Salt and Light

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: Let your light shine. Jesus calls us to be different for Him, where people can see, so they give glory to God.
Bible passage: Matthew 5:13–16. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." *Matthew 5:14 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), a flashlight or a battery candle (no real flames), a bowl, a short note card with a sentence on it, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board. Write a short sentence on the note card, such as "Jesus loves you."

1. Opening game: Read in the Dark (5–10 minutes)

Dim the lights as much as you can. Hold up the note card across the room and ask a volunteer to read it. Then turn on the flashlight and put the bowl over it. Can they read it now? Lift the bowl and shine the light on the card. Ask: *What difference did the light make? What good was the light under the bowl?* Say: "Jesus said something about lights and bowls. Let's find it."

2. Bible story: Salt and Light (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Matthew 5. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

On the mountain. Look up Matthew 5:1–2. Jesus saw the **multitudes** (big crowds). He went up into a mountain, and when He sat down, His disciples came to Him, and He taught them.

Salt. Look up Matthew 5:13. "Ye are the salt of the earth." **Ye** means you. Salt makes food taste good. Job asked, "Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt?" (Job 6:6). But if salt "have lost his **savour**" (its taste), how can it be made salty again? It is "good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be **trodden under foot** of men," thrown out and walked on.

A city on a hill. Look up Matthew 5:14. "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." A whole city on top of a hill can be seen from far away.

A candle on a candlestick. Look up Matthew 5:15. People don't light a candle and put it under a **bushel**, a basket or bowl for measuring grain. They put it on a **candlestick**, a stand that holds it up high, and "it giveth light unto all that are in the house."

Shine. Look up Matthew 5:16. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and **glorify** your Father which is in heaven." Glorify means praise and honor. Your Father which is in heaven means God. People see the good we do, and they praise God.

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3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. Salt makes food taste good (Job 6:6). How can a kid make a home, a class or a team "better" for God?
2. What might make a Christian lose their "savour," and stop being different (Matthew 5:13)?
3. What are some "bushels" that make kids hide their light? (Being afraid, wanting to fit in, being too busy.)
4. Matthew 5:16 says people should see our good works and glorify God, not us. Why does that matter?
5. Where is one place you could shine this week?

Recall questions

1. What did Jesus say we are of the earth? *(The salt, Matthew 5:13)*
2. What cannot be hid? *(A city that is set on an hill, 5:14)*
3. Where do people put a lit candle? *(On a candlestick, 5:15)*

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **ye** means you, **set on an hill** means built on top of a hill, and **cannot be hid** means it cannot be hidden. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world' (John 8:12). We shine because of Him. God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we 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) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."

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.

This week: pick one "bushel" that hides your light and take it off: do one good work you have been afraid or too busy to do.

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6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Matthew 5:1: Where did Jesus go up? *(Into a mountain)*
2. Matthew 5:13: Ye are the salt of the what? *(Earth)*
3. Matthew 5:13: What is salt good for if it has lost its savour? *(Nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot)*
4. Matthew 5:14: Ye are the light of the what? *(World)*
5. Matthew 5:14: Where is the city that cannot be hid? *(Set on an hill)*
6. Matthew 5:15: What do men not put a candle under? *(A bushel)*
7. Matthew 5:15: Who does the candle give light unto? *(All that are in the house)*
8. Matthew 5:16: What should men see? *(Your good works)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for Jesus, the light of the world. Help us not to hide our light, but to let it shine at home, at school and everywhere, so people see our good works and glorify You. In Jesus' name, amen."

Teacher note: the Bible says "candle" (Matthew 5:15). Use a flashlight or a battery candle in class, never a real flame. Matthew 5:13 says salt that has lost its savour is cast out; keep it simple: Jesus wants us to stay "salty," different and good for God.

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