

“Absorbing THE Light”

(A lesson that can work in any dark space, but works best outside at night time)

For The Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta

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Key verses:

Matthew 5:14-16, Ephesians 5:1-2

Objective: to think about how we have to spend time in THE Light (with God) if we want to be a light to the world.

The Set up: Minimal

The Plan:

- Hook: Light equals Life (5 mins)
 - Talking about how all life depends on light and heat from the sun
- Book: Let Your Light Shine (10-15 mins)
 - Discussing the role that God has given us to shine his light to the world.
- Look: Imitators of The Light (10 mins)
 - You will be using glow in the dark stars, one that has been hidden from light, and one that has been soaking in it, to discuss which one will be a better reflection of God’s light.
- Took: Absorbing the Light (5 mins)
 - Thinking about intentional ways to make sure that we are absorbing the light of Christ.

The Supplies:

- Copy of lesson
- Copy of discussion questions #1, if you choose to do small groups
- Flashlight (set up)
- Think paper, heavy fabric, or a dark colored sock- something that will block light (set up)
- 2 glow in the dark stars (set up)- really, any glow in the dark object will work, but stars are best.
- glow in the dark stars, 1 per youth

SET UP

Before you get started, you will need to set up two glow in the dark stars. One should be put inside or under something that won't let it absorb any light- a dark sock works well, or you can even put it in your pocket. The other star should be placed on a table with a flashlight on top of it. The flashlight should be turned on with the light glowing on the star. Keep these hidden until you need them for the lesson so that you don't give anything away!

(Open in prayer, announcements, and any other start of gathering traditions)

Importance of Light (Hook, 5 mins.)

In this section, you will be discussing all the ways that light is important to us. Ultimately you will be having the same conversation no matter what set up you have arranged for, but there are so many different ways to make this work. The only thing that is important is that you gather in a **COMPLETELY DARK SPACE**. Here are a few ideas:

- If you are gathering at night, go outside and let the kids look up at the stars. How have people relied on the stars? We use them for navigation!
- If you are gathering at night and can make a fire, be sure to talk about the heat that comes off fire and how ultimately, the heat we get from the sun is what makes life possible.
- If you need to gather inside, make the room **COMPLETELY** dark. How often do you gather in complete darkness- why is that not your usual pattern??? Because you miss so much when you can't see anything. Try lighting a single candle to emphasize the point.

Light Question and Discussion (5 mins)

There is really only one question to ask for this section, but you may have to ask it in different ways, because you need lots of different answers. You can record the answers on a board if you would like, but it's not necessary.

Here is the question:

Why is light important?

Other possible follow-up questions:

What would happen if the sun burnt out today?

Make sure to hit on all these aspects: so we can see things, cook, have warmth, things can grow and we can have food, we can navigate by the stars... without light/heat from the sun, there would literally be no life.

Transition:

Probably some of you will remember the bible verses that talk about how we are called to be the light of Christ. We are going to look at those, and as we do so, remember to keep in mind all the things that we get from light.

Let Your Light Shine (Book, 10 mins)

In this section, we will look at a couple of passages that talk about the importance of light and how we are the light of Christ.

- If you have enough people to break up into small groups, then do so- let one kid read, and another be in charge of the questions.
- Have everyone look up Matthew 5:14-16. Choose one person to read out loud. Here are the verses for your planning purposes:
*“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. **15** Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. **16** In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.*

Discussion Questions, #1:

1. What does it mean to be the light of the world? (Think back to all the things we listed in the first section)
2. What are some ways that we are a light to the people around us? How are we putting our light on a stand for everyone to see?
3. What is a way that you are uniquely gifted to shine the light of Christ?
4. Do you think that being the light of the world is a big responsibility?

- Bring everyone back into the big group. This next passage will lead you into the Look section.
- Have everyone look up Ephesians 5:1-2 **in the NASB translation!** (translation matters for this one- you want it to say imitators of God in 5:1). Choose one or more students to read. Here are the verses for your planning purposes:

1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; 2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

Discussion Question:

1. How are we supposed to be imitators of Christ? If you wanted to imitate someone, what would you have to do?

Transition:

When people want to imitate someone, they have to spend a lot of time learning about them, or at least observing them! For example, when an actor or actress is playing someone from history, they will sometimes spend months learning about that person—reading about them, interviewing the actual person and/or their family members, and sometimes they even live like the person they are imitating to try and understand them better. All this is done so that they can best represent them in a movie or on a show.

In the same way, God has asked us to imitate him. He has asked us to be the light of Christ....

Imitators of THE Light (Look, 5-10 mins)

In this section, we will compare glow in the dark stars as a way to think about how we can absorb the light of Christ: one has been in complete darkness and has no light to give. The other has been in a bright light for 20-30 minutes and should be glowing!

- Make the area you are in as dark as possible. Turn out lights, put out the fire, do whatever you can to make it pitch black. This is much less powerful in an area that is lit. The only light should be coming from the flashlight that is connected to the glow in the dark star.

Mini Lecture!

Go through these talking points, taking your time, and allowing the kids to respond fully...

- Ask, As a Christian, what is the ultimate source of light? (God/Jesus)
- If we wanted to imitate God (THE Light) so that we could be A light in the world and give it life like God has asked us to do, what would we have to do? (spend time with him)
- (Get the flashlight with the star attached) Let's say that this flashlight is like God... it is the source of all light and life in this world! And let's say that you are like a glow in the dark star. In order for you to bring life and light to the world, you need to spend time with the flashlight (God) to absorb his life.
- (Remove the attached star, and turn off the flashlight... the star SHOULD be glowing pretty brightly)
- This glow in the dark star has spent the last 20-30 minutes in the light of God, learning how to imitate Him, and as a result, we can see how the star will bring light to the dark world.

- What would the star have looked like if it was in darkness all day?
- (Get out the star that has been kept out the light and use it for comparison- it has nothing to offer the world, because it has not spent time absorbing life from God!)
- And taking it a step further, you can talk about what will happen to our bright shining glow in the dark star in another hour... 2 hours... 24 hours.... How long can it go before it needs to be recharged? How is that like our relationship with God?
- The only way to be imitators of God is to spend time with him... to absorb the truth and light of the Gospel so that we can share it with the rest of the world... and bring LIFE to the world!

Absorbing the Light (Took, 5 mins)

In this section, we are coming up with a practical plan to make sure that we stay “charged” with the light of Christ.

- Pass out a glow in the dark star to each student.
- You can either brain storm as a large group, or allow them to break into groups of two or three and think about how they can respond in a way that will keep their star glowing. Here are some things to consider:
 - How are you uniquely gifted to shine the light of God?
 - How do you like to spend time with God, learning how to imitate him and “recharge” your light?
 - How can you tell when your light is starting to grow dim, indicating that you need to spend time in THE Light?
 - How can you make a conscious effort to spend time in THE Light this week, making sure that you stay charged?
- Have them take their stars home with them and put them in a place where they will see them often, and be reminded that they should be spending time in THE Light on a regular basis.
- **Close in prayer:**
 - Thanking God for the light and life that he provides,
 - Thanking God that he has asked us to be part of his bigger plan, and giving us the role of shining his light to the rest of the world,
 - Asking for forgiveness that we forget to tend to the recharging of our light,
 - Help us to be intentional about recharging this week so that we can best represent God to our friends, family, and the entire world.