

Be Sure Your Light Is Shining

UPPER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

Theme: Let your light shine for Jesus

Scripture: Matthew 5:14

Memory Verse: You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. -
Matthew 5:14

The Children's Sermon

Hey there, boys and girls! Today, we're going to talk about something really cool - Shining God's Light. Have you ever thought about how you can shine like a bright light for God? Well, let's dive into that today with a fun experiment and a story from the Bible.

First, let's imagine our hearts are like this candle inside a jar. When we let God into our lives, our hearts light up, just like this candle. (Light the candle inside the jar.) See how it shines and gives light all around? That's like us Shining God's Light when we follow God and do good things.

But, you know, sometimes we make mistakes. We might tell a lie, be mean to someone, or not listen to our parents. God knows all of our sins though and look what happens to our light when we sin (pour "air" - careful not to get liquid mixture - into jar with candle inside...the candle goes out and won't light back). Oh no! My light went out! Well, let me just light it back up. Oh NO! It won't light back up. God's light won't shine when we have sin in our lives.

What do you think I should do now? (Allow a few seconds for responses.) Well, boys and girls, did you know that God can give us light again? That's right! The Bible tells us in 1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all righteousness". So we ask for forgiveness for our sins and (turn the jar with candle over and pour out "air" - it takes a few seconds) God makes us clean and new again. Now look what happens...(light the candle)...our light shines! We can shine God's light again!

Let's talk about a story from the Bible where someone needed to shine God's light again. Do you remember Jonah? Jonah was asked by God to go to a city called Nineveh and tell the people to stop doing bad things. But Jonah didn't want to go. He tried to run away from God and ended up in the belly of a big fish! Inside the fish, Jonah prayed to God. He said he was sorry for not listening. God forgave Jonah and helped him shine His light again by sending him to Nineveh to deliver God's message.

Just like Jonah, when we say sorry to God and ask for His forgiveness, He helps us to start Shining God's Light again. It doesn't matter how many times we mess up; God is always ready to forgive us.

Now, let's think about ways we can shine God's light every day. Maybe we can help a friend in need, share our toys, say kind words, or obey our parents. Every good thing we do helps us Shine God's Light.

But what if we forget and do something wrong? Remember, just like pouring out the "air" and lighting the candle again, we can ask God to forgive us. And guess what? He will! He loves us so much and wants us to keep Shining His Light.

Let's do a little activity. I want you to think of one way you can Shine God's Light this week. It could be anything nice you can do for someone else. Got it? Great! Now, let's make a promise to try our best to do that one thing and keep Shining God's Light.

Sometimes, we might feel like we're too small to make a difference, but that's not true. Remember the little candle? Even though it's small, it gives off a bright light. You are like that candle. You can make a big difference in the world by Shining God's Light.

Let's pray and thank God for His forgiveness and ask Him to help us keep our light shining for Him! (Prayer)

Dear God, thank you for loving us and forgiving us when we make mistakes. Help us to always come to You when we need forgiveness. Please help us to Shine Your Light every day by being kind, helpful, and loving to everyone around us. We want to be like the bright candle, shining Your light for all to see. Amen.

Boys and girls, remember, no matter what happens, you can always start Shining God's Light again. You are never too small or too young to make a big difference in the world. Let's go out and shine bright this week!

Thank you for listening, and remember, keep Shining God's Light!

Bible Memory Verse

You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. - Matthew 5:14

You Will Need:

- Clear jars or plastic cups
- Small LED tea lights
- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Markers or crayons
- Tape or glue

Get Ready:

- Cut out small paper houses from the construction paper, one for each child.
- Write 'Matthew 5:14' on each house.

Do This:

1. Give each child a clear jar or plastic cup, a small LED tea light, and a paper house.
2. Have the children decorate their paper houses with markers or crayons, encouraging them to think about what makes their light shine in their own lives.
3. Once decorated, help the children tape or glue their paper houses around the jars or cups. Then, they can place the LED tea light inside to light it up. Explain how the light cannot be hidden, just like their good deeds and the love of Jesus should shine brightly for everyone to see.

Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- Small flashlights or LED tea lights for each child
- Construction paper
- Markers or crayons
- Scissors
- Tape

- "Light of the World" template (a simple lighthouse or candle drawing)
- A darkened room (able to safely walk around)

Get Ready:

- Prepare the "Light of the World" templates by drawing or printing them out for the children to decorate.
- Ensure the flashlights or LED tea lights are working and have enough for each child.
- Set up a station for decorating the templates with markers, crayons, and scissors.

Do this:

1. Begin with a discussion on Matthew 5:14, explaining that Jesus calls us to be the light of the world, showing His love and truth to others. Ask the children how they think they can be a light in their own lives.
2. Give each child a "Light of the World" template and have them decorate it with markers or crayons, encouraging them to think of ways they can shine their light for Jesus as they work.
3. Once the templates are decorated, help the children cut them out and tape a flashlight or LED tea light to the back, making sure the light shines through the paper.
4. Turn off the lights in the room and have the children walk around, shining their lights. Lead them in a discussion about how even a small light can make a big difference in the dark, relating this back to how their actions and words can be a light to others.
5. Conclude with a prayer, asking God to help each child be a shining light for Jesus in their homes, schools, and communities.

Snack Activity: Lighthouse Lantern Treats

You'll Need:

- Ice cream cones (preferably sugar cones)
- Small round cookies (enough to serve as a base for each cone)
- Melted white chocolate or frosting
- Assorted candies (for decoration)
- Pretzel sticks
- Yellow fruit snacks or candies (to represent light)

Get Ready: Prepare a clean surface with all your materials laid out, and make sure the melted white chocolate or frosting is in a small bowl for easy dipping.

Do this:

1. Dip the rim of an ice cream cone into the melted white chocolate or frosting, then immediately press it onto a small round cookie to form the base of the lighthouse.

Allow it to set for a few minutes.

2. Decorate the cone with melted white chocolate or frosting and assorted candies to add windows and doors, creating the look of a lighthouse. Use the pretzel sticks to make a cross at the top of the lighthouse.

3. Place a yellow fruit snack or candy at the top, inside the cone, to represent the light shining from the lighthouse. Share with the kids that just like the lighthouse shines its light for ships to see, Matthew 5:14 teaches us that we should let our light shine before others to show the love of Jesus.

Game Activity: Shine Your Light Relay

You'll Need:

- Flashlights (one per team)
- Obstacle course materials (cones, ropes, etc.)

- 'Light Stations' cards with different tasks written on them (tasks should be simple actions or questions related to Matthew 5:14, like 'Say a kind word about someone' or 'Name a way you can be a light in your community')

Get Ready: Set up an obstacle course in a large open area, either indoors or outdoors. Place the 'Light Stations' cards at various points throughout the course. Divide the children into teams, giving each team a flashlight.

Do this:

1. Explain to the children that they are the light of the world, just like Jesus said in Matthew 5:14. Their mission is to shine their light by completing the obstacle course and the tasks at the Light Stations.
2. One child from each team starts the relay by navigating the obstacle course with the flashlight. When they reach a Light Station, they must perform the task or answer the question before moving on.
3. After completing a task, the child returns to their team, passes the flashlight to the next team member, who then takes their turn. The relay continues until all team members have completed the course and the tasks.
4. The first team to finish with all tasks completed shines the brightest and wins, but emphasize that everyone is a winner for letting their light shine for Jesus.

Craft Activity: Shine Your Light Lanterns

You'll Need:

- Clear mason jars
- Colored tissue paper
- Mod Podge or white glue
- Paintbrushes

- LED tea lights
- Black construction paper
- Scissors
- Pencil
- Permanent markers

Get Ready: Cut the colored tissue paper into various shapes and sizes. Cut out small cross shapes from the black construction paper.

Do this:

1. Discuss Matthew 5:14, explaining how we can shine our light for Jesus. Ask the children what this means to them and how they can show their light to others.
2. Use the paintbrush to apply a thin layer of Mod Podge or white glue on the outside of the mason jar. Stick the colored tissue paper pieces onto the jar, overlapping them slightly to create a stained glass effect. Allow some space to attach the cross shape later.
3. Once the jar is covered to your liking, apply another layer of Mod Podge or glue over the tissue paper to seal it. Attach the black construction paper cross onto the jar.
4. After the jar has dried, discuss ways the children can be a light in the world. Have them write or draw these actions on the black construction paper with permanent markers.
5. Place an LED tea light inside the jar to finish your Shine Your Light Lantern. Remind the children that just like the light shines through the jar, they can let their light shine for Jesus in everything they do.

Prayer Activity: Shine Your Light for Jesus

You'll Need:

- Small jars or clear plastic cups
- Tea lights or small LED lights
- Colored tissue paper
- Glue and paintbrushes
- Permanent markers

Get Ready: Cut the colored tissue paper into small squares or shapes that will be easy for the children to handle and glue onto the jars or cups.

Do this:

1. Begin with a discussion on Matthew 5:14, explaining how we can be the light of the world by showing love, kindness, and following Jesus' teachings. Ask the children how they think they can shine their light in their own lives.
2. Give each child a jar or plastic cup. Have them brush a thin layer of glue around the outside and stick the colored tissue paper pieces onto the glue to create a stained glass effect. While they work, encourage them to think about the ways they can let their light shine for Jesus.
3. Once the jars are covered and the glue has dried, place a tea light or LED light inside each one. Turn off the lights in the room and light the candles (if using real tea lights, this step should be done by an adult). Lead the children in a prayer, asking God to help them shine brightly for Him in everything they do. Encourage them to take their light jars home as a reminder to be a light for Jesus every day.