

I AM THE LIGHT

Purpose

To explore what Jesus meant when He said “I am the light of the world”.

Key Scripture

Once again Jesus spoke to the people. This time he said, “I am the light for the world! Follow me, and you won’t be walking in the dark. You will have the light that gives life.” John 8:12 (CEV)

Consider & Prepare

Take the time to read John 8:12-20 and John 12:44-50.

Jesus made numerous claims about who he was. He claimed to be the Son of God; he claimed to be the Bread of Life; he claimed to be the Messiah; he claimed to be the Way to enter the Kingdom of God and he claimed to be the Light of the World.

Sometimes it is clear what Jesus meant when he made these claims. At other times,

it’s not as clear. Often we can find many possible meanings. Think about what it means for you to believe that Jesus is the Light of the World.

In this service we will investigate three elements of the meaning of this claim: Light brings life; light represents knowledge; light brings safety and security.

Keep in mind that an all-age worship service should provide opportunities for people of all ages to worship together. Every person should be able to access every element of the service and take away something meaningful.

You Will Need

Introduction

- Spot lights – placed around your space
- Either prepare musicians to provide dramatic music or a drum roll or find a recording that you can use
- A week before this service plant some seeds in plastic cups. Place one in a position where it will receive good



light, place one in a position where it has minimal light. Bring them to demonstrate the importance of light to life. **OR** Find two images of plants, one grown in the light, the other grown with little light

What does the Bible say about Light

- Printed copies of the Scripture verses
- Markers
- One Sheet of cardboard per group

Light Represents Knowledge

- three blindfolds
- a long table and three chairs
- white, black and red jellybeans with two empty bowls for sorting
- chocolate
- laxative chocolate
- approx. 10 pieces of paper, with a statement written on each one that could be true or false about a person. *For example, "I am a compulsive liar"; "I ate cockroaches for breakfast"; "I love my mum"; "I have beautiful hair"; "I am in need of coffee"; "I would like a piece of volunteer number two's chocolate"*

Light Brings Safety and Security

- Set up a simple obstacle course

Prayer Activity + Opportunity for Reflection and Response

- three sheets of cardboard; one poster has a picture of a seedling, symbolizing life; one poster has a picture of a brain, symbolizing knowledge; one poster has a picture of a padlock, symbolizing safety and security.
- enough glow sticks OR candles OR torches for everyone to have one.
- matches or gas lighters if you are using candles

Song Suggestions

I am the way, the truth and the light

Here I am to Worship

Be thou my Vision

God of this City (Chris Tomlin)

City on a Hill (Third Day)

Outline

Introduction

Activity 1

Link 1

Activity 2

Link 2

Activity 3

Prayer Activity

Opportunity for Reflection and Response

Conclusion/ Benediction

Introduction

Have the room in semi-darkness as people enter. (Or turn the lights off once everyone is seated). Place some spotlights around the room (switched off to begin).

Play some dramatic music/ drum roll...

Announce in a loud voice: "JESUS SAID, I AM THE LIGHT" Spotlights and remaining house lights all come on together.

In John 8, Jesus said that he is the Light of the World and that without him we are walking in darkness. When he said this he didn't mean that we will be walking around without being able to see with our eyes. I wonder what he did mean when he said this. We are going to spend some time together exploring what Jesus meant when he said "I am the Light".

Light is essential to life. Look at this plant. It was grown with very little light – it doesn't look very healthy does it? Now, look at the difference in the plant that was grown in full light. What a difference the light makes!

In some countries, when winter comes the sun only appears for a couple of hours a day. Something strange happens to some people who live in those countries. In the winter they become very, very SAD. This is called *Seasonal Affective Disorder*. They don't feel like leaving the house, they don't feel like doing their work. They are too sad to do much at all. Do you know what the doctors do to help them feel better? They are exposed to a special type of light that is just like sunlight!

What does the Bible say about light?

We are going to spend some time looking at what else the Bible says about light...

Divide the congregation into small groups and give each one a different Scripture verse from the following list. Then have them:

- *Look up the Scripture verse*
- *Write the verse on your poster*
- *Talk within your group about what this verse means*
- *Decorate or illustrate your poster with your group*

Who can count his army of stars? Isn't God the source of light? Job 25:3

God said, "I command light to shine!" And light started shining. God looked at the light and saw that it was good. He separated light from darkness. Genesis 1:3-4

Our Lord and God, you are my lamp. You turn darkness to light. 2 Samuel 22:29

Some rebel and refuse to follow the light. Job 24:13

You, the Lord God, keep my lamp burning and turn darkness to light. Psalm 18:28

The Lord's instruction is right; it makes our hearts glad. His commands shine brightly, and they give us light. Psalm 19:8

You, Lord, are the light that keeps me safe. I am not afraid of anyone. You protect me, and I have no fears. Psalm 27:1

You protected me from death and kept me from stumbling, so that I would please you and follow the light that leads to life. Psalm 56:13

If you obey and do right, a light will show you the way and fill you with happiness. Psalm 97:11

Your word is a lamp that gives light wherever I walk. Psalm 119:105

Understanding your word brings light to the minds of ordinary people. Psalm 119:130

The Lord says: You are my people and nation! So pay attention to me. My teaching will cause justice to shine like a light for every nation. Isaiah 51:4

Give your food to the hungry and care for the homeless. Then your light will shine in the dark; your

darkest hour will be like the noonday sun. Isaiah 58:10

You are like light for the whole world. A city built on top of a hill cannot be hidden, and no one would light a lamp and put it under a clay pot. A lamp is placed on a lamp stand, where it can give light to everyone in the house. Matthew 5:14-15

Make your light shine, so that others will see the good that you do and will praise your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:16

Night is almost over, and day will soon appear. We must stop behaving as people do in the dark and be ready to live in the light. Romans 13:12

The Scriptures say, "God commanded light to shine in the dark." Now God is shining in our hearts to let you know that his glory is seen in Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 4:6

You used to be like people living in the dark, but now you are people of the light because you belong to the Lord. So act like people of the light and make your light shine. Be good and honest and truthful... Ephesians 5:8-9

Do everything without grumbling or arguing. Then you will be the pure and innocent children of God. You live among people who are crooked and evil, but you must not do anything that they can say is wrong. Try to shine as lights among the people of this world, as you hold firmly to the message that gives life. Philippians 2:14-16a

If we say that we share in life with God and keep on living in the dark, we are lying and are not living by the truth. ⁷ But if we live in the light, as God does, we share in life with each other. And the blood of his Son Jesus washes all our sins away. 1 John 1:6-7

Give each group 30 seconds to share their verse and show their poster. Place the posters around your space so that people can explore them later. Make sure that you put them low enough on the walls for small people to see them.

Link 1

We have just seen that the Bible gives us lots of clues about what Jesus might have meant when he said "I am the Light". Now we are going to explore what happens when we take away the light.

Light Represents Knowledge

Call for three volunteers. Choose from a number of different generations. Seat them behind a table, YOUNGEST to OLDEST so that they are facing the congregation.

To begin with, I am going to take away the light by blindfolding each of you. Next I am going to explain what I would like each of to do. Then I will give you all forty five seconds to complete your task.

Blindfold the volunteers.

In front of the first volunteer: Place a bowl containing black, white and red jellybeans and two empty bowls to sort them into...

Volunteer number one: Do you know the difference between black and white? I would like you to sort these jellybeans out. Put the black jellybeans into one bowl and the white jellybeans into the other bowl.

In front of the second volunteer: Place a plate containing pieces of regular chocolate and pieces of laxative chocolate.

Volunteer number two: Would you rather eat regular milk chocolate or laxative chocolate? The plate in front of you contains both. I would like you to choose the pieces you would like to eat and set them aside.

In front of the third volunteer: Place about ten pieces of paper containing statements that may or may not apply to your volunteer.

Volunteer number three: In front of you are some statements. I want you to sort them according to whether they are 'true' or 'false' for you. If the statement is true of you then place it on the right. If it is false then place it on the left.

Invite the congregation to encourage but not help the volunteers.

Start the timer for forty five seconds.

Now, let's bring back the light by removing your blindfolds.

Volunteer number one please show us your bowl of black jellybeans. Now let's see the white ones. I thought you knew the difference between black and white. What happened?

Volunteer number two, please show us which pieces of chocolate you have chosen. Are you still happy to eat them?

Volunteer number three, please read out the statements that you think are true about you. Now please read the statements that are false about you. Would you like to change your mind about any of those things? What has changed?

Link 2

Light helps us to see things clearly. It helps us to know more information. It helps us to see the truth more clearly and to make the right choices.

Jesus is the Light of the World. He helps us to better know and understand God. He helps us to see the truth and to understand the right way to live and make better choices.

Light Brings Safety and Security

I wonder how you feel about being in the dark.

Invite responses

Call for a volunteer.

To begin with, I am going to take away light from you by blindfolding you.

Now, I would like you to walk through the obstacle course.

How was that for you? How did it feel to walk around in the darkness?

Now, I'm going to bring in someone to guide you through the obstacle course.

Did it make a difference to have someone to help you though the darkness?

Let's try this once more. I'm going to remove the blindfold and bring back the light for you.

Now walk through the obstacle course again.

How did you feel to be back in the light?

Thank your volunteer and invite them to return to their seat.

Link 3

Often when we are in the dark we can feel very unsafe. We might feel afraid because we can't see where we are going or what is around us.

Having someone to help us through life helps to make us feel a little bit safer and we can do that for each other.

Jesus said that he is the Light. When we have the light the darkness disappears and we can easily

see the way ahead. Jesus helps us to feel safe and secure in life.

Prayer Activity + Opportunity for Reflection and Response

Today we have explored some of what Jesus meant when he said “I am the Light.”

Place three posters across the front of the room. One poster has a picture of a seedling, symbolising life. One poster has a picture of a brain, symbolising knowledge. One poster has a picture of a padlock, symbolising safety and security.

Hold up/move to the poster with the seedling symbol. Light brings life and Jesus came to give us life here on earth and forever in heaven.

Hold up/move to the poster with the brain symbol. Light represents knowledge. Jesus helps us to see and understand what God is like and he also helps us to see and understand how to live life well and make good choices.

Hold up/move to the poster with the padlock symbol. Light helps us to feel safe and secure. When we are friends of Jesus, we learn that we can trust him to keep us safe, not just for now but forever. So, we can have confidence to live for him in this life.

Invite everyone to think about what they would like Jesus to bring more of for them.

Ask everyone to come forward and take a candle/ glow stick/ torch and place their light under their chosen symbol.

Share a prayer together.

Jesus said, “I am the light for the world! Follow me, and you won’t be walking in the dark. You will have the light that gives life.” John 8:12 (CEV)

Conclusion/ Benediction

I ask the glorious Father and God of our Lord Jesus Christ to give you his Spirit. The Spirit will make you wise and let you understand what it means to know God. ¹⁸ My prayer is that light will flood your hearts and that you will understand the hope that was given to you when God chose you. Then you will discover the glorious blessings that will be yours together with all of God’s people. Ephesians 1:17-18