Angels and Spirits with Us—A Mobile**

Use a hanger to make a mobile showing guardian angels and evil spirits near us.

**ACTIVITY: Where’s Your Head?**

## **TRUTH AND CONSCIENCE**

It is a momentous truth that the Lord governs people by means of spirits and angels. When evil spirits start to have dominion, angels set to work to ward off evils and falsities, as a consequence of which conflict arises. It is by means of perception, dictate, and conscience that a person comes to feel this conflict. These, together with temptations, make it possible for a person to become plainly aware of the fact that spirits and angels are residing with him.

*(Arcana Coelestia 227)*

Conscience is formed in every person who learns truths and takes them to heart, wanting to act from them. He may learn these truths directly from the Lord’s Word or by means of parents, teachers, ministers, and others. These truths build up our conscience only if we try to apply them in our daily lives. When a person follows his conscience, he is freely choosing to live his religion. And one definition of religion is “walking with God” (Coronis 40) recalling the teaching about the Lord leading a person “as if by the hand” if the person is willing to follow in freedom (see *Apocalypse Explained* 1172:2).

**READ: “When Angels Held You Back” by the Rev. Donald L. Rose**

**PROJECT: Like a Beam of Light**

Two activities to explore the influence of the angels which is compared to a beam of light made up of countless truths present within good (see *Arcana Coelestia* 5893:3).