

Oak Arbor New Church Sunday School – Lessons for Intermediate Level

Lesson 56: STARS

DISCUSSION:

Tell me any stories from the Word you can think of that have stars in them.

The sun, so bright and warm, is a picture of the Lord's burning love. It gives us life, and keeps us going. Stars are so far away that they can't give us any warmth. But they are a cheerful and beautiful sight on a dark night. Stars are a picture of things that we learn and know, that can give us hope and guidance during a dark time in life.

While you work on this project about stars, I will read some stories from the Word and Swedenborg's writings about stars.

NOTE TO TEACHER: Or you could tell the stories first, and then start the project. It's up to you.

PROJECT: STAR PICTURES

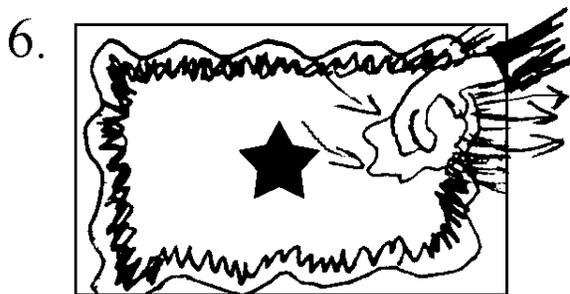
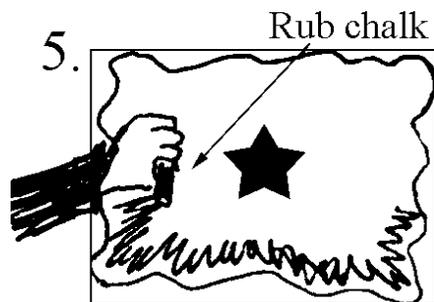
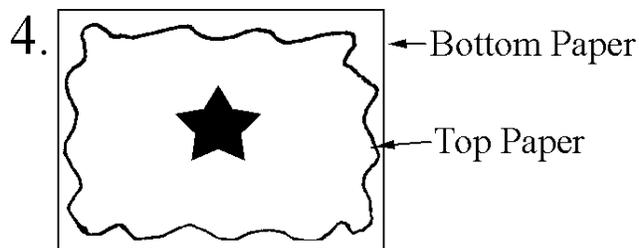
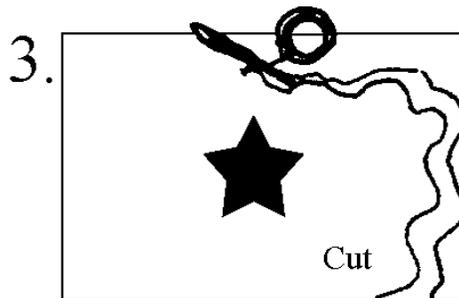
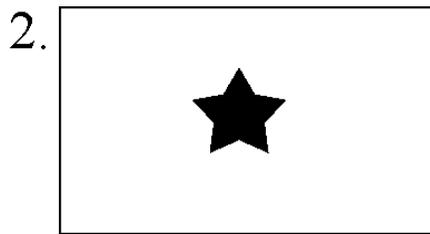
Supplies:

Two sheets of white 11"x17" paper for each child
Art chalk in many colors
A roll of paper towels, or Kleenex
Newspaper
Scissors for each child
A pencil for each child
Fixative spray

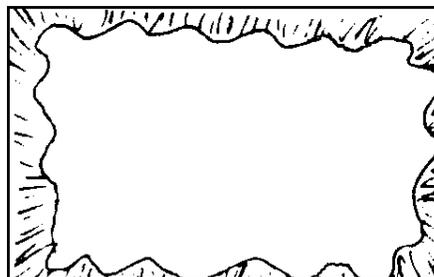
Procedure:

1. Cover the table with newspaper.
2. Have each child draw a star at the center of one of the sheets of white paper.
3. Have each child take that same paper and cut away the straight edge all around, creating a pattern that will now border the piece of paper.
4. Lay the cut piece of paper directly on top of the uncut piece.
5. Take a piece of colored chalk. Rub chalk along the edge of the cut piece of paper that lies on top. (In other words, the chalk will go on the top piece of paper.)
6. Take a paper towel. Sweep the chalk off of the top piece of paper right onto the bottom piece, all around. When finished, lift the top piece off and see the beautiful pattern!
7. Now start again. Take the cut piece of paper and cut around the edge again, making a new border.
8. Lay the cut piece again on top of the uncut piece. Rub another color of chalk along the uncut piece. Take a paper towel and sweep the color onto the bottom paper.
9. Continue this until finally you cut out the star at the center of the top piece of paper. The final addition to the picture will be to place this star on the center of the bottom piece of paper, rub color onto it, and then sweep that color onto the bottom paper. This will leave a white star in the middle.
10. Spray a coating of fixative over the whole thing. This will keep the chalk from getting all over clothes and hands whenever someone holds the picture.

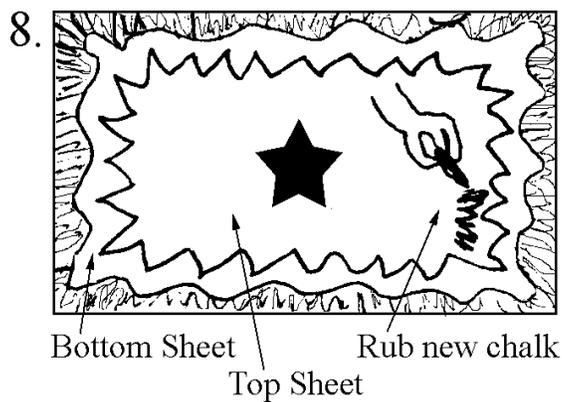
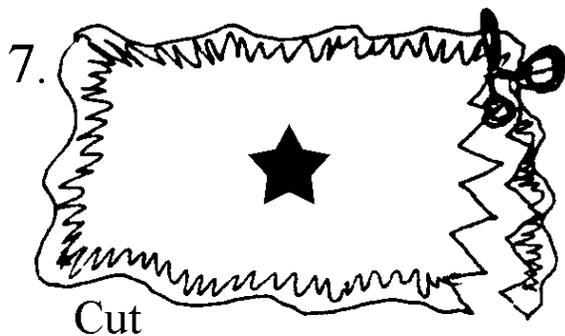
Illustrations of the Project Procedure



Wipe chalk onto
bottom sheet...



...Bottom sheet
will look like this.



STAR STORIES

Creation

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

On the first day, God created light; on the second, waters above and beneath; on the third, dry land and plants. “Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. God made the stars also. God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.” (Genesis 1)

Abraham

Jehovah had called Abraham to a new land, the land of Canaan, and promised to give it to Abraham and all his descendants. Abraham was confused, because he was old and had no children. How could the land be given to his descendants when he didn't have any? But Jehovah brought him outside and said: “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them...So shall your descendants be.” And sure enough, Abraham had a son and grandchildren and great grandchildren, until his descendants, the children of Israel, were more than anyone could count! (Genesis 15)

Balaam's Prophecy

Balaam was a prophet of Jehovah. King Balak was a king who feared the children of Israel, who were passing through his land. There were too many of them! King Balak called Balaam, because he knew he was a holy man, full of power. He asked Balaam to come and curse the children of Israel. Balaam wanted to, because he would have liked to get the reward the king was offering. But he told Balak, “I will come, and I will try, but I am only able to prophesy the words that Jehovah puts in my mouth.” So Balaam came, and stood on high ground, overlooking the camp of the Israelites. And there, instead of cursing them, he blessed the Israelites, and spoke one of the most beautiful prophecies about the coming of Christ, the Messiah. “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, and batter the brow of Moab, and destroy all the sons of tumult.” The Lord born on earth would be like a star, because He would bring new knowledge to give light in a dark time. (Numbers 24)

The Wisemen

There were others besides the Jews who expected a Messiah to come someday. Some wise men in eastern countries searched the sky for a sign of when this Messiah would be born. And then they saw it – a star, much more brilliant than the others. They followed it over many miles, until it finally led them to a humble stable in Bethlehem, where the great Messiah lay as a tiny babe in a manger. Not everyone could see the star that had led them – only those, like the wise men, who were truly looking for it with their hearts. (Matthew 2)

John's Vision of the Lord

When the apostle John was alone on the island of Patmos, he saw many amazing visions. And the first vision he saw was a scene of the Lord standing in the middle of seven lampstands, with brilliant white clothing and hair, flaming eyes, a sword coming from his mouth, and feet of glowing brass. In his right hand he held seven stars, which he called “the angels of the seven churches.” Often angels can appear to look like stars. (Revelation 1)

The Woman Clothed with the Sun

Another striking vision John saw was of a beautiful woman, clothed with the brilliance of the sun. She had the moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars on her head, and she was waiting for her child to be born. This woman represents a new understanding about God and the Word and heaven, and so she was crowned with stars, which are sparkling new knowledges. Sometimes angels also appear with stars around their heads. (Revelation 12)

The Great Red Dragon

This is the beast that pursued the woman clothed with the sun, wanting to devour her child. His tail knocked a third of the stars out of the sky – a monster like that would try and destroy all hopeful knowledge! (Revelation 12)

The Bright and Morning Star

At the end of John's visions, the Lord Jesus Christ calls himself the "Bright and Morning Star." He is like the star, the knowledge that comes at the beginning of a new day, when the warmth of love is returning like the sun. (Revelation 22)

Angels Around the Lord

The Lord appears in many different ways in heaven. Once Swedenborg watched as the Lord was appearing in a certain place in heaven. First there was a bright white cloud, which turned to a brilliant red and became brighter and brighter. Finally this cloud turned to a human form, which was the Lord. All around this cloud were stars, which were angels, getting their light from the Lord. (*Heaven and Hell* 69)

Writing In Heaven

When something true is written on a piece of paper in heaven, that paper will shine like a star. Once, some angels wrote something true on a piece of paper, and then let the paper drift down toward earth. At first the paper shone like a star, but as it got closer to earth, it became darker and darker. People on earth weren't yet ready to accept the true idea that was written there. (*Conjugal Love* 533 *Apocalypse Revealed* 566)

The Word In Heaven

In heaven, when the Word is placed in the shrines and temples there, it shines like a great star, and sometimes like a sun. Rainbows often appear around it as well. If any verse from the Word is written on paper and then thrown into the air, the paper becomes a glowing image of the shape that the paper was cut into, whether that shape is a star, a bird, or a fish, or anything! And even more wonderful, if anyone takes one of these pieces of paper and rubs it onto his hands, face, or clothing, those things will glow as if he were standing in a star, encompassed by its light. (*True Christian Religion* 209)

Dying, and Waking Up In the Spiritual World

For most people, when they die it's like going to sleep for a short time, and then slowly and gently they begin to wake up. Sometimes the first thing a person will see, before they're fully awake, is a dusky blue color, and a little star.