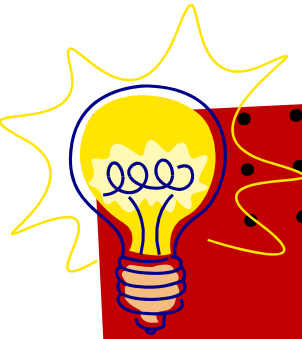


the Light of the World

Lesson 1: Witness to the Light



A Witness to the Light

Luke 1:5-25, 57, 67-80

Advent Candle

Scriptures: John 1:6-9; Job 12:22

Promise

Memory Verse: The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them. Isaiah 9:2 (NASB)



Have you ever stumbled around in the dark? Did you stub your toe? Did you trip over an object you couldn't see? It is confusing and painful, isn't it? Being in the dark can also be very scary, especially when you lose your way. As painful as it is to your eyes when a light is finally turned on, it is a huge relief.

Did you know that the Bible talks about something just like that? Our memory verse says that, "the people who walk in darkness will see a great light . . ." (Isaiah 9:2 NASB) These verses aren't talking about people walking around in a dark room, though. They mean that people without God are in the dark. The darkness represents sin. God never wanted us to be separated from Him by sin, but all of us are sinners. (Romans 3:23) God promised over and over again that He would send His Son into the world to offer us a way out of a life of sin and darkness. But before God sent His Son, He announced the birth of another boy who would do very important things. Let's see who that boy was!

During the time of the Roman Empire, while Herod was king of Judea, there was a man named Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth, who "did what was right in God's eyes. They obeyed the Lord's commandments and rules faithfully." (Luke 1:6 NlrV) Although Zechariah and Elizabeth were very old, they had no children.

Zechariah and Elizabeth were both descendants of Aaron. Aaron is someone from the Old Testament. He was Moses' brother and he went with Moses to Egypt to free the Hebrew people from slavery. Because Zechariah was a descendant of Aaron, he belonged to a special group of men - a special group of priests who worked in the temple.

One day, when Zechariah was chosen to work in the temple, the angel Gabriel appeared to him. The appearance of the angel scared Zechariah, so the angel told him not be afraid. The angel Gabriel told Zechariah that his prayer had been heard, but Zechariah had prayed many prayers. Which one of those prayers had been heard? Then, the angel Gabriel explained, "Your wife Elizabeth will have a child. It will be a boy, and you must name him John. . . He will be important in the Lord's eyes. . . He will bring many of Israel's people back to the Lord their God." (Luke 1:13, 15-16 NlrV)

That's a pretty amazing list, but Gabriel wasn't finished. He told Zechariah that his son would prepare the way for the Promised One of God. John would prepare people to be ready for God to send His own Son. He would do that by teaching parents how to love their children. He would also teach people how to be wise and do what is right.

God kept His promise to Zechariah. His wife, Elizabeth, became pregnant and she gave birth to a son. They named him John. After John's birth, Zechariah was filled with God's Holy Spirit and he talked about some of the things his son would do as an adult.

"You, my son, will be called a prophet of God in heaven above. You will go ahead of the Lord to get everything ready for Him. You will tell His people that they can be saved when their sins are forgiven. God's love and kindness will shine upon us like the sun that rises in the sky. On us who live in the dark shadow of death this **light** will shine to guide us into a life of peace." (Luke 1:76-79 CEV)

And that is exactly what John did. John wasn't like everyone else. He lived in the desert. He wore camel's hair and he ate locust and wild honey. But people came to see him and he pointed them to God's Promised One. Some people thought that John might be the Promised One of God. John knew that he wasn't. "John himself was not the light. He came only as a **witness to the light.**" (John 1:8 NIV) John came to announce that the Light was coming into the world!

Review

1. Our memory verse says that people who walk in darkness will see what? (a great light)
2. What does it mean to walk in darkness? (sin)
3. What is the "great light?" (God's Promised One)
4. Was John the Promised One from God? (No. John wasn't the Light sent from God. John was only a witness to the light.)

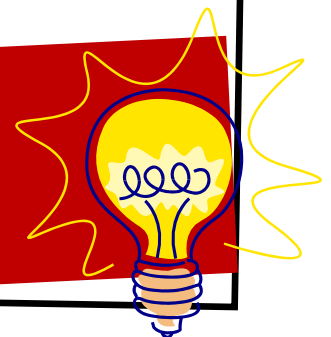
Application

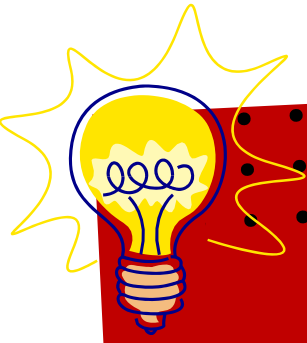
John came as a witness to the Light. But what do we need light for, we are not in the dark, are we?

Actually, all of us are in the dark - or have been in the dark. The dark represents sin and the Bible tells us that everyone has sinned. (Romans 3:23) Some people, though, believe that they have no sin, while others believe they have so much sin that they can never be forgiven. 1 John 1:8, 10 say that if we claim not to be a sinner then we are calling God a liar and are only fooling ourselves. For those of us who are very aware of our sin and who think it is beyond forgiveness, 1 John 1:9 offers hope. If we confess our sin to God, He forgives us and cleans us up, not because of who we are, but because of who He is.

And when you have experienced God's forgiveness, be like John . . . be a **witness to the Light** of God in your life and tell others how they can experience the same.

Next Week
Your Light Has Come
Luke 1:26-38





Activities

Memory Verse Activity - Make your area as dark as you can, warning your students ahead of time so as not to scare them. Review the memory verse several times in the dark. Then, light a candle (the advent candle if appropriate) or turn on a light. Talk about the difference Jesus' birth made to a dark and sinful world.

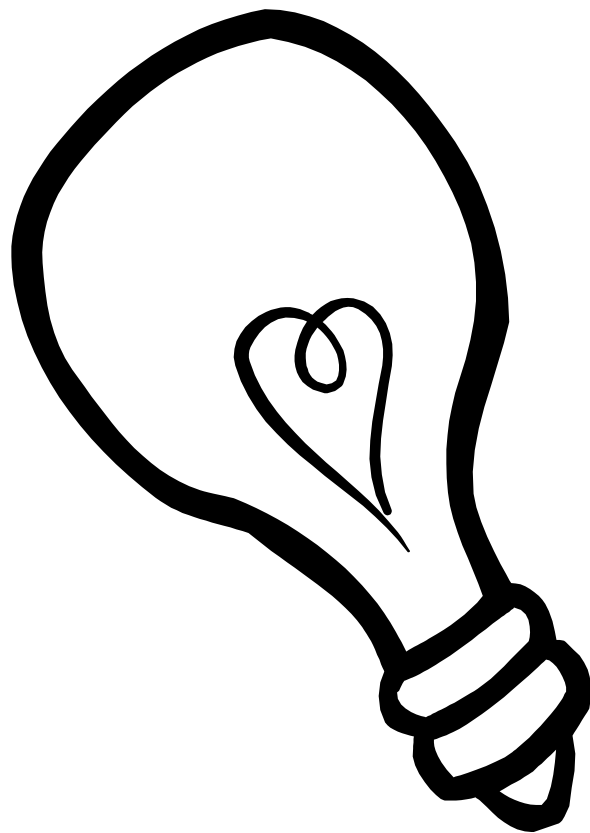
Sing "Trust and Obey," "Thy Word," "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus," "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," and "I Love to Tell the Story."

Bring honey and gummy insects for snack. Talk about John's odd diet.

Make switch plate covers. Print all or part of the memory verse on the switch plate cover as a reminder of our need to be in the Light rather than the dark.

Decorate a Christmas tree for your area. Decorate it in stages and wait until Christmas to turn on the lights. This week, string your tree with lights and talk about how John came to tell about the light.

Encourage your students to be like John. Talk about who they can tell about Jesus.



The people who walk in
darkness will see a great
light; Those who live in a
dark land, the light will
shine on them.

Isaiah 9:2

Light Lessons

Match the opposites from the story.

dark

sin

peace

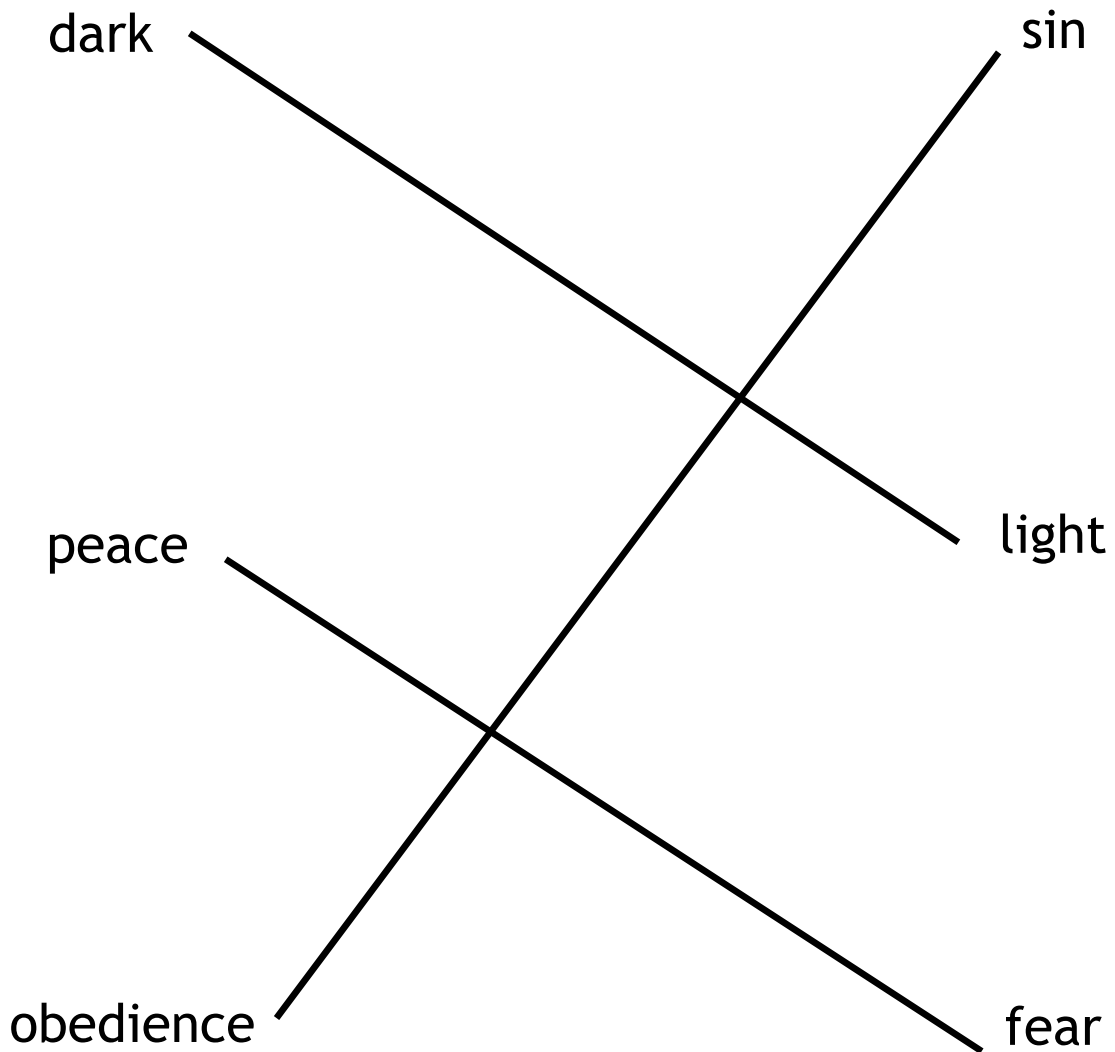
light

obedience

fear

Light Lessons

Match the opposites from the story.



Word Search

z a c h e r i a h g i l e r z
d i r k a t p a r y w h e r k
a e l i h h t r g h i l n g a
r l a g b e h r a p t h a l t
g h i t i l e h b y n h o j o
a l e h a i r a h c e z e l i
b z g e r g b e t h s r p l o
r e l a z h a b e t s w i t i
i c n s b t p r b y e r l g h
a h a r k r a d a a w t i b r
i r i e l w i t z r e h t y a
w i t n e s z e i p o l i t e
n o h j a i z l l j t h b e w
z d a k r o n j e s s o d t k
a r e t w n e s s n o j a i w

dark

light

Zechariah

Elizabeth

Gabriel

prayer

John

witness

the Light

Word Search

z a c h e r i a h g i l e r z
 d i r k a t p a r y w h e r k
 a e l i h h t r g h i l n g a
 r l a g b e h r a p t h a l t
 g h i t i l e h b y n h o j o
 a l e h a i r a h c e z e l i
 b z g e r g b e t h s r p l o
 r e l a z h a b e t s w i t i
 i c n s b t p r b y e r l g h
 a h a r k r a d a a w t i b r
 i r i e l w i t z r e h t y a
 w i t n e s z e i p o l i t e
 n o h j a i z l l j t h b e w
 z d a k r o n j e s s o d t k
 a r e t w n e s s n o j a i w

dark

light

Zechariah

Elizabeth

Gabriel

prayer

John

witness

the Light

Word Search

r c o m m h e r i g h t
b p l l a t j o h n y e
e l i z a b e t h n t s
f t r f l l i g h t e t
j l d a r k u k n y l s
h p u n a s h m w n e o
c r u g a b r i e l e r
p w a y e r h l e s u d
m d l l w t e r e s e s
d l a j n j e s u j e n
l a z e c h a r i a h j
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Word Search

r c o m m h e r i g h t
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p w a y e r h l e s u d
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