**JOURNEYING TOGETHER:** FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Session 2 of 4

# Salt and light

### MEETING AIM

To reflect on how we should be salt and light in our world.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Matthew 5:13-16

### BACKGROUND

This session plan is intended for use either in-person or online, depending on how you’re meeting. Adapt the activities to fit your situation.

This week we’re looking at the call in the Sermon on the Mount to be like salt and light. These are two simple metaphors, where Jesus was trying to make it clear that his people were to be known. In some ways this has always been a difficult challenge in a world where it is sometimes easier to be like everyone else. Of course, in this sense it is a particularly pertinent challenge to teenagers in an age of identity formation, where what their peers think of them is felt so keenly.

This session looks at this metaphor and tries to explore what it might mean still today, and then towards the end we seek to find ways to put these concepts into practical use in our lives.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Welcome everyone as they join you, by name if possible. If you normally do refreshments, you may want to save these until you’ve played the game in ‘Intro activity’.

### INTRO ACTIVITY – 10 mins

**You will need:** paper cups (or lots of identical ceramic or glass cups); water; salt; prizes (sweets)

Before the session, fill two-thirds of your cups with tap water and one-third with tap water mixed with salt.

Explain the game to the group. Give a volunteer three cups of water: two plain and one salty. They have to take a sip from each of the cups and keep a straight face, even when drinking the salty water. The rest of the group has to watch them carefully and see if they can work out which is the salty water by the drinker’s reaction. They have to vote for which cup they think it was, and if the drinker manages to fool them, they win a sweet!

Use a new set of cups for each volunteer. It would be kind to have a refreshing drink available for everyone who played the game!

### BIBLE EXPLORATION – 10 mins

**You will need:** salty snacks (such as pretzels) in bowls; small bowl of salt; tealights (real or battery-operated); matches (if using real tealights)

Put out your salty snacks and invite everyone to eat them. Put out a small bowl of salt as well, to help act as a visual aid. Also put out some tealight candles (on an appropriate surface) and invite everyone to take a turn in lighting one with matches or switching them on. (Being very careful with safety, and mindful of fire alarms above.)

Ask the group if they can guess what the passage you are going to look at today might be. Open up your Bibles to read the passage in Matthew 5:13-16. Ask a couple of volunteers to read the passage out: one person reading the ‘salty’ part in from verse 13, and another the ‘light’ part in verses 14-16.

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Following on from ‘Bible exploration’, discuss these questions:

* What are the qualities of salt and light that Jesus is using as metaphors?
* Do you think they’re good metaphors still today?
* What do you think Jesus is trying to say to those listening?
* How do you think Christians should be distinctive in the world today?
* What do you think Jesus meant about salt losing its saltiness?
* Do you find this message challenging or encouraging?
* How can we be salt and light in our world today?

### CREATIVE RESPONSE – 10 mins

**You will need:** paper; felt-tip pens or gel pens in different colours

Ask the group to think practically in ways that they can be like salt and light in the world. What are the places they find themselves in each week? Where is it easier or harder to see where they can be like salt and light? What are the things they already do where they are being like salt and light? Prompt the group to encourage each other in the ways that they think that their friends are like salt and light: it might be the things that they do, or their character.

Draw out a weekly planner, with seven columns for each day. Ask the group to take a dark-coloured pen, and write in some of the regular things that they do in the week.

Then ask them to look for opportunities in the week where they might have chances to be like salt and light in the places they find themselves. Ask them to annotate their weekly schedules using light-coloured pens over the top, finding ways that they might take opportunities to be salt and light.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** a string of fairy lights; pegs, pens; small pieces of paper or card; music and the means to play it

Hang the fairy lights up like a washing line! Give each group member a peg, a piece of paper or card and a pen.

Ask the group to think about a way that they could respond to Jesus’ call to be like salt and light. What would be the things they’d want to offer him back? Introduce a time of prayer; say that you’re going to play a piece of music that they might quietly reflect on and then offer something up in prayer. When they’re ready, they can write a small prayer, or just words or a drawing that symbolise they’re response to Jesus on their piece of paper or card. They can hang it up on the fairy lights using their peg.

‘Build your kingdom here’ by Rend Collective might be an appropriate song to play, or another that is familiar to your group, or simply some reflective instrumental music. At the end of the song you can finish in a simple prayer:

“Jesus, help us be people that are like salt and light. Help us be people who grow more and more like you. Amen.”

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