

Lesson 50: THE DOVE
Genesis 8 and Matthew 3

INTRODUCTION:

A dove is a very common symbol in our world today, and it is usually used as a symbol for peace. Doves are gentle and beautiful birds.

Do you know an early story in the Word that has a dove as an important character? It is the story of Noah and the great flood.

READING:

Have the children read aloud from **Genesis 8:6-12**. Show a picture if you have one.

DISCUSSION:

Noah used a dove to see if the waters of the great flood had gone down – if there was any place in the world where a living creature could land and make a home.

Doves are sometimes mentioned in the poetic words of the Psalms, and in the words of the prophets. Doves were considered a special sacrifice by the Israelites and Jews for certain religious ceremonies.

In the New Testament, a dove comes into the story when the Lord is baptized by John the Baptist. This happens right before the Lord begins His ministry, in which He would do miracles and teach new truth to the people.

READING:

Have the children read aloud from **Matthew 3:13-17**. Show a picture if you have one.

DISCUSSION:

John the Baptist was there to prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. He urged the people to “repent.” Do you know what it means to “repent”? To repent means to recognize that you are doing something wrong or harmful, and then to *stop doing it*. This has to happen before we can ever let the Lord into our lives.

The Lord came on earth to show us how to be purified – how to push aside all evil and harmful thoughts and feelings, and let the Lord in. A beautiful white dove is a symbol of becoming purified by working to live a life according to the holy and true ideas from the Word, like “do unto others as you would like them to do unto you.”

Today we’ll make a paper dove, as a reminder of the holy and true ideas from the Word, and the way that they can purify us from evil.

[This could be a time to get them started on the project, and as they work, read the following. Or you could wait until the end of the reading to start the project. It depends on how long your group is able to listen without having their hands busy.]

When Swedenborg was in heaven one time, he asked some angel wives to tell him things about marriage. The angel wives looked toward their window, and there outside sat a dove on an olive branch. This dove had a golden crown on its head, and its wings had a silvery shine to them. It

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was spreading out its wings, and the angel wives knew that this was a sign that they were allowed to tell Swedenborg some things about true marriage love, which is called “conjugal love”. But when the dove flew away, it was a sign that they had said enough.

So also in heaven, a dove is a symbol of true ideas from the Lord, which can make our lives better, and purify us into angels. These angel wives were telling Swedenborg true ideas that could make people’s marriages better and happier. On this paper dove that you are making, if you would like to add a gold crown and some silver coloring on its wings, you can make it look something like this heavenly dove.

Another time, Swedenborg was speaking with seven other angel wives about marriage. When they were finished speaking, a dove appeared in the distance, flying toward them with a leaf in its mouth. When the dove came closer, it looked like a little boy with a paper in his hand. On the paper was written, “Tell the people of earth that there is a love truly conjugal that is full of delights. Those delights are scarcely known on earth now, but the world will know them when the Church joins itself with the Lord.”

One of the seven wives made a wreath of roses and sprinkled it with water from a fountain. She then placed the wreath on the boy’s head. When the boy turned and went away, he looked again like a dove from a distance, but this time with a wreath around its head. So if you would like to draw a wreath of roses on the head of your dove, you could do that as well.

What are some true ideas from the Word? *[Let them answer, but if they don’t come up with much, here are some to offer:]*

There is one God.

There is a heaven – life doesn’t end with death.

Don’t kill or hurt or criticize. Treat others with kindness.

Don’t steal or take credit for other people’s work.

Don’t lie. Always be honest with people.

When you get married, be faithful to your husband or wife.

Be humble, and realize that everything comes from the Lord.

When we work to use these true ideas in our lives, we gradually become purified, and in the end become angels. And when we are purified, we will have peace, because we won’t be bothered by evil spirits anymore. So you see, it is right that a dove is used as a symbol for peace. A dove is a symbol of being purified by the Lord’s truth, and this is what brings us peace.

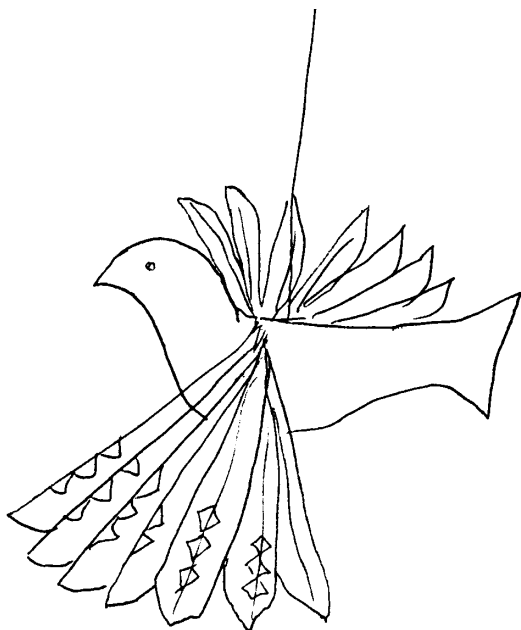
PROJECT: A PAPER DOVE TO HANG

Supplies:

White, lightweight poster board
Sheets of white paper, 8 1/2 by 11 inches
Scissors
White yarn
Scotch tape, in case something doesn't hold together
A large needle or compass point, to poke a hole for the yarn
For decorating: Gold and silver pens or glitter, thin markers to draw a wreath of roses and eyes

Procedure:

1. Have children trace the pattern of the dove's body onto white poster board and cut it out. The slit at the top of the body must be wider than a single slit to have the wings fit in properly.
2. Poke a hole behind the slit, as shown on the pattern.
3. Show them how to do an accordion fold with a piece of white paper, folding it back and forth. Fold it along the shorter side of the paper.
4. Cut a nice, rounded point at either end of the folded paper.
5. Cut shapes into the folded edges of the paper, similar to paper snowflake cuts.
6. Insert the folded paper into the slit on the dove's body, and spread out either side to form wings.
7. Tie a piece of white yarn into the hole to hang the dove.
8. If they want, the children can decorate the dove as described in the lesson, using markers or gold and silver pens or glitter.



Project Pattern

