

*You Are a Light of the World.*

*Leader's Guide*

**Level:** Middle School

**Overview:** The purpose of this lesson is to examine the concept of sharing our faith. This will be done through the following:

- Reading a verse from scripture that reinforces this concept.
- Sharing a story of how people share the faith with people all over the world.
- Engaging in a discussion about what sharing our faith can look like.
- Being challenged to offer a Christian witness to someone outside the church.

**Objectives:**

1. Introduce students to the idea of sharing their faith.
2. Explore how to share their faith and examine why it is an important part of their life in Christ.
3. Challenge them to demonstrate sharing their faith others.

**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.”

***Story***

Christians have been sharing the Faith with others for nearly 2000 years. They have offered a living witness to the love, hope, and salvation of Jesus Christ to people in big cities and even to those who live in the most 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 strikes up a conversation about the cross whenever she gets the chance.

While in Alaska, she attracted many children as she sat and talked about the cross and its meaning in our lives as we grow in Christ. She also brought all of the women of the village together and taught passages from the 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.

**Discussion Questions:**

What does it mean to be a light of the world?

**To Consider:** *Prompt the class to share what they think an Orthodox Christian is. Help them to explore how belief is reflected in the choices we make. Ask the students to reflect on how our choices may impact others.*

What kinds of things can we do to shine in the world?

**To Consider:** *Help the class explore ways to express their faith in word and deed. Encourage them to share how they talk about their faith with others. Ask how they serve others and if they feel that serving others is part of being a Christian. Guide them toward appreciating the subtle ways in which others might see us living our faith like going to church instead of attending weekend or after school activities and saying a prayer before meals (even if we are in public).*

Can you think of anyone who has been a light to the world, and how were they a light?

**To Consider:** *Ask the class to describe people they feel have demonstrated love and goodness, and ask them how they feel that person impacted the lives of others. Prompt them to think about how their parents, a good friend, or a public personality (a celebrity, athlete, etc.) has shared the light of Christ through their love for, and service of, others if needed.*

Why is sharing the light of Christ so important?

**To Consider:** *Reinforce the idea that during Christ's earthly ministry He taught, healed, and served others both to reveal truth to the world and to serve as an example of how to live in harmony with that truth. Help them to understand that Christ died and rose from the dead for the salvation of all people and that prior to His Ascension into heaven He commanded all His followers to take His teachings and the salvation He made possible to the ends of the earth, so that all people could come to know hope in God.*

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**Exercises:** Encourage the class to select one of the following challenge exercises (or have them come up with their own) that will encourage and enable them to share their faith with others outside the church.

***Exercise 1***

Send students home with a note asking that they bring a sack meal consisting of non-perishable food items to class the next Sunday. Provide them with a small card on which they can write a prayer for the person who will receive the food bag. Once collected take the food bags to your local homeless shelter or food bank.

***Exercise 2***

Divide the students up into groups of four or less. Ask them to perform a skit using no words in which they demonstrate sharing the faith through acts of kindness (e.g. feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, helping to build a church, etc.). Ask the other students to guess what is being performed. Then ask the students who performed the skit to explain why they felt the acts they enacted were a good way to share their faith.