

God's love is for everyone



The Lord wishes all people to be saved, those here on earth, as well as those already in the beyond—all should come to know the truth and have access to the sacraments. In the services for the departed, which take place three times a year, the Chief Apostle and the Apostles commissioned administer the sacraments to two ministers who act as vessels for the prepared souls in the beyond. (The various realms in the beyond and the power of the keys given the Chief Apostle will not be dealt with in Sunday-school.)

If the children of God here on earth sincerely and compassionately pray for the longing souls in the beyond, then the desire will grow in them to become children of God too.

The children learn that God's love is for everyone.
They are urged to pray for the souls in the beyond.

George Bramley gets quite a shock when he comes home. He has never known his wife to greet him so sadly. When she tells him of the accident which has occurred in their neighbourhood on that particular day, he is very shaken too. She says: "It is almost unbelievable, but little Peter was killed today! Eddie and some of the other children were still playing with him in the park this afternoon. I called Eddie and he came home. Shortly afterwards we heard the ambulance. They wanted to rush Peter to hospital, but he died on the way. He ran after his ball which had landed in the road and the motorist could not stop in time." Mother is crying and Eddie is just standing there. He cannot comprehend that his playmate is not alive any more, that he will never be able to play with him again. Father, too, is very upset. He hugs Mother and says: "We so often take it for granted that we shall all see one another healthy and well again. Let us now kneel and pray for little Peter." Father prays for the young boy and asks the Lord to comfort all those who are now so very sad, especially for the boy's parents, but also for his own family.

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This tragic event remains on everybody's mind in the days that follow. On Saturday evening Peter's tragic death comes up on-

ce more. Eddie says tearfully: "I am still so sad about Peter. I miss him so much!"

"I am sad, too," Mother replies. In an attempt to comfort her son she adds: "We will never forget Peter and we'll pray for him so that his soul feels how much we love him."

Father says: "We should show him our love every day in our prayers. Soon a service for the departed will take place."

"What are 'departed'? Are they people who have gone somewhere else?" asks Eddie. "No," explains Father, "they are people who have departed this life—in other words, people who have died. Their souls are no longer on earth. The services for the departed are especially for those who have gone into the beyond before they could become children of God. And there are very, very many ... The Lord wants them to feel his love and grace too, for he loves all people, whether they are here on earth or already in the beyond. He also loves Peter even though he is not yet a child of God."

"What actually happens in a service for the departed?" asks Ruth. Mother explains: "We as children of God prepare ourselves for this service by praying for those who have died. We will pray especially for Peter. After Holy Communion the congregation prays and connects itself with the Apostle, round whom all the longing souls from the beyond will have gathered."

Father adds: "The sacraments are dispensed there where the Chief Apostle and the commissioned Apostles conduct the service. Two ministers are specially chosen as the vessels who receive the sacraments for the departed who are longing to co-

Sacraments

me to the Lord. Insofar as their souls are ready for it, they are baptized and sealed and also receive Holy Communion." Eddie says: "Then Peter can become a child of God too!"

"Yes, if it is God's will," replies his father. "Souls which are longing for this can become children of God, whether they

live on earth or in the beyond. It is immense grace to be a child of God, for the Lord wants his children to be very close to him one day in his glory. He will share everything with them which is his—that which he has already created, and that which he will still create. Oh, what a wonderful future awaits us!"

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The Lord wants all people here on earth and in the beyond to be saved.

- 1 The children tell of people they have known who have died. Probably all of them have relatives or acquaintances who are already in the beyond. There are also many souls who are not remembered by anyone. We can pray for all of them and think of them with love and compassion.
- 2 We summarize the previous lesson in that we look at the photographs once more and discuss the administration of the sacraments. As the souls in the beyond no longer have a physical body, the Chief Apostle and the Apostles dispense the sacraments to two ministers who stand proxy for these souls.
- 3 The children try to put into words what they have understood of the service for the departed. Together we prepare ourselves for the next service for the departed in that we pray particularly for all unredeemed and longing souls.
- 4 We discuss the photographs. Where could this be? We compare them to our own congregation: what are the differences and similarities. There are many children of God living all over the world today, and also very many in the beyond. We summarize the contents of this unit. God's love is for everyone:
 - The gospel is brought to Samaria
Philip preaches and baptizes in Samaria. The Apostles seal the baptized believers with the Holy Spirit.
 - The treasurer from Ethiopia
An angel sends Philip to a prominent African to proclaim the gospel to him. He believes and is baptized.
 - I am happy to be a child of God
God's children live all over the world. Their belief in Jesus Christ and their faithful partaking of the sacraments unites them.
 - God's love is for everyone
The souls in the beyond can also become children of God. They may receive the sacraments too, and look forward to the first resurrection and a wonderful future in God's kingdom.