

Week 1

Jesus is the Light of the World!

OPENER

Supplies: flashlight

Begin by turning off all the lights in the room. Give your usual welcome to the kids and then ask, "Do you notice anything different?"

The kids should say, "It's dark in here! We can't see!"

Say, "Oh! You're right! It is very dark, isn't it? What do we need to get rid of this darkness? That's right! We need light!" Turn on your flashlight. Say, "That's better, isn't it?"

"Isn't it amazing that in this giant room, we can all see because of this little light? A light dispels darkness. Darkness never covers up light. Light always covers darkness!" You could also (secretly) hand out flashlights to other adults in the room and have them turn on their flashlights at this point, too.

Say, "Did you know Christmas is actually a celebration of light? It's the celebration of the Light of the whole world being born! Does anyone know who the Light is? That's right! It's Jesus! I cannot wait to share this story about Jesus being the Light with you this year! Are you ready to hear more about the Light? And celebrate the Light this Christmas?"

BIBLE VERSE

Scripture: *Isaiah 9:2 "The people who are now living in darkness will see a great light. They are now living in a very dark land. But a light will shine on them."*

Supplies: blindfold, words of Isaiah 9:2 printed on several pieces of paper

Begin by reading Isaiah 9:2. Explain that you are going to help everyone memorize this verse and to do so, you need some volunteers to help play a game. Call up enough volunteers to hold the papers with the verse printed.

Then say, "We are going to memorize this verse. All I need you to do is get in order so when you are standing next to each other, the signs will be in order. Ready? You are? OK! Oh. Wait. I forgot, you need one more thing to play this game. Blindfolds!" Put the blindfolds on each child and then on your signal have them try to get in order.

They should not be able to do it! Or if they do, it should be a very difficult task!

TIP: Play an upbeat song as the kids try to put the verse in order. Then turn it off as a cue to finish. That way they won't go on too long!

Let the kids take off their blindfolds. Ask, "So, was that too hard? What would have made it easier? Taking off the blindfolds, right?" Let the kids try it again without blindfolds.

Once they are in order, have the audience read the verse several times to help memorize it. Then let your volunteers sit down.

Say, "It was really hard for our friends to get the verse in order when they were blindfolded. They needed light, didn't they? This is how our world was before Jesus came. People didn't live in actual darkness, but their hearts were dark inside. It was impossible to do the good things that God had for them. God saw that darkness and decided to send light—The Light, Jesus! He sent a bright light to a land of darkness! Just like light helped our friends finish our memory verse game, Jesus' light changed the world forever!"

STORY

Scriptures: Genesis 1-3, Genesis 11:1-9, 1 Samuel 8, John 8:12

Supplies: large box (at least 12x12x12), pictures of Bible stories (included), Adam and Eve cut-out (included), candle (with matches or lighter), clear tape to attach Adam and Eve

Set up: Print pictures and attach one to each of the 4 sides of the box. Cut off or push flaps down to leave top open. Put candle inside of box.

Say, "Boys and girls, I have a story box here. This box is going to help us understand a little more about how our world was in darkness until Jesus came."

Turn the box so the dark picture is facing towards the kids.

Say, "In the beginning there was just God. The Bible tells us everything was dark, and God just hovered over the darkness. Then He decided to speak. And when He did, everything changed. He said, 'Let there be light!' And guess what? There was light!

"God went on to speak the whole world into existence. He made plants, animals and people. (Show your Adam and Eve cutout and then attach to the darkness paper.) Who were the first people? Do you know? That's right, Adam and Eve. Even though they lived in a perfect place with God, they soon sinned. And it messed up God's perfect world.

"Adam and Eve had to leave the garden and now there was a new darkness—a darkness in their hearts. Adam and Eve had children, who had children, who had children. And in every person that was born, that dark heart continued. This dark heart separated them from God."

Turn box and show Tower of Babel. Attach Adam and Eve to Tower.

Say, "Oh, they tried to get back to God. They even tried to make a tower to Heaven. But no one can get to Heaven on their own!"

Turn box to King. Attach Adam and Eve to this side.

Say, "Soon, the people of the world stopped looking to God and started looking to each other. They followed kings and other leaders. But this would never lead them back to the perfect world God planned. A king could never get rid of the darkness in their hearts.

“God tried to speak to His people. He sent miracles, prophets and judges. But no one listened. The darkness in their hearts seemed to crowd out any voice from God.”

Turn box to dark heart. Attach Adam and Eve to this page.

Say, “Finally, God sent light to the darkness. He knew people couldn’t get back to Him with a tower, or a king or with their own actions. He had to go to them. So, He sent Jesus to light up the whole world!”

Pull candle from inside of box. Light.

Say, “When Jesus was born, it was more than a baby being born. It was a light that came into the world. Just like God said, ‘Let there be light!’ at the beginning of the world, He sent Jesus to say, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’ (John 8:12)

“We don’t have to work hard at trying to find God, we don’t have to follow anyone else to try to get to Heaven. We don’t have to stay in the darkness and sin of our own hearts. We can look to Jesus and follow Him. He is the light of life!”

APPLICATION

Supplies: strand of Christmas lights, plugged in

Call up a volunteer (maybe a small group leader if you’re concerned about kids handling lights). As you speak, wrap the volunteer with Christmas lights.

“How many of you have Christmas lights at home? Have you decorated your house for Christmas? Do you have lights on the outside of your house? On your tree?”

“Lights make Christmas seem more special, don’t they?” {Feel free to insert a story about your own Christmas decorations, or a special Christmas light display you’ve seen here.}

When the disciple John wrote the book of John, he doesn’t begin with the story of the baby Jesus in the stable like Matthew, Mark and Luke do. He begins with a description of Jesus. Guess what he calls Jesus? The light!

(Read John 1:9 and surrounding verses if desired.)

“John said the ‘the true light that gives light to every man’ was about to come into the world. When Jesus was born, He came to be a light to us. Some people did not recognize Him. And people today still don’t believe He is God’s Son and the true light. But when we choose to look to Jesus and recognize Him as the true light, the Bible says, ‘Some people did accept him. They believed in his name. He gave them the right to become children of God.’ (John 1:12)

“This year, when you see Christmas lights, I don’t want you to just think about how pretty they are or how sparkly. I want you to take time to recognize Jesus and thank Him for allowing you to be a child of God!

“Let’s all shout it out! Who is the true light? JESUS!”

SMALL GROUP

Supplies: ink pads or paint, white paper (either one sheet per small group or long roll of butcher paper set up for everyone)

Draw a long squiggly line on the paper. See example.



Questions for Small Group Leader to Ask & Discuss With Kids

1. What happened to our world when Adam and Eve sinned? (They left the garden, sin entered the world, our hearts became dark, etc.)
2. What did people try to do to get back to God or get rid of the darkness in their hearts? (build a tower, follow kings, do their own thing, etc.)
3. Who is the only person that can get rid of the darkness in our hearts? (Jesus)

Say, “This Christmas, I want all of us to focus on the true light, Jesus. Sometimes it is easy to only think about presents, parties or fun Christmas stuff. Will you make a promise with me to spend some time thinking and talking to Jesus this Christmas season? To celebrate the true Light and not just the fun stuff?”

To show their commitment, have each kid put their finger in the ink/paint and press onto the paper to make a Christmas lights picture (see example). Display in the classroom so everyone can see the “light”!

Pray together, thanking Jesus for coming into the world. Thank Him for being the light so we don’t have to walk in darkness forever. Ask for His help in focusing on His light this Christmas season.

EXTRA

1. End the service by singing “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing” while kids (or small group leaders) hold candles.
2. Review or highlight the Truth in the Tinsel ornaments that correspond to this week’s lesson. (Day 1: Light and Day 2: Crown)
3. Show Veggie Tales’ Star of Christmas. (38:15 to end talks about the “real star of Christmas” and God coming to earth as Emmanuel, “God with us”.)