

## *“I have set you as a light...” (Acts 13:47-51)*

*Teacher’s Page - Lesson Summary*

**Grade Level:** 4th Grade - 8th Grade

**Theme:** *“I have set you as a light...” (Acts 13:47-51)*

- Objectives:**
- **Introduce** the idea of *“being a light”* for the love of Christ.
  - **Establish** a connection between *“being a light”* to all people and the words of Acts 13:47-51.
  - **Understand** that when we open our hearts to be a light to those around us and support those who are working and sharing Christ’s love with those around the world, many will have the opportunity to come to know Christ and the fullness of the Orthodox Church.
  - **Challenge** the students to understand that it is part of our faith to *“be a light”* to all people and that in so doing we are obedient to His Will. Likewise, it is important to pray each day for our brothers and sisters around our world.
  - **Identify** the ways that the Faith has impacted Tina’s life, and whose actions were a light for her.
  - **Act** by collecting funds throughout Great Lent with the Mission Coin Boxes to support the work of the Mission Center so that many more are empowered to *“be a light”*.

- Overview:**
- Begin the lesson with the mission prayer and reading the scripture verse on the next page.
  - Do Activity #1 (A Letter from India).
  - Do Activity #2 (Student Work Sheet - *“I have set you as a light”*).
  - Do Activity #3 Assemble the Coin Boxes and send them home with students with the instructions that the donations they return will support the work of the Mission Center which helps many *“be a light”* around the world.
  - Close with a prayer.

- Materials:**
- A copy of the Missions Prayer
  - Handouts
  - Coin boxes

## *“I have set you as a light....”*

*Teacher’s Page - Activities*

**Pray:** *Attached Mission Prayer*

**Verse:** **Acts 13:47-51** For so the Lord has commanded us: ‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.’ Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region. But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabus, and expelled them from their region. But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and came to Iconium.

Introduce the idea of “being a light” in this passage.

- **Emphasize** that:
  - we (all of us) are told to “be a light” and to proclaim the Good News all the times.
  - the good news of the “word of the Lord” is that we are offered salvation through Christ.
  - we are to declare to all the nations the wonderful things that God has done for us.
  - it is important to have faith in Jesus and “shake off the dust” when people do not like that we talk about Jesus.

- Activity #1:**
- Read the letter from Tina in India.
  - Discuss the people that were “a light” in her life as she grew up. Draw attention to Sister Nectaria being a light to Tina and how our Faith has impacted Tina. (This is an opportunity to highlight the lesson objectives to **Understand**, **Challenge**, and **Identify** listed in the Objectives section of the previous page).

- Activity #2:**
- Pass out the Activity #2 handout. Review the maps and discuss where India is in relation to the United States. Reflect on the letter from Tina by discussing some of the listed questions.

*The following are possible talking points for each question:*

Question #1 - Some responses may include being a good listener, patient, caring, compassionate, seeing all of those around us as a brother or sister in Christ! Approaching others like Christ would and keep those people in prayer. We should feel comfortable speaking about Christ as well. Whether they are a friend or not, whether they live near or far, they are brothers and sisters and we should pray for them each day.

Question #2 - In her letter, Tina mentions Fr. Ignatios and Sister Nectaria.

Question #3 -The responses will be varied, but ask that they reflect on how might someone “be a light” during a conversation.

Question #4 - Ask the students to think about their interactions with their friends, teachers, parents and how they approach them, including people they do not like. Have them discuss what it would take for them to “be a light” to someone they do not like, or someone that does not like them. Is this easier, or harder, than hanging out with a stranger from India and “being a light” with them?

*Continued on next page.....*

*“I have set you as a light.....”*

*Teacher’s Page - Activities*

Question #5 -Shaking off the dust can be hard, but we have a model for this in the scripture verse in verse 51. When at school have they had to “shake off the dust,” and what could the consequences be if they do not “shake off the dust?”

Question #6 - They can commit to pray each day for missionaries and the Church in mission countries. They can ‘be a light’ to their neighbors here in the USA. They can participate in the coin box program and encourage their community to become more involved in missions, maybe even sending a team from the parish to another country!

**Activity #3:** Have your class assemble the OCMC Coin Boxes and discuss how these funds will be used to support the ministries of the Mission Center to spread the Gospel around the world. Send the boxes home with the students and ask them to fill them and then return the boxes at the appropriate time. Extra Coin Boxes are available by emailing a request to [coinbox@ocmc.org](mailto:coinbox@ocmc.org) or calling 904-829-5132 or 1-877-GO-FORTH (463-6784).

**Follow-up:** Collect Coin Box money on the predetermined date. Remind class of their role in spreading the fullness of Orthodoxy and the Gospel of Christ around the world. Assign the students the task finding a way to “be a light” throughout the week.

### **A Note to Teachers:**

*The Orthodox Church is spreading around the world due to the dedicated commitment of Orthodox clergy and laity. These modern day evangelists are proclaiming our Orthodox faith to friends, family and total strangers. Because of their great commitment to spreading our Faith, they spend weeks at a time on the road, away from their families, so that others may hear of the love of Christ. Most do not own a vehicle. Bus fares are very expensive when compared to the average income. Many work long hours, traveling from community to community by bicycle, by bus or by foot. Seeing others transformed by the message that we ‘have been set as a light before the Gentiles’, we have an example for ourselves of how we are to spread our faith among all people.*

*The Church in India, through the love of 10 clergy and one monastic nun, are operating a girls orphanage housing 96 girls age 4-20, serving milk and biscuits to up to 250 street children each morning, dispensing food to 150 poor, elderly, and disabled adults each Monday morning, maintaining eight medical and dental clinics, operating five primary schools, and providing a housing renovation program. While human service outreach is outstanding, the Church continues to struggle and is in need of prayer. In most states of India, it is illegal to convert any person to Christianity, as it is seen as undermining the Indian culture. Those that do convert, face extreme oppression from society and their families, even in areas where they are free to become a Christian. All missionaries working in India face having their travel visa revoked and being deported if they are found engaged in direct religious activities as a foreigner.*

## *A Letter from India*

### *Activity 1*

Dear brothers and sisters,

My name is Tina Khatoon. Let me tell you about my childhood. As far as I can remember, I was born in Kolkata. When I was 9 my mother passed away, and 6 months later my father also passed away and I became an orphan. I did not know how to live like other children. By God's Grace a relative of mine found out about the Orthodox Orphanage here in Kolkata and I was able to come here in 1999 when I was 9 and 1/2 years old. Living here, I was supported to go to school and started in Class 2 (2nd Grade). At that time, Fr. Ignatios and Sister Nectaria, who ran the orphanage, took care of me. This chance gave me a new life and a dream for the future of all of the things that I would be able to do. At this time, I did not know any religion, but I became accustomed to things at the church at the orphanage. Here, I prayed and sang. When I saw people taking Holy Communion, I asked Fr. Ignatios how I might be able to take Communion too. He told me that "when God will call you, then only you will take Holy Communion." I soon became a member of the Orthodox Church. Though I lost my parents in my early childhood, Sister Nectaria's love and affection has helped me to enjoy my life. I cannot deny her contribution towards my growth and my studies. Ten long years have passed without any difficulties, and I am now in Class 10 (10th Grade) and studying business. I have a dream to be an accountant or a professor in a college someday!

Your sister in Christ,

Tina



*Tina and Sister Nectaria at the Orphanage*



*Christine, a short term mission team member, with girls at the Orphanage in January 2009.*



*Coming home from school*

*“I have set you as a light....”*

*Activity 2*

*Student Work Sheet*



*A Sunday afternoon outside of a park in Kolkata, India.*

The Church in India, through the love of 10 clergy and one monastic nun, are operating a girls orphanage housing 96 girls age 4-20, serving milk and biscuits to up to 250 street children each morning, dispensing food to 150 poor, elderly, and disabled adults each Monday morning, maintaining eight medical and dental clinics, operating five primary schools, and providing a housing renovation program. While human service outreach is outstanding, the Church continues to struggle and is in need of prayer. In most states of India, it is becoming illegal to convert any person to Christianity, as it is seen as undermining the Indian culture. Those that do convert, face extreme oppression from society and their families, even in areas where they are free to become a Christian. All missionaries working in India face having their travel visa revoked and being deported if they are found engaging in direct religious activities as a foreigner.

India is in Asia and our sister Tina, from the previous page, lives in the city of Kolkata. The people in Kolkata can usually speak 3 languages: Hindi (national language of India), Bengali (the local dialect of the Kolkata area), and English. The economy is very bad there and many people are poor. Being a Hindu country, primarily, most people do not yet know Jesus Christ. Sister Nectaria, a nun from Greece, helps the priests and runs an orphanage for young girls who do not have parents. Tina lives at the orphanage and was one of those people who heard about Jesus Christ and decided that she wanted to join the Orthodox Church.

*“I have set you as a light...”*

*Activity 2*

**Reflection Questions - jot down some of your thoughts and share them as a class.**

1. What does it mean to be a ‘light’ for someone else?
  
2. After listening to the letter from Tina, who was a ‘light’ in her life and shared Christ with her?
  
3. If you could spend an hour with Tina, what would you want to talk about with her?
  
4. How can you ‘be a light’ in your daily life at school?
  
5. In the scripture verse, Paul and Barnabus had to ‘shake off the dust.’ When have you ever had to do that and how did you approach that situation?
  
6. What can you do in your parish and your home to remember Tina and your Orthodox brothers and sisters who live in India?

*A Prayer for Missions*

*God of truth and love, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
hear our prayer for those who do not know You,  
that they may come to a saving knowledge of the truth  
and that Your Name may be praised among all peoples of the world.*

*Sustain, inspire and enlighten Your servants  
who bring them the Gospel.  
Bring fresh vigor to wavering faith; sustain our faith  
when it is still fragile.*

*Continually renew missionary zeal in ourselves and in the Church;  
raise up new missionaries who will follow You  
to the ends of the world.*

*Make us witnesses to Your goodness,  
full of love, strength and faith  
for Your glory  
and the salvation of the entire world.*

*Through the prayers of St. Paul, St. Fotini,  
Sts. Cyril and Methodios, St. Kosmas, St. Innocent,  
St. Nicholas of Japan  
and all the missionary saints,  
have mercy on us and save us.  
Amen.*