

you can even do some “stealth” good deeds—see if you can do them in secret without the person you’ve helped ever knowing. Life in the light of Jesus can be a really great adventure!

(If you made the posters and if time will allow, have three children each take a poster and hold it up. Let the group help you rearrange the posters to form and read the correct sequence aloud several times. Let your helpers exchange posters each time to make this a bit more difficult. Then have one helper put his or her poster facedown on the floor. See if the group can recite the whole verse then. Conceal a different segment, and ask the group to try reciting the verse again. Then hide two segments and repeat the activity. Keep hiding segments and reciting the verse until the group can say the verse with all the posters lying facedown on the floor.)

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#LNJX2DC



Light the Night with Jesus

Getting Started

You will need your Bible and a flashlight or camping lantern to show the children. Create three posters ahead of time, each with one phrase from this passage on it (as shown by the slash marks): You were once darkness,/ but now you are light in the Lord./ Walk as children of light. (Ephesians 5:8).

Introduction

(Welcome the children and show them your open Bible. Explain that God gave us this Book and everything in it for our good. He always tells us the truth—about ourselves and about him.) Today we will look at a very important truth God tells us about ourselves and about himself.

Getting to the Heart

Has anyone ever taken a walk in the dark—perhaps on a family camping trip or looking for a lost pet at night? Was it scary? Were you afraid of tripping over a rock or tree branch? Was it hard to find your way back to the campsite or back door? Does it help to have one of these along? (*Hold up the flashlight or lantern.*)

Listen to what today's Bible verse says about being in the dark. (*Read Ephesians 5:8.*)

You were once darkness . . . At one time or another, most of us have felt afraid in the dark. Even adults do sometimes. If there's a bad storm at night and we can't see the coming clouds, it can be scary. If we're lost on a dark highway or if we hear a loud noise late at night, children and grown-ups, too, can feel tense.

The Bible says that all people—that includes everyone here—used to be “darkness.” We didn't love God. We didn't trust Jesus. We thought and did wrong things, too—our words hurt other people, we disobeyed our parents and teachers, we didn't pray, our hearts weren't thankful. All that stuff—all of it sin—belongs to the dark way of life we once had. Does that scare you? It could, because by our sins, we deserved God's punishment. We deserved to have him send us away from him and his love forever. The Bible calls that “outer darkness,” and it is so awful we can't even imagine it.

But now you are light in the Lord . . . Now here's something so wonderful, we can't even imagine it! Despite all our sin, God never stopped loving us! He sent his own Son, Jesus, to be our Savior and Friend. Jesus took our punishment. He died for us—on the cross in our place! He came back from the dead on the first Easter. Now, Jesus is the Light of the world!

Now we don't have to be afraid of the darkness of sin in our lives anymore. Jesus has brought us the light of forgiveness and God's love. Jesus is our Savior and Friend, and that is very good news!

Walk as children of light. In the Bible, *walk* and *live* often mean the same thing. Jesus has put us on the right path. He made us his friends and now he lights that path for us, showing us where to walk safely. God's Word is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path. We are “children of light”; no matter how old we get, God is our heavenly Father. We are his dearly loved children. When we walk beside him, we are safe. No matter how scary our lives get, we can trust him to hear our prayers and help us. We can count on him to keep us on the safe path.

Sometimes we still fall off that path. We get angry and yell at our mom or dad. We get lazy and just don't do our homework and then maybe lie to our teacher about it. We hit our little sister or call our friend an ugly name. When we sin in these ways, the Holy Spirit whispers words of warning in our hearts. He helps us know what we did was wrong, and our consciences bother us. When that happens, we can tell Jesus we're sorry. We can ask him to forgive us and to help us confess our wrongdoing to our parents, teachers, and friends. Jesus always helps us in these ways. His love for us lights our way—day and night.

Taking It Home

(*Give the children today's take-home item.*) As you take this (*name the item*) home with you today, I want it to remind you of Jesus' love for you. Whenever you use it, you can remember that Jesus lights up your life with his forgiveness. You can think about ways to “walk as children of light” by doing good, kind things for those around you. Maybe