**GROWING TOGETHER:** FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Session 2 of 4

# Salt and light

### MEETING AIM

To explore how following Jesus makes us different.

### 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.

In the Beatitudes, Jesus has talked to his disciples about living in a way that’s radically different to the world’s. He now goes on to paint some pictures of how his followers’ lives act as salt and light to the world around them. Salt was much more significant in the ancient world than it is today – in fact, often today we are encouraged to have less of it! Roman soldiers received their wages in salt, Greeks felt that salt was somehow divine and Jewish sacrifice laws included salt. Before the age of refrigeration, salt was used to preserve food and prevent decay. When Jesus told his disciples that they were salt – it was significant.

Light is an easier thing for us to connect with from our modern viewpoint, although once again, perhaps our light sensitivity has been dulled somewhat by electricity, light pollution and our ability just to flick a switch and send the darkness packing. Maybe we don’t have such a sense of darkness as the first disciples.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

As the children arrive, sit everyone down in a circle. Chat about anything the children have done this week. Share something that you have done this week too. Ask the children to share their favourite savoury snack.

### INTRO ACTIVITY – 10 mins

**You will need:** salt and shake crisps; blindfolds

Ask for some volunteers who don’t mind being blindfolded. Blindfold the volunteers and tell them that you’re going to give them two crisps. They have to decide which one they like the best. Let them try a crisp without and then one with the salt. Talk about what they prefer and why. Take off the blindfolds. Is it nicer being in the dark or the light?

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** A3 paper (or larger, depending on the number of children in each group); marker pens

Divide the children into small groups of four or five (or stay all together if you have a smaller group). Give each group a big piece of paper and some marker pens. Ask them to write a list of what we use salt for. Now ask them to write a second list of why light is important.

Draw the group back together and talk through their lists. Read (or ask someone to read) Matthew 5:13-16. Have them look at their lists a second time in groups, and circle or underline any ideas from their lists that might connect with them being salt and light as Jesus says they are. Gather together and share those ideas. Unless your group has particular knowledge of salt in ancient times, you might like to share some of the ideas from today’s background notes with them to help further understanding.

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

* Jesus used word pictures that his followers would’ve understood at the time. Are salt and light still helpful ideas for us to think about the way we follow Jesus?
* If not, what would be better metaphors?
* Do you think that your friends and family would sense a saltiness in you or light coming from you as you live as a follower of Jesus? How are these things seen or experienced?
* What things might have to change if people are going to see that you’re a follower of Jesus?
* Jesus says you are these things – does that mean you don’t have to try to be?

### CREATIVE TIME – 10 mins

**You will need:** flour, salt, water, bamboo skewers, tealights (real or battery operated); access to an oven (optional)

Before the session, make salt dough by combining one cup salt, two cups flour and three-quarters of a cup of water.

Give everyone a fist-sized piece of dough and show them how to push their thumbs into the top to make a simple pot. They can then mould their pot as they like, but it needs to be big enough to contain a tealight once it’s hardened. A bamboo skewer can be used to push holes though in a pattern so that when the tealight is lit, the light will spill out from the holes. The salt dough can be hardened in the oven on 150°C for 30 minutes or left to dry out for several days.

As you work, chat about what the children have discovered today and the practical outworkings of being salt and light in their lives. You might want to share examples from your own life, if appropriate.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** salty snacks (small crackers or similar; tealights (real or battery operated); music and the means to play it

Create an atmosphere of calm by putting on some music and dimming the lights (if you can). Invite the children to reflect on being salt and light as they taste a salty cracker and then light a candle.

Pray, asking God to help them to recognise the moments when they are being salt and light in the week to come.

**JENNY CHEUNG**

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