**1. Motivate**

What are some Christmas movies you can remember seeing?

* It’s a Wonderful Life
* The Man in the Santa Clause Suit
* Miracle on 34th Street
* The Santa Claus
* Elf
* A Christmas Carol
* How the Grinch Stole Christmas
* Home Alone (I, II and III …)
* Frozen
* The Polar Express

**2. Transition**

Perfect, peaceful endings usually happen in these movies

* They are harder to come by in real life
* We have true peace when we have Christ.

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 No God, No Peace

Listen for

Isaiah 8:19-22 (NIV) When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? [20] To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn. [21] Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land; when they are famished, they will become enraged and, looking upward, will curse their king and their God. [22] Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness.

The Israelites were looking for direction and peace in the wrong places.

* Mediums, spiritists
* Consulting the dead

Where do people in our culture look for peace and hope in life?

* consultants
* therapists
* palm readers, fortune tellers, horoscopes
* advice columnists
* friends
* self-help books
* the internet

Why do we often consult God last?

* we think we can figure things out
* we have a humanistic mindset (if you study something well enough, you can find a solution)
* we are afraid the problem is too big for God (He is not powerful enough)
* we think the problem is too small for God (He is too busy, He does not care enough)
(both of these are lies from the Devil)

According to the passage, what would be some of the results for the Israelites of *not* looking to God’s Law?

* they have no light
* they are distressed, hungry, lost
* they become enraged
* they curse both the government and God
* all they are able to perceive is distress, darkness, fearful gloom
* cast into utter darkness

How do these results work out in our modern lives today?

* depression
* uncontrolled anger
* mad at God
* feel totally at a loss to know what to do
* constant feeling of hopelessness

How have you seen people who *don’t worship God* blame or curse God when they encounter hardship?

* why did God “do this to me”
* how could a “so called God of love do this to someone”
* this isn’t fair, I don’t deserve this

Note the key phrase … “don’t worship God”

⇨ When we *don’t* discover the greatness, the power, the authority … and the love of God

 Then we will be quick to *depend* on *self* and *blame God*

⇨ I should be *depending on God* and admitting/confessing the *blame* for *myself*

3.2 Know God, Know Peace

Listen for light on the horizon.

Isaiah 9:1-5 (NIV) Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan-- 2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. 3 You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as men rejoice when dividing the plunder. 4 For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. 5 Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire.

We see some contrasts. What happens for each contrasting situation?

* In the past and humbled Zebulun, Naphtali
In the future honor Galilee of the Gentiles
* Darkness, shadow of death people walking in darkness
Light light seen, light dawned, rejoicing

Consider how some of these phrases might be interpreted in the context as Messianic prophecy.?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Phrase from the passage | Possible implication |
| * People walking in darkness?
* People living in shadow of death?
* See a great light?
* Rejoicing over plunder
* Shattered the yoke that burdens?
* Battle uniforms burned?
 | * No knowledge of Gospel message
* We stand condemned for our sinfulness
* Jesus, the light of the world
* Rejoicing over new life, abundant life
* Freed from the power of sin over our lives
* Old sinful life put away, taken off
 |

Think about a time when you were physically walking in a dark place … how was it different when the light came on?

* you can see where you are going
* you avoid things you would have bumped into or fallen over
* you are no longer afraid
* you can see how to get to where you want to go

What about a time when you were trying to proceed with a complete lack of understanding or wisdom as to what you should do? How was it different when God gave you “light” and revealed His direction?

* gloom lifted
* confusion gone
* continue on in life with confidence
* better able to trust in His light and wisdom for the next situation
* easy to see what is the right direction, what to do, what not to do

⇨ God *will give light* when you pursue *knowing* and *worshiping* Him, putting Him *in charge* of your life, *submitting* to Him

3.3 Promise Made, Promise Kept

Listen for titles given.

Isaiah 9:6-7 (NIV) For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

This was the “light of the world” that God is promising … how do you think people might have responded to the promise that this would be a *child*?

* might have expected a king, like David
* might have expected a warrior (again like David)
* a child would be unexpected
* how could a child be the deliverer they needed (whether politically or spiritually)?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| List the titles that would be given to this special child | What are the implications or characteristics suggested by the titles? |
| * Wonderful Counselor
* Mighty God
* Everlasting Father
* Prince of Peace
 | * gives wisdom, gives direction, guides – in a wonderful way
* powerful, in charge, able to handle all situations, sovereign
* can always be approached as a loving father, always watches over, always protects
* brings peace to situations, ends conflicts, brings peace between God and men, helps us to live at peace with one another
 |

The Jews anticipated a political or military leader. What did they hope He would do?

* at that time to free them from Roman rule
* protect them from all other national threats
* enlarge their borders, make them a powerful nation
* make them victorious against all enemies

In actuality, what kind of ruler was (is) Jesus?

* a spiritual leader
* the Leader, the One in charge, the Ruler of the whole universe
* He is the King of Kings – the ultimate ruler of all things
* He wants to rule (for our good) in our hearts and minds
* every knee will bow to the Messiah, the Sent One, the Anointed One, the Chosen One

 In what ways does the Messiah want to rule in our lives?

* guide and direct our decisions
* empower us to live victoriously
* lead us to conquer the influence of the world
* guide us to take the Truth of the Gospel, the Good News to the whole world
* make the Church (we are members of the Body of Christ) the victorious force in the world

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

Application

Listen.

* In your time with God, read and listen to the song, “*I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day*,”
* Reflect on the peace God gives in times of conflict.

Meditate.

* Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Don’t let your heart be troubled or fearful” (John 14:27).
* Spend a minute reflecting of the unique peace God gives.

Reconcile.

* As we reflect on the concept of shalom, ask God to reveal to you someone with whom you should reconcile.
* This week, initiate reconciliation in one relationship and leave the results to God.

BATTLE
BLOOD
BOOT
BURDENS
BURNING
CHILD
COUNSELOR
CURSE
DARKNESS
DAWNED
DEATH
DEFEAT
DISTRESSED
EARTH
ENLARGED
ENRAGED
EVERLASTING
FAMISHED
FATHER
FEARFUL
FOREVER
FUTURE
GARMENT
GLOOM
GOVERNMENT
HARVEST

Word Search

Bah! Humbug! Sorry, just in one of my moods … humph! OK, you know the drill, find the words. You’re lucky, they are only left to right, down, and diagonal. No backwards words this time. If you see Spiros the Spy, remind him he owes me a book report. Humph! And it wouldn’t hurt you to read the Bible passage in Isaiah where these words come from. Or, you could wimp out and go to <https://tinyurl.com/muuayhez> And there’s lots of other Fun Family Activities there.

HONOR
HUMBLED
HUNGRY
INCREASED
JOY
KING
KINGDOM
LIGHT
LIVING
MIGHTY
NATION
OPPRESSOR
PEACE
PLUNDER
PRINCE
REIGN
ROAM
SHADOW
SHATTERED
SHOULDERS
SPEAK
TESTIMONY
VORN
WALKING
WONDERFUL
YOKE