Grades K–5

Light of the World

Object Lesson · Matthew 5:14–16 · Ages 5–10 · 10 minutes

Main point: Jesus wants His light to shine through us, so people can see our good works and glorify God.
Bible verse: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." *Matthew 5:14–16 (KJV)*
You need: a flashlight (test it first), a bowl, basket or small box that covers it, your Bible, and a high spot like a shelf or a stack of books.
Before class: read Matthew 5:1–16. Jesus went up on a mountain and taught His disciples (Matthew 5:1–2). Find the high spot where the flashlight can sit so everyone can see it.

The lesson

Do: dim the lights. Turn on the flashlight and shine it around the room.
Say: "What happens when we turn on a light in a dark room? *(Let kids answer.)* That's right. We can see where we're going, and nobody trips over things!"

Do: set the bowl over the flashlight so the light is hidden.
Say: "Is my light still on? *(Yes!)* Is it helping anybody see? *(No!)* That would be a silly thing to do with a light, wouldn't it?"

Do: open your Bible and read Matthew 5:14–15.
Say: "Jesus said that! A **bushel** was a basket for measuring grain. A **candlestick** was a stand that held a lamp up high. Nobody lights a lamp and hides it under a basket."

Do: lift the bowl away and set the flashlight up high, shining out over the room.
Say: "Up here, it gives light to everyone in the room. Jesus said, 'Ye are the light of the world.' He wants His light to shine through us."

Do: read Matthew 5:16.
Say: "How do people see our light? By our **good works**: helping without being asked, telling the truth, sharing, being kind to the new kid, obeying the first time. And look who gets the glory: not us. People 'glorify your Father which is in heaven.' We shine so people see God."

Questions to ask

1. What did Jesus say we should NOT do with a light? *(Hide it under a bushel, Matthew 5:15)*
2. When people see our good works, who gets the glory? *(God, our Father in heaven, Matthew 5:16)*
3. What is one good work you can do this week so your light shines at home or at school?

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The light comes from Jesus

Say: "Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life' (John 8:12, KJV). When we follow Jesus, we have His light. God loves you, and everyone has sinned (Romans 3:23). Jesus is God who came in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16). He died for our sins, was buried and rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). The Bible tells us how to obey the gospel: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) We turn away from our sin, we are buried with Jesus in baptism in His name so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16), and God fills us with the Holy Ghost, and we speak in other tongues like the believers did (Acts 2:4)."
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for Jesus, the light of the world. Help us never hide our light. Help us do good works this week so people see You and give You glory. In Jesus' name, amen."

Preschool (ages 3–5): skip the reading of the whole passage. Let each child take a turn hiding the light under the bowl and then holding it up high while everyone says, "Let your light so shine!" Ask just one question: *Should we hide our light or let it shine?*

Tips

- **No dark room?** It still works with the lights on. Shine the flashlight on the wall so kids can see the spot appear and disappear.
- **Keep it moving:** let one helper lift the bowl at the right moment. Kids remember what they do.
- **Make it stick:** at the end of class, turn the flashlight on again and have kids say Matthew 5:16 together as they leave.
- **Teach the passage:** this fits right after the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:1–12, the beginning of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.

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