**FIRST STEPS TOGETHER:** FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

Session 2 of 4

# Salt and light

### MEETING AIM

To think about how Jesus living in us can change the 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.

In Jesus’ day, salt would have been used for flavouring and preserving and people also used small clay lamps to burn olive oil, so his analogy would have really spoken to them. Shining our light so that others praise God, or so that we can ‘change the world’ can seem huge, so it’s important to emphasise to the children that this is about shining their light in all the places they go, *their* world. There’s an opportunity to share a story of someone you’ve known who’s done this – the more ‘ordinary’ the story, the better!

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Welcome each child by name and encourage them to share stories from their week. Celebrate any birthdays, or special events. Ask the children: “What was the best thing you did this week?” Thank God that he’s with you and ask him to help you learn more about him today.

### PLAY – 10 mins

**You will need:** lots of different lights, eg candle, torch, lamp, headtorch

Turn off, or dim, your main lights and show the children all the different kinds of light you’ve brought. Light is powerful; it helps us find our way and it gets rid of darkness. Let the children play with any lights (provided it’s safe for them to do so). We’re going to hear today about how Jesus says we can shine his light in the places we go.

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** picnic blanket; light and bucket; saltshaker; torch

Lay out your picnic blanket and invite everyone to sit down. Then tell this story:

Jesus loved speaking to people. One day, he was teaching a huge crowd of people all about how they could become more like God. They had all sat down on a mountainside to listen.

Jesus told the people: “You are the salt of the earth and you are the light of the world.” *Hold up a saltshaker.*

A long time ago, before people had fridges and freezers, it was hard to keep food fresh. People would cover their food in salt and this would help to stop it from going yucky and rotten. Jesus calling us “the salt of the earth” was like him saying that we help to keep things fresh – by loving God and helping others, we help to bring goodness in the world.

Jesus also said: “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. People don’t light a lamp and hide it under a bowl. Instead they light it shine so people can see. When you shine God’s light, others will know God too.” *Switch on a lamp and cover it with a bucket.*

Imagine putting on a light so that you can eat your dinner or to do some colouring, then covering it up and being in the dark instead. Wouldn’t that be silly?

That’s what Jesus was saying, his light is so bright and God’s love is such good news that it would be silly to hide it. When we choose to ask Jesus to be in our hearts and ask him to help us shine his light, then we can change the world. We change the places around us. *Hold up a torch and turn it on as you talk about Jesus’ light.*

It’s like Jesus light is a torch ready for us to turn on. We just have to ask him to shine his light so we can show other people how bright and powerful he is. When we don’t know where to go in the dark, we can shine a torch to see the way. When we’re connected to God, we can show other people how to find him too. We can share with them how much God loves them, and help them to connect with God. We’ll stand out, like a bright light!

There are lots of amazing stories about people who shone God’s light and changed the world around them. Find a story to share with your children of someone who let their light shine and the impact it had. It would be great to share an example of someone in your church, or even invite someone to come in and share their story themselves.

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Ask the children these questions, ensuring everyone has the chance to contribute:

* What was your favourite bit in today’s story?
* Changing the world can feel big, but Jesus is saying we can change *our* world, so that means all the different places we go. Where are the places you go where you can shine your light?
* Who do you know who is really good at sharing God’s love with people around them?
* What was your favourite bit of [name’s]story? (If you had a guest or shared a story.)

### CREATIVE TIME – 10 mins

**You will need:** glowsticks or battery-powered tealights; paper bags; scissors, felt-tip pens or crayons; items to decorate bags

Make paper-bag lanterns. Give each child a bag and help them to cut out patterns in it. Then let them colour them in and decorate them how they’d like to. Give each child a ‘light’ so they can put it in their bag. Chat together about how we can shine God’s light wherever we go to help others to know God too.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** worship music (this can be someone leading, or a video, or just the music, whatever works for your setting)

Sing ‘City on a hill’ by Nick and Becky Drake, or another light-themed song. Tell the children that Jesus said we are “the light of the world” and “the salt of the earth”. He said we can help others and teach them about God.

As you sing: “Let your light shine”, sing this as a prayer over each other, using your hands to sign shining light on everyone. Thank God that Jesus living in each one of us can change our world.

**ANNIE WILLMOT**

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