

Riverview Baptist Church
Sunday School Teaching Plan
December 7, 2014
“Light in the Darkness”

Memory Verse:

“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.” Isaiah 9:2, NIV

The Big Idea:

Sermon Title: Light in the Darkness
Sunday School Scripture: Various passages
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ESS: As a light enters the darkness, Jesus came among sinners to offer abundant and eternal life and reveal the true pathway to a right relationship with God.

Presentation

Thanksgiving is over, today is the first day of December, and today is the first Sunday of advent.

- Do you use Christmas lights at your house as part of your Christmas decorations? Indoor or outdoor? White lights or colored lights?
- Why do you think lights are so often used to express the joy of the Christmas season?

Today, the topic of our lesson is LIGHT.

1. Take a minute and brainstorm as many different light sources as you can think of. (Give participants 2 minutes to brainstorm ideas individually or in partnerships. Have them write their ideas on the back of the learner guide.)
Light Source examples: flashlight, spotlight, candle, headlights, etc.
2. If you could choose one type of light to represent you, what would you choose and why?

Today, we'll focus on Jesus coming to Earth as a light entering the darkness. To better understand how and why Jesus is a light, we first need to take a look at the concept of darkness.

1. Darkness is the ABSENCE of Light

Einstein once said there is no such thing as darkness. Darkness, in and of itself, does not exist. Darkness is just the absence of light. In the Bible, darkness is used to symbolize several things:

(Assign each verse to a designated reader. As he/she reads the verse aloud, have the class try to guess what darkness represents in the verse.)

READ Isaiah 9:2 - Darkness represents life before the coming of the Messiah!

In Isaiah's prophecy, “those who lived in darkness” are those who are living before the advent of the Messiah.

READ Ephesians 5:8 - Darkness represents sin and separation from God.

As sinners, we all started out “in darkness” because our sins separated us from God. We live in the darkness until we have a love relationship with Jesus Christ.

READ 1 John 1:5 - Darkness represents the opposite of God.

God is light, the opposite of darkness. Since God is perfect, righteous, and holy, darkness represents the opposite - sin of any and every kind.

DISCUSS: *Why are children sometimes afraid of the dark? What affect can darkness sometimes have, even on adults?*

Now that we understand a bit about what the Bible means when it uses the term *darkness*, maybe we can better understand why Jesus is described as the LIGHT.

2. Light Gives LIFE

It doesn't take a degree in science to realize that light is essential to life. Not many things can live, grow, and thrive without light. In fact, we would have no food without light! The sun's light enables the crops to grow and the animals to thrive. The human body needs light for life, too. Just as light is essential to life through a scientific lens, the Bible also uses light to represent life.

READ John 1:1-4

Jesus came to give light to a dark world. The light He was offering was His own life - lived sinlessly, laid down sacrificially, and revived victoriously! Light is essential to life, just as the light offered by Jesus is essential for eternal life! But, just as some people can choose to leave the lights off and sit in darkness, so too can people ignore the light of eternal life Jesus offers.

Do you know anyone who knows about Jesus' offer of eternal life, but refuses to accept or acknowledge it? What about you – sure, you know that the light Jesus offers is essential for eternal life. But do you see Jesus's light as essential for abundant life today, here on Earth? Do you live your life as if everything depends upon the light Jesus offers you today?

3. Light Reveals TRUTH

Have you ever heard the saying, “nothing good ever happens after dark?” It seems to be true that more crimes and acts of violence happen in the darkness than in daylight. Why is that? It's because darkness conceals truth while light reveals it. Because the truth is harder to see in the dark, darkness seems to breed confusion and fear. In contrast, light produces confidence and clarity because it reveals the truth and exposes what the darkness hid.

READ John 3:19-21

Based on John 3:19-21, why do men prefer the darkness over the light? Why are the evil afraid to enter the light? Why do the righteous love the light? Do these principles hold true today? Are there areas of your life that you would prefer to keep in the darkness? How does Christ bring “light” to our lives?

Jesus is the light that entered a dark world. His perfect, sinless life and whole-hearted love for the Father shed a brilliant light on any that were around him, exposing their sins and shortcomings. BUT the light of His gospel message offers light to sinners and those living in darkness. Jesus' light illuminates sin but offers pardon. His light exposes our faults but reveals His forgiveness.

4. Light Illuminates the PATH

Have you ever been out walking at night, unsure of your direction or path? A flashlight can make a big difference! And what about driving in darkness? How could we safely and effectively make it from point A to point B without headlights? Light enables us to see and recognize the path we are to follow.

READ Psalm 18:28-36

According to Psalm 18, the writer claims God turns his darkness to light. Because of this, what are some things he is able to do with the help from God's light? (See verses 29-36)

READ John 12:35-36

In this passage, Jesus makes it clear that living without His light, presence, and salvation means wandering in the darkness, traveling aimlessly, without clear direction or purpose. In contrast, those who “trust in the light” live purposefully and abundantly in the present, with the blessed hope of eternal life waiting in the future.

5. Light Should be SHARED

Aren't we glad that Thomas Edison, inventor of the light bulb, decided to share his discovery with us? Light is meant to be shared, not possessed. If the power goes out in your house, don't you light several candles or turn on multiple flashlights so the various members of your household can see? Light is meant to be shared, not hoarded. On Christmas, we decorate with strands of lights inside and outside our homes, celebrating the season and spreading the cheer to our neighbors. Light is meant to be shared, not stashed and stored.

READ John 12:46

In this passage, Jesus gives a clear purpose statement. Jesus came to be a light: a lifeline, a revelation of truth, and a clear pathway to a right relationship with God. Those who see and believe his light will no longer walk in darkness – aimlessly, alone, and separated from God.

READ Matthew 5:14-16

Just as Jesus came as a light, he has commissioned us to live as lights. We are meant to expose the true pathway to eternal life. Jesus has shined His light for us and saved us. Now we must share his light with others. After all, light is meant to be shared!

CLOSING: As a light enters the darkness, Jesus came among sinners to offer abundant and eternal life and reveal the true pathway to a right relationship with God.

APPLY IT!

1. YOU are the light of the world! Look at your own life. Is your light on or off? Stowed away in storage, occasionally used, or often available for others? What are some practical ways you can share the light of Jesus more often as you go through your daily life?