

You Are a Light of the World.

Leader's Guide

Level: Elementary

Overview: The purpose of this lesson is to introduce children to the idea of sharing their faith (both in word and action) with others by:

- Reading a scripture verse.
- Teaching them as to why sharing their faith is important.
- Involving them in an activity that encourages them to share their faith.
- Discussing what it means to be a missionary.
- Sharing with them a story of how people share the faith with people all over the world.

Objectives:

1. Introduce students to the idea of sharing their faith.
2. Teach them that sharing their faith is an important part of their life in Christ.
3. Challenge them to share their faith by first doing it with friends, with their family, and in their community.

Read: *Matthew 5:14-16*

“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

Teach: Christ wanted everyone, no matter what their age, or where they came from, to be able to know God, to love God, and to live a good life.

While Christ was with the disciples he taught people about God. He showed them how to live a good life; and He healed them, cared for them, and loved them.

Christ knew that He would be Crucified and that He would rise from the dead. He also knew that people still needed to learn about God and what Christ had done for them.

He told His disciples that they should go to people who had not heard about Him and teach them about God. They did this by talking about Jesus and by doing good things for others.

Everyone who is a Christian is a disciple of Christ. Being a "disciple" means being a "student," much the same way that we are students in the Sunday School class. As we learn more and more about Jesus's love for each of us, Jesus asks us to share this with everyone so that they can know Him, and love Him, and live a good life too. Whenever we share what we are learning with others, it is like we are shining a "light" for them showing them the way, much like we read in the Gospel. We become the "light" that Jesus talked about.

Activity #1: Being a Light

Exercise: Ask the students to take a crayon, marker, or pencil and, on a blank sheet of paper, draw something that gives out light and is helpful to us.

To Consider: *The students will likely draw pictures of lamps, flashlights, candles, campfires, headlights, etc. (Stressing that items should be 'helpful' may avoid some of the children drawing lightsabers, laser guns, or a picture of a wildfire.)*

Questions: Why do we need these lights?

To Consider: *The students should be guided to think about how lights show us where we are going and assists us as we do tasks. Reiterate that in this same way, as Jesus was a "light" to each of us to show us where to go and how to live, we need to also be a "light" to others in our family, at school, and even when we are out in the community in a restaurant or store by living like Christ lived, helping and loving others, and telling people about God.*

Who are some people who are "lights" for Jesus?

To Consider: *The students will likely share that they think that people like their Sunday School Teacher, Priest, Priest's wife, Chanter, Youth Leader, or Family Members are "lights."*

Share that all of these are correct, but many people leave their home and go to places in other countries in order to be a light and tell people about Jesus. When people do this they are called missionaries.

Story: Christians have been sharing their Faith for nearly 2000 years. They offer a living witness to the love, hope, and salvation of Jesus Christ to people in big cities and to those who live in remote corners of the world. Some of those who dedicated their lives to this important work are recognized as great saints in the Church.

Even today there are people who are hard at work sharing Christ with the world. Not just priests or monks, these people may stand next to you every Sunday during Liturgy. They come from many different backgrounds and age groups. Flora, an 83 year old Orthodox Christian from Alabama, is one such person.

Flora has volunteered for 8 Orthodox Mission Teams and has served in Alaska, Puerto Rico, Guatemala, Romania, and Albania. When she travels, she takes small wooden crosses with her. She sits in the middle of the village with the crosses, offers them to people, and tells people about the cross.

While in Alaska, she talked about the cross to many children and told them about its meaning in our lives as we grow in Christ. She also brought all of the women of the village together to read the Holy Bible.

Flora is a great example of how Orthodox Christians, no matter who they are or where they find themselves, can touch other people's lives with the light of Christ.

Activity #2: Being a Light to our Friends and Family

Exercise: Distribute copies of old magazines to the students as well as safety scissors. Ask the students to cut out pictures from the magazine that represents things that they are thankful to God for.

The students may cut out pictures of people that remind them of their mom and dad, pet, a friend, their bedroom, etc.

On a piece of poster board or poster paper, choose a student to draw a light in the center of the poster or glue a magazine picture that is a light (a light bulb, lamp, campfire, etc.) Have all of the students glue their magazine pictures onto the poster in the areas around the light in the middle of the poster.

Keep this poster in the classroom as a reminder of all of the beautiful people and things that we are thankful to God for and for whom God calls us to be a "light."

Activity #3: Being a Light in our Community

Exercise: Send students home with a note asking that they bring a sack meal consisting of non-perishable food items to class the next Sunday. These meals might include a canned good with a pop-top, granola bar, snack crackers, a juice box, etc. When they return with these meals, provide them with a small card on which they can write a prayer for the person who will receive this food bag, and sign the card, but only with their first name.

Lead a discussion with the students about what they are thinking as they write their prayer for a stranger and how this food can be a "light" for the stranger. Once collected, have an adult in the parish take the food bags to your local homeless shelter or food bank.

Material List: Crayons/Markers
 Drawing Paper
 Old Magazines
 Safety Scissors
 Poster Board
 Glue
 Large Lunch Bags