

“Salt, Change, and Ice Cream”

(A lesson about being the Salt of the Earth)

For The Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta

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Key verse:

Matthew 5:13

Objectives: To help students think about all the different things God meant when he called us the salt of the earth, and to think about a way that we can be “salty” affect change in the world.

The Set up: Minimal (don’t let the shopping list scare you!)

The Plan:

- Hook: Salty vs Unsalty (5 mins)
 - Taste testing several snacks in salted and unsalted form
- Book: Salt of the Earth (5-10 mins)
 - Thinking about all the important things that salt does and how that is similar to Christians
- Look: Change and Ice Cream (15 mins)
 - Thinking about how we change a certain atmosphere so that people can have a new and better relationships- maybe even with God.
- Took: Ice Cream Prayers (3 mins)
 - Praying specifically for an area, or person in our lives that we want to be an agent of change for.

The Supplies:

- Copy of lesson
- Bible
- Several snacks in salted and unsalted varieties. Examples:
 - Potato chips
 - Nuts
 - Saltines (yes, SALTines come in an unsalted variety- weird)
 - Pretzels
- Ice cream making supplies
 - Directions on how to make it (back of lesson)
 - Cream, sugar, and vanilla in a zip lock bag
 - Ice and salt in a larger bag
- Bowl(s)
- Spoons

Set up: Before getting started, you will want to prep the bags for making ice cream. (see the back of the lesson) It is not difficult to prepare, but getting out measuring cups and spoons tends to throw off the rhythm of the lesson if cooking isn't really the point of the lesson! Also, unless you have a really large group, just one or two bags is plenty to make this work. You want one bite per kid, not an entire bag per kid, otherwise they will be so focused on shaking the bag that they will miss the point.

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

Salty vs Unsalty (Hook, 5 mins)

This part is super simple and fun... because who doesn't like a taste test?! Provide multiple snacks in both the salty and unsalty versions. Have the kids try both and see which they like better. You can do a blind taste and guess, or you can just pass around and taste- whatever is fine... but keep an eye on the time! You will need lots of time for the Look section and the kids will be sad if they miss it.

Possible discussion question:

Does salt make the snack better or worse?

Salt of the Earth (Book, 5-10 mins)

In this section, we are talking about how we are called to be the salt of the earth and thinking about all the different roles we play as a result.

- Have everyone look up Matthew 5:13 and choose one person to read out loud. Here is the verse for your planning purposes:

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot."

- As a class, try to make a list to the question, "How are some ways that Christians can be like salt?" Some may include:
 - Christians like salt are of great value
 - Christians like salt are a preservative to the decay around us in the world
 - Christians like salt are to add zest, flavor, excitement to the world
 - Christians like salt are to make people thirsty for the Living Water
 - Christians like salt can help promote healing
 - Christians like salt can lose our influence and usefulness

Discussion Questions:

- Describe a time when you've seen a fellow Christian act as salt to make a difference?
How can we prevent ourselves from being diluted, of being mixed with other things so that we are no longer salty?
- In what ways are Christians of great value in the world?
- In what ways are Christians a preservative to prevent decay? (there was so refrigeration back in the day!)
- In what ways does the life of a Christian add flavor to the world?
- In what ways do Christians make people hungry for the living water – Christ?
- In what ways do Christians promote healing?
- In what ways can Christians lose their influence and become less useful in growing the kingdom?

Change and Ice Cream, (Look, 10-15 mins)

In this section we are thinking about how, as salt, we can change the atmosphere so that relationships can be made in new ways... with God's help, we can affect change in the lives of the people around us!

There are directions for making ice cream at the back of the lesson, but basically you put stuff in a bag and shake for a LONG time. The kids can take turns doing this as you talk through this last part, but have one of the teachers get it out before you start talking or you will run out of time. Promise the kids they will get to eat some AS LONG AS THEY STAY FOCUSED ON THE CONVERSATION.

Mini-Lecture!

(Say something like)

One thing that is really cool about the Bible is that it changes! It's called the living word because it can have different meanings to different people and it can have different meanings to entire cultures at different times in history. For example, when Jesus told his followers they were the "salt of the earth" that gave them a clear picture of their role and importance (did you know Roman soldiers were PAID in salt... it was that important!). That same analogy can still be applied today, but we can even expand upon it. For instance, we don't rely on salt for preservation quite as much anymore because we have refrigeration, but we can use salt for something that the people who knew Jesus would have known nothing about... to make ICE CREAM!

<< BE SURE TO KEEP SHAKING THE BAG(S) >>

Talk them through the importance of salt in making ice cream... depending on the age of your class, they may know and have done this in school, but in case they have no idea, here is how it works... Basically, water freezes at a certain temperature (32 degrees), but ice cream, thanks to the delicious sugars and fats, freezes at a slightly lower temperature. If you were simply to try and freeze ice cream with just plain old ice, it would never freeze... it would just stay a soup of sugar and cream. But salt provides the solution! Similar to sugar, salt affects how water freezes and effectively lowers the freezing/melting point of water. Creating a saltwater slush and packing this around our ice cream base allows us to cool the base enough so that it starts to thicken and freeze before the ice melts completely. This whole process feels very counter-intuitive to us! We're looking at a slushy, half-melting saltwater mix and thinking that it can't *possibly* be colder than hard ice cubes. But amazingly, it is.

So that brings us to another question.... How are WE, as Christians, like the salt in making ice cream?

(we can change the atmosphere so that relationships can be made in new ways... with God's help, we can affect change in the lives of the people around us!)

<< STILL KEEP SHAKING! >>

If we are not making a difference in the world, what use are we? The reason God doesn't take us straight to heaven is because he wants us to make a difference here on Earth. As Christians, if we are in the world, but there is no difference between us and the world around us, we have lost our saltiness. If people cannot see the difference God has made in our lives, we have lost our saltiness. If we have no positive influence, we don't bring healing, or add something positive to those we come in contact with, we have lost our saltiness.

What one lesson can you take from this study and apply to your own life?

How can you, like salt, make a difference when you are at school, at home, among your friends, in your neighborhood, etc.?

(Give the students a chance to share, especially if you need more time to shake the ice cream!)

Ice Cream Prayers (Took, 5 mins or less)

Praying out by thinking of a way we can affect change for the people in our lives, just like the salt changes the ice and creates something new

- Open the ice cream and dump it into a bowl.
- Give everyone a spoon and ask them to think of at least one practical way that they can affect change for God this week. How can they help mend a broken relationship? How can they make someone thirsty for Christ? Etc.?
- If you have time, have people share in once sentence what they will do this week to be an agent for change.
- As you close with a prayer, have everyone take a spoonful of ice cream and think of that one thing they can do this week to be the salt of the earth.

Here is a sample closing prayer:

Thank you that you have called us the salt of the earth. Help us to be salty. Let us bring out the flavors of righteousness, love, and mercy in this world. Help us to salt the world. Let us lead others to eternal preservation through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Ice cream in a bag directions:

What You'll Need

Ice Cubes

1 cup half and half

1/2 cup Kosher salt

2 tablespoons sugar

1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 pint-size ziplock bag

1 gallon-size ziplock bag

Step 1: Combine the half and half, sugar and vanilla extract in the pint-size bag. Seal the bag tightly, so that none of the liquid will leak out.

Step 2: Prep Ice Bag. Fill the gallon-size ziplock bag halfway with ice cubes. Sprinkle Kosher salt over the ice cubes.

Step 3: Zipping Bags. Insert the pint-size bag filled with ingredients into the bag of ice and salt. Seal the gallon-size ziplock bag. If the bag begins to leak, don't hesitate double bagging it to reduce the mess.

Step 4: Shake it up! Shake the bag for 5-10 minutes until the ice cream mixture begins to harden. Feel the small bag to determine the consistency of your ice cream. Once satisfied with the consistency, remove the small bag from the bag of ice.

Step 5: Enjoy.