

Shine in the Darkness!

John 1:6-8; 19-28 KJV

Bible Lesson & Activities for Children



THE **SUNDAY SCHOOL** STORE

Shine the Light of Christ!



Jesus Christ is the light of the world, and gives us hope in the darkness of life's challenges. During the season of Advent, we celebrate His coming and remember how John the Baptist came as a messenger to prepare the way for Him. This lesson reflects on John and how, like him, we can share the good news of Jesus and tell others about Him, spreading His light. Christmas lights remind us of His light, and also act to illustrate how that hope and joy can be contagious to other people.

The hope of Christmas is remembering that Jesus has come, that He will come again someday, and that He is present with us now and always. This message reminds children of the true meaning of the season and the delight we have in knowing His salvation. In the darkness of winter, Christmas lights shine brightly. In the darkness of our lives, Jesus gives us joy and strength. We rejoice in the eternal life we will have with Him one day.

Passage: John 1:6-8; 19-28 (or entire passage 6-28)

Target Audience: Kindergarten-6th grade

Materials Needed: Construction paper; decorative supplies; glue; markers or crayons; tape; scissors; paper plate; toilet paper tube; tissue paper; flashlights; candles; Bibles.

More Resources Online

- Watch the [video demonstration of the object lesson](#).
- Watch the [video example for the craft projects](#).
- Watch the [video Bible story "John the Baptist"](#) from Saddleback Kids Club
- Watch the [video Bible story "John the Baptist"](#) from Crossroads Kids
- For more free illustrations, visit [Christian Clip Arts](#) and [Ministry-To-Children](#)

Object Lesson (5 minutes)

Greet children and discuss Christmas lights...

Hello, children of God!

What do I have here? *Show a string of Christmas lights.* That's right; these are Christmas lights. You probably see a lot of these around this time of year. They are fun and festive and joyful to look at during the season before Christmas. Now, I also have some Christmas lights here... *If possible, have another strand of lights that is plugged in, or point out some that are on a nearby tree or display.* What's the difference between these sets of lights? Allow time for responses. They might be slightly different in size or shape, true, but the main difference is that some of them are plugged in. The ones that are connected to a power source are bright and lit up, right? In fact, when I have one light strand plugged in, I can connect it to others and spread that light across a wide range of space. It makes quite a difference, especially in the middle of darkness.

Speaking of which, why do you think we have Christmas lights, anyway? What's the point and purpose of them? They're fun to look at, of course. And they light the way in the midst of darkness. These lights remind us of the light of Jesus. When Jesus was born, the people were living in darkness and sorrow. The Messiah brought hope in that sadness. God's promise was coming true! We remember that Jesus came to save us, and that hope helps us in our sadness and darkness.

There was a messenger that came to prepare the way for the savior. Before the ministry of Jesus began, a man named John told others that He was coming. John did a lot of preaching and teaching, and people asked if he was the Messiah. John was quick to point out that he was not the one they had waited for, but that his job was to get people ready to receive that true and long-awaited king. John said that he was not even worthy to untie

the sandals of Jesus. He pointed the way to Christ. He wanted others to know and turn to Him for hope.

Our job is much the same as that of John the Baptist. We recognize that we are His servants, but that we have the opportunity to share His love with others. We can show them the love of Christ and tell them about Him. We can spread His light, just like the Christmas light strands connect to one another and spread light. Like the light strands, though, we need to be connected to the power source. When we know the love of Jesus and trust in His saving power, remembering His constant presence, we have connection to that power. We can then point others to Jesus. Out of joy that we are saved, we should be happy to share with other people. We have hope that shines in darkness. Jesus is the light of the world. That's even more wonderful than Christmas light displays, and it lasts all year!

Prayer: (Invite the children to repeat each line)

Dear God,

Thank you for giving us light and joy

Even in the midst of life's challenges.

Help us to shine your light

And share the hope of Jesus with others.

Thank you for your love

We love you, God!

In Jesus name, Amen!

Game & Activities Suggestions (10 minutes)



This passage tells us a bit about John the Baptist, who came to prepare the way for Jesus. As John did, we should be ready and willing to point others to our savior and Messiah, and to rejoice in His coming. To get students thinking and ready to learn, consider an activity opener along these lines:

- Flashlight tag: if you have a large enough (and relatively dark) playing area, provide a couple of “it” students with flashlights, and have them use the lights to tag others. Once tagged, students can “freeze” or receive lights to also tag others.
- Whose shadow is that? Light causes shadows to form. In a way, we want to be “shadows” that reflect the light of Jesus. Provide students with several pictures of shadows, and have them guess what items create those shadows.
- Spread the word relay: have students celebrate sharing Jesus with others, relay-race style. Split them into two teams and have one student at a time run to the opposite end of the play area and pick up a candle (unlit). Bring the candle back to the last person in line, and continue until everyone on the team has a candle.
- Sandal swap: John the Baptist said that he was unworthy to untie the sandals of the Messiah. Have some footwear fun by having students remove one of their shoes and place them in a pile. Other students will find a shoe and then find the person who fits it. Remind the shoe owner of Christ’s love before returning the shoe.
- Christmas light tangle: give teams of students a knotted strand of Christmas lights, and have them race to see who can untangle the strand fastest. (Note: not recommended for younger students.)

Explain to students that the lesson is about a man who came to tell others about Jesus, and how He was the light of the world. We also can tell others about the light that brings life and hope to everyone!

Main Bible Teaching (15 minutes)



The passage in this lesson describes the ministry of John the Baptist and how he pointed the way to Jesus. It could be made into a drama-style telling, or just read and described. Have older students take turns reading, or read out loud for younger kids.

John 1:6-8 KJV There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. (7) The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. (8) He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

These verses introduce us to an important figure in the Gospels, John, who we usually call John the Baptist. He was a relative of Jesus, in fact (well, their mothers were), and he came to point the way to Christ. John was the one who prepared others to know and receive Him. John readily admitted that he was not the light of the world, but came to show others who the Messiah was.

Ask: What does it mean to “bear witness”? How can we be a witness for Jesus?

John 1:9-13 KJV *That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. (10) He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. (11) He came unto his own, and his own received him not. (12) But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: (13) Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

This true light is talking about, of course, Jesus. He is the one by and through whom all things came into being, but not everyone realizes or accepts that. Some people reject

Jesus altogether or refuse to believe in Him. He wants to bring us life and light and love, but the people who should have been most willing to embrace that did not. The good news of these verses, though, is that we have reassurance that all who do believe in and trust the promises of Jesus can be part of God's family. We don't earn it or work for it, but we are adopted by God.

Ask: Do you know why Jesus came to Earth as a human?

John 1:14-18 KJV *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. (15) John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. (16) And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. (17) For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. (18) No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him*

How do we know what God would be like as a human? It's simple: look to Jesus! In Christ we see all of the love, grace, and power of God come down in human form. In Jesus, God is revealed and made known to us in flesh. Even we who have not seen Jesus in person can rejoice that the Bible tells of who He is and what He does.

John 1:19-23 KJV *And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? (20) And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. (21) And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. (22) Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them*

that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? (23) He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

Back to this John the Baptizer guy...explain that John was a teacher who preached and encouraged people to repent and know God. Some wondered if perhaps he was the long-awaited Messiah, but John was quick to deflect that attention, assuring people that his job was to point the way to Jesus. In fact, John's coming had also been prophesied by Isaiah. John wanted to offer hope that someone much greater than he was coming, who would be the true light of the world.

Ask: How would you explain Jesus to someone who had never heard of Him? Why is it important to tell others about Him?

John 1:24-28 KJV *And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. (25) And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? (26) John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; (27) He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. (28) These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.*

John knew that Jesus was the most important one. He baptized people, but he knew that Jesus would baptize in a different way, and was much greater than John could imagine.

We want to have this same attitude. We ought to recognize that our strength and value come not from anything we do, but from our Lord Jesus Christ. We want to shine His light and direct others to how great He is. Like John, we are called to become less as He (Jesus) becomes more.

Ask: How can you shine the light of Jesus?

Light is wonderful. Flashlights guide our way. Christmas lights are fun decorations. Jesus is the light of the world, who shines the way for us and brings hope to the darkest of times and places. We want to show and tell others about that light, and to let it guide our lives.

Close with prayer, thanking God for the light of Jesus and asking for His help in sharing that with others.

Craft Activities (15 minutes)

John the Baptist came to “bear witness about the light,” sharing with others that Jesus was coming. As Christians, we, too, should direct others to Christ. These crafts recall how Jesus is the light of the world. A “Luminary Plate Ornament” shows how light shows up in darkness. A “Light the Way Candle” reminds us that the hope of Advent is the light of Christ. Let’s get crafty!

Craft one: "Luminary Plate Ornament"

You will need:

- Paper plate(s)
- Construction paper or cardstock (dark)
- Markers or crayons
- Scissors
- Glue or tape
- Ribbon or string
- Extra decorations (stickers, etc.)



Procedure:

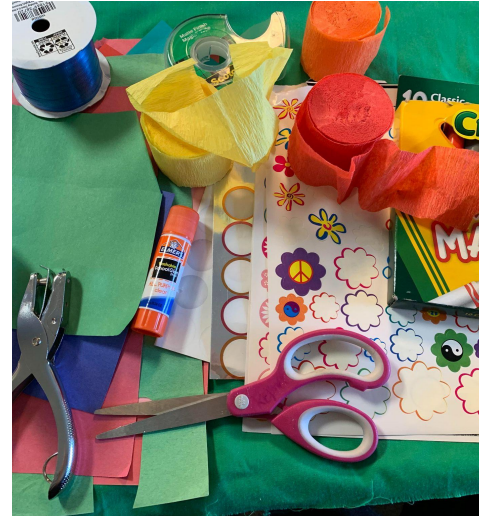
1. Color the paper plate with a bright "light" color (yellow, orange, etc.), using markers, colored pencils, and/or crayons.
2. On a dark (black or dark blue) paper, cut a circle shape to cover the area of the plate. Draw and cut simple shapes on the dark paper.
3. Use glue, tape, or staples to attach the dark paper to the yellow plate, so that the bright color "shines" through the darkness.
4. Add extra decorations, verses, and captions as desired.
5. If hanging, attach a string or ribbon to create an ornament.



Craft Two: “Light the Way Candle”

You will need:

- Toilet paper or paper towel roll (empty)
- Construction paper or cardstock (optional)
- Tissue paper or crepe streamers in “flame” colors
- Crayons and/or markers
- Scissors
- Tape and/or glue
- Small plate or holder



Procedure:

1. Wrap toilet paper tube with paper in color of choice.
2. Add verses, captions, or additional decorations as desired.
3. Carefully place streamers or tissue paper inside the tube to resemble candle flames.
4. Attach the “candle” to a small plate, bowl, or other holder to look like a candle holder.
5. If desired, attach a clothespin or string to make the candle an ornament.



John 1:7 KJV

The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.





Word Search Puzzle

Witness - John - Baptist - Light - Jerusalem - Levite

Testimony - Elijah - Isaiah - Wilderness - Prophet - Jordan

T	E	S	T	I	M	O	N	Y	Z	I	H
H	U	P	X	P	G	K	N	E	Q	C	S
P	P	J	O	R	D	A	N	B	G	G	G
B	U	K	J	O	H	N	T	P	F	V	R
J	B	H	E	P	A	W	Z	L	J	R	L
H	C	B	R	H	W	U	U	E	B	J	I
G	X	A	U	E	I	Y	A	V	E	D	G
D	P	P	S	T	T	E	L	I	J	A	H
W	W	T	A	A	N	M	Q	T	F	X	T
O	W	I	L	D	E	R	N	E	S	S	R
O	T	S	E	F	S	W	I	G	D	U	D
I	Y	T	M	I	S	A	I	A	H	I	Z

Word Search Answers

T E S T I M O N Y Z I H
H U P X P G K N E Q C S
P P J O R D A N B G G G
B U K J O H N T P F V R
J B H E P A W Z L J R L
H C B R H W U U E B J I
G X A U E I Y A V E D G
D P P S T T E L I J A H
W W T A A N M Q T F X T
O W I L D E R N E S S R
O T S E F S W I G D U D
I Y T M I S A I A H I Z