

Lesson 19: ANGELS AND STARS AT CHRISTMAS TIME

Luke 2:8-16, Matthew 2:1-12

READING:

Bring pictures to display, of the angels appearing to the shepherds, and of the wise men following the star.

Have the children read aloud from the two following stories:

Luke 2:8-16 (or you could go to verse 20), and **Matthew 2: 1-12**

LESSON:

At Christmastime, we see stars and angels everywhere – in stores, in decorations, in nativity scenes, in tableaux. They are strong symbols of Christmas, and it's obvious why that is, having just read about the angels who appeared to the shepherds to tell of the Lord's birth, and about the star that signaled the wise men to follow it, to find the Christ Child. In the Word, stars and angels are the things that announce the Lord's birth, bringing the good news to people who were ready to receive it.

But the Writings of Swedenborg tell us more about stars and angels. From the Writings, we learn that in the Christmas story, the star and the angels were actually the same thing – both were groups of angels who loved to tell the good news that the Lord had come!

For a long time, people have tried to explain how the star of Bethlehem came to appear at the time of the Lord's birth. Some have guessed that right at that time, several bright planets and stars happened to line up in the same area of the sky, and together looked like one huge star. But if that were true, why wouldn't everyone else have seen that star? As far as we know, only the wise men saw the star. No astronomers or people who studied the sky from back in those times wrote down anything about seeing an unusual star. So what did the wise men see?

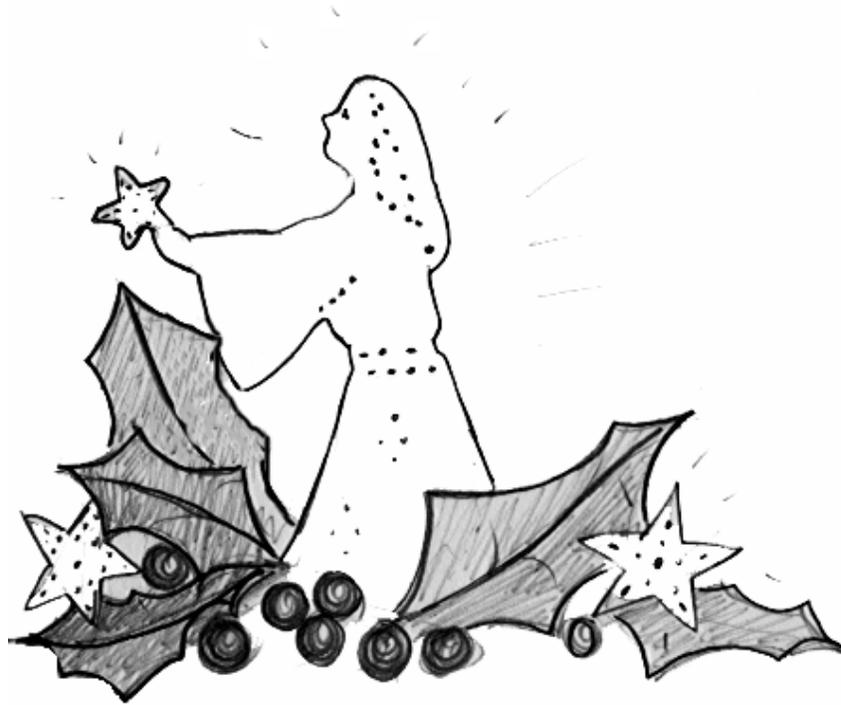
It seems that the wise men, because they were good men who were especially waiting for the coming of the Lord, saw that beautiful star of Bethlehem with their spiritual eyes. They were seeing into the spiritual world, and were seeing a group of angels who together appeared like a brilliant star. These angels, like the ones who appeared to the shepherds, felt great joy in telling people that the Lord had been born. And, who knows – it might even have been the same group of angels!

In the Word, whenever good stars are mentioned, they symbolize good and true things, *or* good and true people, who are the angels. In heaven, angels or groups of angels often appear like stars. And the *most* good and true Person, of course, is the Lord Himself. That is why He is also called a star in the beautiful prophecy that was spoken long ago by the prophet Balaam:

“I see Him, but not now;
I behold Him, but not near;
A Star shall come out of Jacob;
A Scepter shall rise out of Israel. ..“

NUMBERS 24:17

Project Idea: Pierced-Paper Angels and Stars



Supplies:

Medium-weight watercolor paper (or other heavy white paper such as tagboard or cover stock)
T-pin or large needle; straight pins
Small scissors; art knife
White glue; masking tape
Tracing paper
Foam pad or cardboard work surface
Glitter

Procedure:

- ❖ Trace the designs on the next page.
- ❖ Tape tracing paper to watercolor paper to hold design in place.
- ❖ Lay paper on work surface. Use T-pin to pierce holes marked by large dots, and straight pins for smaller dots.
- ❖ With scissors, cut around outlines.
- ❖ Arrange a host of angels, and stars, in a bed of holly or other Christmas greens.
- ❖ The same technique can be used to make other ornaments.

**Project
Templates**

