

GLENVIEW NEW CHURCH SUNDAY MORNING PROGRAM
Primary Lessons: Phase 2, Lesson 9
People Cannot Die

I. Underlying Ideas for the Teacher

- A. There is no death, for life is eternal. Death is just a bridge for crossing from the natural world to the spiritual world.
- B. The Lord and His angels prepare a person for life in the spiritual world in wonderful, gentle ways. The Lord cares for his soul, and the angels prepare his mind.
- C. After about three days of transition and preparation, a person is ready to start his new life in the spiritual world. So gradual is the transition that the person seems to pick up his life right where he left off, sensing only that he has been asleep.
- D. Angels welcome the newcomer to the world of spirits and gently show him that he is now in the spiritual world.

II. Story Circle

- A. Introduce the Story
 - 1. Suppose a very old man gets sick, and he dies. What happens to him? Yes, the Lord takes him to the spiritual world. He doesn't really die; he sleeps for a while, then he wakes up in the other world!
 - 2. But his body was very old and sick. What kind of body does he have in the spiritual world? He has a spiritual body that can live in heaven. It has eyes, ears, hands, legs and everything else that our bodies have. Our body on earth gets old and wears out, but our spiritual body never gets old or wears out. When someone dies, he just moves from one body to another.
 - 3. The Lord takes a person to the spiritual world in a very gentle way, so when he wakes up there, he will be happy. Here is a story about an old woman who is ready to go to the spiritual world.
- B. Tell/Read the Story
 - 1. Read the attached story, "Anna and Her Garden," which describes the resurrection of an old woman.

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C. Ideas to Discuss

1. Why did the angels come to Anna just before she died? (The Lord sends angels to help a dying person think pleasant thoughts so he/she will be happy and peaceful. The angels helped Anna think about the Lord and heaven.)
2. What happened to Anna when she died? (The Lord took her from this world to the spiritual world. She stopped using her tired, old body and used her spiritual body instead.)
3. What did the Lord do for Anna while she was asleep? (He did special, wonderful things for her to help her get ready for life in the spiritual world.) When did Anna wake up? (On the third day after she died.)
4. How did Anna find out she was in the spiritual world? (Angels came to her and told her. First, they found out what she knew about heaven.)
5. Why do you think the Lord let her wake up sitting in her chair? (He makes everything the same when we first wake up so that we can get used to being in the other world slowly. He doesn't want us to be at all frightened.)
6. The angels were delighted to welcome Anna to heaven. Angels never think of death. Instead, they think of welcoming a new friend to heaven.
7. Anna asked the angels lots of questions. What questions would you ask the angels if you were Anna?
8. Anna's spiritual body grew young, didn't it? At first she looked just like she did on this earth. But everyone in heaven has a young, healthy body. So old people find their bodies growing younger until they are about 18 years old. Children's bodies grow like they do on this earth, but when they are about 18 years old they stop growing older. In heaven, the angels grow inside to be better and wiser, but their bodies stay young and strong, beautiful and handsome, forever.
9. Wasn't it wonderful that Anna was able to visit heaven in our story? And that she was able to be with her husband, Robert, who had died before her? A lot of special things happen in the spiritual world.

III. Enrichment Activities

A. Music

1. "You Shall Love the Lord Your God with All Your Heart and Mind,"
FIRST SONGS FOR LITTLE CHILDREN (copy attached to Lesson #1)

B. Activities

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C. Project

1. Ask children to draw their favorite part of the story. Is it the angels talking to Anna in her garden? Or is it Anna visiting heaven? Etc.
2. Use white drawing paper (heaven is bright!) and felt markers or oil pastels so the colors will be bold and bright. Everything in heaven is even lovelier than it is here!

IV. Teaching Aids

- A. Illustrations from the book, LIFE IS FOREVER, by Peter Buss, nos. 2, 3, 6, and 13.

V. Further Reading for the Teacher

- A. Heaven and Hell, nos. 445-452 (Man's Awakening) and nos. 491-497 (Man's First Condition).
- B. Five Memorable Relations (in Posthumous Works), nos. 4-7.
- C. The Spiritual World by Hugo Oehner, Chapter 3, "Death and Resurrection."

ANNA AND HER GARDEN

Anna stopped to smell the flowers in her garden. "What a lovely day it is! I wish I could work in my garden." But she was too tired, so she walked back to her little house. Some children came by, and she paused to wave to them. She thought about making cookies for the children when she felt better. Then Anna went inside and sat down in her chair to read the Lord's Word. She began reading her favorite Psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."

Anna was a kind, gentle woman who loved the Lord. She constantly looked for ways to help her family and friends. But her body was old and tired. She couldn't do as much as she wanted to do. The Lord knew that Anna was ready to go to heaven and live in her spiritual body. So He sent two angels to her. The angels helped her to think about the Lord and heaven so that she felt very peaceful. Then she fell into a deep sleep. Her heart stopped, and Anna died. (Remember, she was very old, and her heart probably was tired and not working as well as it used to.)

When Anna died, the Lord took her from this world to the spiritual world. She stopped using her tired, old body and used her spiritual body instead. Her spiritual body would never be sick or grow old. Anna was in the other world, but she was still asleep.

And while she slept, the Lord did wonderful things to prepare her for life in the spiritual world.

On the third day, Anna woke up. "I must have fallen asleep," she thought. She put the Word away and walked out into her garden. The flowers smelled delicious, and the day was bright. Why, the light almost hurt her eyes! She felt fine after her nap. She wasn't at all tired. Then she saw two people coming toward her. They were angels, but Anna didn't know that.

The angels talked with Anna about her garden and the lovely day. Then one of them asked her if she had ever thought about heaven.

"Often," she replied, "for my husband died five years ago, and I think of him in heaven." The angels were delighted to tell Anna that she was in the spiritual world. They were truly pleased to welcome her. Anna was surprised because everything seemed the same to her— the house, the garden, her body— and she was also very happy.

"So I am in heaven now?" asked Anna.

"You are in the world of spirits," answered one of the angels. "Hell is below, and heaven is above. People stay in the world of spirits for a while after they die. They find out whether they want to live in heaven or hell. Then the Lord makes them ready for their new home."

"How could anyone want to live in hell?" asked Anna. "I have always hoped to go to heaven!"

"People who love the Lord and the neighbor want to live in heaven," said the angel. "But there are bad people who love only themselves. They don't want to worship the Lord, and they don't want to help other people. They could not stand to live in heaven, so the Lord lets them live in hell."

"How long will I be in the world of spirits?"

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The angel answered, "Only the Lord knows. But He will lead you to your new home as soon as you are ready."

"But how will I get food, clothing, and the other things I might need here?" asked Anna.

"The Lord provides everything we need in the spiritual world," replied the angel. "He will give you food, clothing, and all that you need. Please don't worry."

Then Anna asked, "Can you tell me about heaven? I have often wondered what heaven is like."

The angel's companion answered, "Would you like to visit heaven? Sometimes we are allowed to take newcomers to visit a community in heaven. Would you like to do that?"

"Oh, yes!" Anna exclaimed. "That would be delightful!"

They walked across a meadow full of flowers. They climbed a hill and walked on a path through a grove of olive trees. Then some people came to meet them. The women were very beautiful, and the men quite handsome. Their clothes were lovely, and they shone with light. The people welcomed Anna and were very friendly. They showed her gardens with flowers that sparkled as if they were made of gold and precious jewels. Anna never imagined that a garden could be this beautiful!

"Who plants these gardens?" asked Anna.

The angels smiled kindly and said, "The Lord gives us these gardens. He gives us everything we have here."

Then they showed her their homes which were made of stone, precious jewels, and gold and silver. The smaller homes were amazingly beautiful, and there were magnificent palaces. Every home was surrounded by its own gardens.

Anna thought the palaces and shining clothes were marvelous, and she was fascinated with the gardens in heaven. But the kindness of the angels impressed her most. Now she knew just how wonderful heaven was!

Anna's two angel guides took her back to her little house with its beautiful garden. Anna thanked them for taking her to visit heaven and for answering her questions. Then she asked, "Is there any way for me to find my husband, Robert?" The angels looked past her, so she turned, and there was her husband coming toward her! They were so happy to see each other. Robert asked her about family and friends. Anna wondered if he was happy in the spiritual world. They had fun getting to know each other again.

Anna still needed time to get used to living in the spiritual world, but the angels told her that when she was ready, the Lord would lead her to a heavenly home where she would live happily, forever. So Anna lived in the world of spirits for a while. Robert stayed with her, and they were very happy together. Anna's body soon became young and healthy again. Both Robert and Anna looked like they had when they were young. And gradually the goodness inside them changed their appearance so that everyone who saw them knew they were good people who loved the Lord.

Robert and Anna traveled around the world of spirits for about a year getting ready for life in heaven. They met friends they had known on earth, and they made new friends. They looked for ways to help other people wherever they went. And

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along the way they rid themselves of some bad habits. Then they came to a place near heaven where angels taught them about the Lord and heaven. There was a lot to learn!

Finally, Robert and Anna were ready to live in heaven. They were given angelic clothing, beautiful white robes, and then an angel guide showed them the path they were to take to heaven. The Lord led them along the path which climbed upward through grapevines and laurels until they came to a community in heaven which seemed familiar to Anna. It was the one she visited when she had first come to the world of spirits!

The angels there welcomed Robert and Anna and told them to look for their home. They walked around, and there on a hill was the new home the Lord had waiting for them. It was a lovely stone house with purple columns by the door and a gold roof. Do you think there was a garden, too?

One thing have I desired of the Lord,
That will I seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the Lord
All the days of my life (Psalm 24:7).

Story Notes: When an old woman enters the spiritual world, she is greeted by angels, taken to visit heaven, and reunited with her husband. After staying in the world of spirits for a time, she finds her way to heaven.

References:

Newcomers who come to the spiritual world wish to know what heaven and hell are like, where they are, and whether they will get into heaven. Some are taken to splendid cities, gardens, or parks that delight them (HH 495).

All who have been friends meet and talk together in the world of spirits if they wish, especially husbands and wives, and brothers and sisters (HH 427).