



THE WORD OF THE LORD

The Word is what God has revealed (*New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* 251).

The Lord gave us the Word so that we can have eternal life. Without the Word, we could not learn about the Lord and how to love our neighbor. Without the Word, we would be walking through life in spiritual darkness, and the Lord could not lead us to heaven. So the Lord gave us a written Word, and through it, He can work a miracle in our lives. If we look to the Lord in His Word, He can lead us to the everlasting happiness of heaven.

[READ: “What Is the Word?” by the Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss](#)

When you pick up any part of the Word and read it, then the Lord is talking to you. Because it is His Word, He wrote it, and it is as if He was speaking to you in His own voice. Every time you hear the Word or read it, then the Lord is very close to you, helping you to understand and love what He has said there.

[PROJECT: Make a Book About the Word \(ages 6-8\)](#)

Each page tells children something about the Lord’s Word and suggests ways they can illustrate it.

[PROJECT: Open Word Snowflake \(ages 10-14\)](#)

[COLORING PAGE: The Lord Gives Us the Word](#)

[READ: “They Found Him in a Manger” by the Rev. Grant H. Odhner](#)

Explains how understanding the Word helps us understand the Lord and that when we love and obey the Word, we are loving and obeying the Lord.

[SING: Father in Heaven, Who Gave Us the Word](#)

THE LORD TEACHES US

When the Word is read, the Lord comes in and teaches (*Arcana Coelestia* 6516:3).

The Lord speaks to us when we read or listen to the reading of His Word. If we are receptive—looking to the Lord and His Word for truths to guide our lives—then He is able to teach us. He teaches us directly as we read the Word. And He teaches us indirectly by means of priests, parents, teachers, and friends who share the truths of the Word in conversation, preaching, and other ways. Although He allows others to help us learn truths from the Word, the Lord is the only source of true enlightenment.

ACTIVITY: Light to My Path (*all ages*)

Arrange for every member of the family to have his own candlestick so that everyone can light a candle when the family is gathering for the reading of the Lord's Word (after dinner, at bedtime, or whenever). If desired, the candles themselves can be decorated with cut-outs from sheets of colored beeswax (available as candle decorating wax on the Internet). Before reading a story from the Word, or taking turns reading selected passages from the Word, the family may want to say together: "Let Your words be a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105).

SPIRITUAL TASK: What Is the Lord Trying to Tell You?

LEARNING ABOUT THE LORD

The Word is from the Lord, about the Lord, and is the Lord (*Apocalypse Revealed 200*).

The truths of the Word teach us about the Lord and how He cares for us, allowing us to know Him from His qualities. So the more we know about the Lord from learning His Word, the better we can see Him in our minds and feel Him in our hearts.



PROJECT: The Word Mirrors the Lord (*ages 6-10*)

This project is based on the teaching that the truths of the Word help us learn about the Lord and see Him in our minds. As children learn a verse from Scripture, let them glue a piece of reflective material such as mylar or foil on one of the "mirrors" around the Lord.

READ: "The Word Made Flesh" by the Rev. Eric Carswell

This sermon explains why "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us..." (John 1:14). For us to choose a relationship of love with the Lord, we have to learn about Him. It was essential that the Lord be born into this world and make His Divine Humanity visible and knowable to us.

FOR REFLECTION: The Truths of the Word Are a Mirror

Each truth from the Word is a mirror in which we see the Lord (see *True Christian Religion 508*). Everything in the Word reflects some aspect of the Lord. As you read the Word, think about what idea of God is presented here? That He is loving? Merciful? Powerful? Wise? Gentle? Forgiving? That He cares about marriage?

ACTIVITY: Enhancing Your Worship Center

Try setting votive candles in the center of used CDs (or the free ones you get in the mail), then lighting them for worship. The CDs will reflect the light.

SPIRITUAL TASK: To Learn About the Lord, Look in the Word

READ: "Using the Whole Word to Develop a Concept of the Lord" by Sylvia Parker

The Word gives us three wonderful successive pictures of who the Lord Jesus Christ is, in all His fullness and glory. None of these pictures is complete without appreciation of the other two.

SING: O Word of God Incarnate

READING THE WORD

Where the Word is read with reverence and the Lord is worshipped from the Word,
the Lord is present together with heaven (*Divine Providence 2:2*).

Reading or hearing the reading of the Lord's Word helps the Lord lead us by His truth. Ideally, we will try to read from the Word every day and look for ways to use what we learn to help us serve the Lord and our neighbor.

FAMILY WORSHIP: Listening to the Lord's Word (*all ages*)

Find a way to integrate the reading of the Lord's Word into your family life, perhaps reading it aloud after dinner or as part of your bedtime routine. You might want to light candles, say the Lord's prayer together, and sing a song as well. For more ideas for having a simplified worship service at home, see the [Ideas for Family Worship](#). With little children, it may help to preview (tell) the story before reading it aloud and to use Bible illustrations to help them picture the story. After reading the story, help your children focus on key aspects such as:

- Who are the key people?
- What is happening?
- When is it taking place (time of day)?
- Where does it happen?
- How do the people in the story feel?
- What is the Lord telling us in this part of His Word?
- How might this help you in your life?

ACTIVITY: Encourage Individual Reading of the Word

How can we develop the habit of reading the Lord's Word on a regular basis? Adults may be encouraged by learning how the Lord nurtures them through the truths of His Word. At first, we may find it difficult to set aside a quiet time to turn to the Lord in His Word. But experiencing the way the Lord can nurture us when we read the Word with humility, it will become easier to maintain this habit.

Parents can encourage their children to read the Word every day, perhaps incorporating it into their bedtime routine. You may wish to give your children (or grandchildren) their own copies of the Word when they are first learning how to read. As a motivational tool, you may want to use a chart that helps children keep track of their reading progress. (See the [Tree of Life Chart](#) for a sample.) Another way to encourage children to read the Word is to let them see their parents turning to the Lord in His Word.

Because the Word of the Lord is holy, teach your children to handle the Word carefully. Help them make a special place for keeping the Word in their bedrooms—perhaps on their dresser or on a shelf. Give your children a special cloth to put over the Word or make a Word cover. (Word covers

are also available through the New Church Book Center.) Because the Word is from the Lord, teach your children not to place any other book or thing on top of it.

COLORING PAGE: The Word of the Lord

ACTIVITY: Turning to the Lord in His Word *(for teens and adults)*

Here are some suggested readings from the Old and New Testaments for different situations in which we might turn to the Word for inspiration or comfort as we face daily challenges.

SING: I Pray You, Lord, to Guide My Ways

PROJECT: Living Waters of the Word

Gives two projects relating to water. One is a well made of clay (or using a box) in which you put quotes from the Word. The second is a fountain with the Lord's words from the gospel of John (4:13-14) written along the streams of water.

ACTIVITY: Understanding What You Read

The article on "Reading the Letter of the Word" by the Rt. Rev. W. F. Pendleton suggests ways to increase your understanding of what the Lord is trying to tell us in His Word.

ACTIVITY: Reading "Face and Hands" Passages in the Word

Read and discuss some of the clear teachings in the Word about a person's life and salvation. They are like the face and hands of a person, not covered by clothing.

ACTIVITY: The Story Basket *(ages 4 and up)*

Find a large basket. Each day put one item mentioned in the Word (or a picture of it) into the basket. Tell children a story (or stories) from the Word with which it is associated. For example, bread is mentioned in the Lord's prayer, the miracle of the loaves and fish, the table of shewbread in the tabernacle, etc. You might also add bread to the basket when teaching children about the Lord's Prayer. The next time you bring out the story basket, add another item such as an angel and talk about a story where an angel appears. Also, review the items already in the story basket by taking them out one at a time as the children call out the associated stories. The story basket is a delightful way to collect visual aids to help children learn and review stories of the Word.

See the **list of stories** that are associated with various items you might put in a story basket.

Optional: Depending on the age of the children (and how familiar they are with the stories of the Word), either ask the children if they know of any other places in the Word where bread is mentioned or briefly mention the other places.

THE INTERNAL SENSE OF THE WORD

The only subject in the internal sense of the Word is the Lord, and His kingdom and Church. This is what accounts for the holiness of the Word, and also for the Lord's coming to and presence with those who, as they read the Word, have in mind the Lord and the neighbor (*Arcana Coelestia* 10405:2).

The Old and New Testaments are an endless source of wisdom—especially when we consider that they have a deeper meaning within. This deeper, spiritual meaning is called the “internal sense” by people in the New Church. By means of Emanuel Swedenborg, the Lord has given a new revelation that can help us glimpse the internal sense or deeper meaning of the Old and New Testaments.

READ: “A Deeper Meaning to the Bible” by the Rev. Peter M. Buss, Jr.

This sermon explores the way images or symbols (such as “the water of life” and a “seed”) can help us glimpse the inner meaning of stories in the Lord's Word.

PROJECT: Layers of Meaning in the Word (ages 8-12)

Make a little book to illustrate the layers of meaning within the Word.



THE WORD IS LIKE...

How might we picture the Word? As a beautiful garden? Fruit? A beautiful infant? A Divine man? A treasure chest? The Lord suggests various analogies to help us comprehend the wonders of His Word, and these projects and activities are based on these comparisons. You may want to read a collection of quotes from the Word called “[The Word Is Like...](#)” before doing the following activities with children:

FLASH ANIMATION: The Word is Like... (for teens and adults)

PROJECT: Treasure Chest Banner (ages 10-14)

The Word is like a treasure chest with precious things hidden within. Make a banner with the treasure chest open, revealing the sparkling gems within!

PROJECT: The Word Is Like a Garden: Make a Dish Garden (ages 3-8)

Make a beautiful dish garden to illustrate this way of thinking about the Word.

PROJECT: The Word Is Like a Garden: Seeing the Whole Picture (for ages 9-12)

ACTIVITY: Examine an Orange (ages 4-12)

How can looking at an orange help us understand the layers of meaning in the Word?

PROJECT: Make an Apple Book (ages 5-10)

This is a fun book that illustrates the layers of meaning within the Word, comparing the skin to the literal sense, the pulp within to the deeper meaning, and the seeds to the truths that can take root in our minds and bear fruit.

PROJECT: The Word Is Like a Beautiful Infant (ages 4-8)

Picture this analogy by making a small infant with modeling compound and then wrapping all but the face with beautiful ribbons.

PROJECT: The Word Is Like a Divine Man (ages 10-14)

Does a person's physical appearance reflect his inner qualities? If you saw a copy of the Word, would you recognize that this book is unlike any other? If you were designing a special place or cover for the Word are there ways you could indicate that this is a special book?

ACTIVITY: Like a Cloud and the Glory

The Word is like a cloud with the deeper, spiritual meaning being the glory or light that comes from the Lord (see *True Christian Religion* 780). Find a photograph of the sun shining through the clouds. Think about the Lord giving us light. Then make a collage of the photograph and quotes from the Word about light.

POSTER: The Word Is Like a Cloud and Glory

Print a beautiful picture of sunlight shining through clouds, surrounded by this quote from True Christian Religion: "*The literal sense of the Word is like a cloud, and its spiritual sense is the glory. The Lord Himself is the sun which gives light, so that the Lord is the Word*" (780).

THE WORD IN HEAVEN

The Word has been written for the sake of people and angels (see *Arcana Coelestia* 1025:2).

The Word is the Divine truth accommodated to the angels in heaven and people on earth. The angels in heaven have the Word, but it is different than our Word because they can understand the inner meanings of the stories in the Old and New Testaments.

COLORING PAGE: The Word is Like a Treasure Chest

When we read the Word with reverence, this gives the angels great delight because the Lord shows them its inner meaning.

COLORING PAGE: The Word in Heaven

Pictures how the Word is seen in heaven.

READ: "Reading the Word Conjoins a Person with the Lord" Excerpt from a Sermon by Rev. B. David Holm

When the Word is read, it serves as a perfect link between the Lord, the heavens, and people.