**1. Motivate**

When have you been most thankful you had some light?

* getting up in the middle of the night in a motel room
* fixing a flat on a dark road
* walking through the woods on a dark night
* when the power went out in an ice storm
* went on a hike at night on a youth retreat
* light on my music stand, playing in a band in an evening concert
* working on the plumbing under the sink
* trying to see under the bed

A video introduction to the lesson is available at <https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1_en1txjg9> If you have no wi-fi where you teach, best to download to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/2p8uxb5x>

* driving at night in a snowstorm

**2. Transition**

We often struggle with physical darkness.

* Spiritual darkness is even worse
* We can now for sure that Jesus shines His light into a dark world.

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 The Light Shines on Those in Darkness

Listen for a promise from God.

Isaiah 9:1-3 (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.

Note the national situation:

* Northern regions of Galilee in Israel had been devastated, depopulated, and annexed by the Assyrians
* Under the tyrannical leadership of Tiglath-pileser.
* Hence, the cause for the dimness, gloom, anguish
* What happened to them at the hands of the Assyrians was an action of the Lord because of their disobedience

What did God promise? What blessing would come?

* no more gloom
* He would honor the “Galilee of the Gentiles”
* a great light would come
* a light would dawn
* joy, rejoicing at the harvest

How might the “great light” be understood as a Messianic prophecy? How can various phrases of the passage be interpreted in that context?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Phrase from the passage | Possible implication |
| * people walking in darkness
* people living in shadow of death
* see a great light?
* increased joy
* enlarged the nation
* rejoicing over plunder
 | ⇨ no knowledge of Gospel message⇨ we stand condemned for our sinfulness⇨ Jesus, the light of the world⇨ brings joy of sins forgiven, free from sin⇨ growth of the church⇨ rejoicing over new life, abundant life |

In what ways does our world, our culture walk in darkness?

* legalized abortions
* drugs, substance abuse of different kinds
* pandemic
* inability to handle life’s challenges
* political wrangling – hate, deceit, breaking of the law
* movements to do away with police
* materialism that doesn’t satisfy

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

Now recall 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 the right direction is, 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

3.2 Jesus is the Light

Listen for the presence of Jesus.

John 1:1-4 (NIV) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

John uses the Greek word *logos* which is translated “the Word” to refer to Jesus. What statements does he make about “The Word”?

* He was in the beginning
* He was with God
* He *was* God
* through Him all things were made
* He is the source of light and life
* the Word became flesh, a human

Why do you think John used the concept “Word” to identify Jesus?

* Jesus *communicates* to us about God – what He is like
* Jesus *reveals* God
* Jesus is God’s *teaching* to us – in the flesh

John says in verse 4, *In him was life*. What are some ways in which Jesus gives us life?

* salvation
* abundant living John 10:10 (KJV) … *I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*
* physical life – miracle of physical birth,
* physical healing
* rescue, protection from fatal injury
* a reason to live, meaning to life

How has Jesus been *light* to you personally?

* conviction to reveal my sins
* Jesus’ teachings reveal His loving care
* learn new lessons of how to live
* guidance in life – help in seeing the right decisions

How can you be *more* *receptive* to God’s light in your life?

* be sure to be exposing your heart and mind to the light of God’s Word – *every day*
* when you read it, don’t just watch the words go by
* meditate on it, think about it
* even journal your thoughts … writing down what you are thinking it means to you personally

3.3 Jesus Gives Light to All Men

Listen for who was a witness.

John 1:5-9 (NIV) The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. 6 There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. 8 He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. 9 The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

What was John’s assignment in coming into the world? What was the goal of his witness?

* testify concerning the light
* persuade, encourage people to believe in Jesus
* a witness to the light

In what ways is light a powerful metaphor for describing who Jesus is?

* light reveals what is really there, a full, true picture
* Jesus reveals what God is like
* Jesus reveals God’s love for us
* He accomplished salvation for all who believe

How powerful is the Light of the Word compared with the darkness of this world?

* light of the Gospel dispels the hate and despair of the world
* God changes and rebuilds lives that have suffered in spiritual darkness
* families are reunited
* people are set free from enslavement to sin
* God’s Truth gives hope to people who have none

What are the consequences of walking in darkness instead of the light? List some contrasts.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Walking in darkness | Walking in Light |
| * confusion
* failure
* discouragement
* frustration
* gloomy attitude towards life
* use people, love our stuff
 | * understanding
* victory over sin
* full of joy
* trust in God’s power to deal with life
* peace and joy
* love people, use our resources for good
 |

Verse 5 speaks of the darkness not understanding “the light.” Why do you think that happens?

* Satan blinds people from seeing God’s Truth
* people are too much occupied with other pursuits
* they are stubborn, refusing to admit their need for light

What opportunities exist for our group to display the light of Christ in our community?

* support outreach
* involve in discipling ministry
* calling on home bound
* giving to ministries such as Salvation Army, local homeless shelters, city missions

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

Application

See the Light.

* Don’t deny the darkness around you.
* Make a list of the darkness in your life, community, and world.
* Then acknowledge the need for light and thank God for sending this Light into the world.

Trust the Light.

* Don’t try to navigate your life in the dark.
* Psalm 119:105, “Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.”
* Rely on God’s Word (Scripture) and the Word made flesh (Jesus) as you look for opportunities to share the gospel this week.

LIGHT
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MADE
NATION
NEVERTHELESS
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PEOPLE
PLUNDER
REJOICE
SEA
SEEN
SENT
SHADOW
SHINES
TESTIFY
TRUE
UNDERSTOOD
WALKING
WITNESS
WORD
WORLD

Shine the Light.

* Choose a local ministry such as a food pantry.
* Gather friends to volunteer with you.
* Lead your group in a time of prayer emphasizing the opportunity to show the light of Jesus to your community.

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BEGINNING
BELIEVE
COMING
DARKNESS
DAWNED
DEATH
DISTRESS
DIVIDING
ENLARGED
FUTURE
GENTILES
GLOOM
GREAT
HARVEST
HONOR
HUMBLED
INCREASED
JOHN
JORDAN
JOY
LAND
LIFE

You’re not in the dark. Humph! You know the drill … words go right, left, up, down and diagonal. If you don’t finish finding these words, it’s going to be coal in your stockings! Humph! You can find help and other Family Activities at <https://tinyurl.com/2p8uxb5x>

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Word Search