



Light the Night with Jesus

Kids Event Outline

This event outline provides ideas for an hour-long program based on the theme *Light the Night with Jesus*. It's perfect for . . .

- ✦ Fall festivals, trunk-or-treats, or other Halloween-alternative events
- ✦ Special Sunday school celebrations (for example, 5th Sunday classes)
- ✦ One class or one month of summer Sunday school sessions
- ✦ Adapting for a day or two of VBS

The ideas that follow include suggestions for decorations, activity booths, snacks, and other fun ways to *Light the Night with Jesus*!

Accompanying downloadable extras are available at www.CTAinc.com/FREE.

May God work through you as you share the love of his Son with kids in a brand-new way!

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*At one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.
Walk as children of light.*

Ephesians 5:8

Preparation

Think about creative ways to decorate your space and carry out the *Light the Night* theme in your setting. For example, use glow-in-the-dark stars to frame each doorway or table. Invest in several black light bulbs, especially for the area in which you will serve your snack. (There are recipes for glow-in-the-dark food later in this guide.)

Key “glow in the dark” into your Internet search engine and you’ll find luminous paint, glow-in-the-dark tape, and all manner of ways to take your event up a notch or two.

On the other hand, feel free to keep things simple. The ideas below and the glow-in-the-dark items available from CTA are designed to intrigue the children who attend, introduce the Savior to those who don’t know him, and encourage faith in the hearts of those who already believe.

As children arrive, give everyone a *Light the Night* goodie bag (Item #LNJXTS12) to collect treats and prizes along the way.

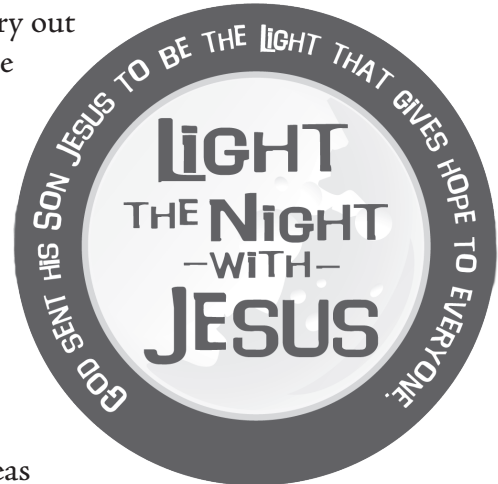
The event outline divides the time between booth activities, crafts, snacks, and a Bible Time station. There are too many options to complete in an hour. So choose which to execute, taking into account the size of your group, the children’s ages and interests, their background knowledge and skill levels, and the time available.

Craft Options

“Jesus Is My Light” Tissue Paper Pumpkin Craft

Gather black, yellow, and orange tissue paper, 12-inch cardboard squares, *Light the Night* pencils (Item #LNJXP12) or crayons, paintbrushes, scissors (optional) and small containers of watered-down white glue. If time is short, cut small tissue-paper squares ahead of time. Spread a plastic tablecloth on a table to create a work area.

Have the children draw a pumpkin or a pumpkin arrangement on their cardboard. Help them use large letters to write, “Jesus Is My Light.” They could add a cross, too. Then show them how to cut or tear tissue paper into small squares, wrap the paper around the end of a pencil,



touch the end into the glue, and paste the twisted paper in place on both the letters and the pumpkins. When they've finished that, they should fill the background with black tissue paper to represent nighttime.

Double layers of tissue paper will yield bolder colors.

As the children work, talk with them about the words. Help them understand that Jesus isn't a light bulb, flashlight, or candle. Instead, his love shines into the darkness of our sin, taking it away. His love scatters our fears and worries. His care for us makes it possible for us to care for others who are going through dark, difficult times in their lives.

“Light the Night” Salt Sculpture

Older elementary-age children will enjoy making this craft. Experiment ahead of time with food coloring so that you can help the children produce autumn colors. Consider working on this craft in two parts: Color the salt ahead of time or shortly after the children arrive for your event and then allow it to dry. Right before you go home, assemble the sculptures with the now dried salt.

You will need egg cartons and lots of newspaper. Also, each child will need these items:

- A baby-food jar with lid
- A spoon
- A *Light the Night* pencil (Item #LNJXP12)
- A circle of yellow or orange construction paper
- Glue or glue sticks
- Crayons

For each color of sand, each pair of children will need these ingredients:

- ½ cup of salt
- Food coloring
- A plastic sandwich bag

To color the salt:

1. Pour ½ cup of salt into a sandwich bag and add several drops of food coloring.
2. Close the bag tightly, making sure that most of the air is out.
3. Massage the closed bag to mix the color into the salt.
4. Pour the salt in a thin layer onto a piece of newspaper to dry.
5. Repeat for each color, giving each color its own piece of newspaper. (You can use half a page.)

To make the sculpture:

When all colors are dry, pick the papers up one at a time and pour the salt back into sandwich bags or into separate compartments in an egg carton. (Adults may want to do this after the salt dries and before the children return to the craft table.) Organizing the project in this way will make it easier for the children to work on their sculptures.

1. Spoon the salt into the jar, forming layers of color to create a design. Layers can be as thick or thin as they like. Uneven thicknesses look more “natural.” A free-form design of fall colors will work, or students may want to create a fall sunrise or landscape.

2. Add layers one at a time until the jar is full. Show the children how to use a pencil to poke top layers of salt into the layer underneath to create interesting effects. Challenge them to add a cross to the sunrise.
3. Screw the lid on tight.
4. Decorate the construction paper circle and affix it to the lid. Use words like “Jesus is the Light” or words from today’s Bible verse: *At one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light. Ephesians 5:8* Consider shortening it to, “I am light in the Lord!” or “A child of the light!”

Jesus-Is-My-Light Mobile

This project is easier and quicker than the salt sculpture, and is more appropriate for younger children. For each child you will need these items:

- A paper plate
- Paper streamers or wide ribbon (fall colors)
- Scissors
- White craft glue
- A length of ribbon for hanging
- Yellow construction paper for cutting crosses

How to make it:

1. Cut the paper plate in half.
2. Cut 40-inch strips of streamers, cutting each up the middle to create two strips from each streamer to hang down from the plate. You will need 6 to 8 strips for each mobile. Glue the streamer strips to the top curve of the paper plate, centering them so that equal lengths hang off each side. They’ll cover the plate in a rainbow of fall colors.
3. Repeat with each strip until the plate is covered.
4. Make 12 to 15 small yellow crosses (about 2 inches tall) from construction paper. Glue them to the streamers or to strips of fall-colored ribbon.
5. Tie a piece of ribbon into a circle with a knot, then glue to the back of the plate to use as a hanger.

Bible Truth Time

*At one time you were darkness,/ but now you are light in the Lord./ Walk as children of light.
Ephesians 5:8*

Ahead of time, create three posters, each with one phrase from the passage on it (as shown by the slash marks above), perhaps each phrase could be written with a different color marker. (If children will rotate through your center and you will repeat your presentation more than once, you will need a fresh set of posters each time.) Have markers on hand for the children to use to decorate the posters, and have your Bible nearby, opened to Ephesians 5:8.

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. Then display each phrase below, one at a time. As you explain it, invite the children to use the markers to illustrate what each phrase means.

At one time you were darkness . . . Have you ever felt afraid in the dark? Many people do—even grown-ups do at times. If there’s a bad storm or if we’re lost on a dark highway or if we hear a loud noise late at night, we can get scared. The Bible says that we used to be in the dark. We didn’t love God. We didn’t trust Jesus. We did wrong things; we said hurtful things; we disobeyed our parents and teachers; we didn’t pray; our hearts weren’t thankful. All that stuff belongs to the dark way of life we once had. Does that scare you? It could, because we deserved God’s punishment. We deserved to have him send us away from him and his love forever.

But now you are light in the Lord . . . Despite all our sin, God never stopped loving us. He sent Jesus to be our Savior and Friend. Jesus took our punishment. He died on the cross in our place! He came back from death on the first Easter. 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.

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 lights that path for us, showing us where to walk. 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.

If time will allow, scramble the posters and let the children rearrange them in the correct order. Read the verse each time you reassemble it. Then remove one poster. Can the group still recite the entire verse? Do this several times; then remove a second poster. Can the group still recite the verse? Keep reciting and removing phrases until everyone in the class can say the verse in unison without visual cues. Then challenge individuals to do so.

Give every child a *Light the Night with Jesus* activity book (Item #LNJXAP) before they leave the area. Encourage them to complete the puzzles and play the games at home as a reminder of what God does for us in Jesus.

Games

Candy Corn Relay Race

You will need one hollowed-out pumpkin for each team. Carve each, following the directions on the Pumpkin Prayer bookmark (Item # PPR9BKCA) or use a permanent marker to draw these features on each pumpkin as you read the prayer.

You will also need several bags of candy corn and a spoon for each team.

Form teams with an equal number of children in each. (Add some fun-loving adults to even up the numbers as necessary.) Set up a race course. Each team member, in turn, is to scoop candy corn into spoon, race to the end of the course, dump the candy corn in the pumpkin, and run back to tag the next person in line. The team finishing first wins. In case of a tie, the team with the most candy corn in their pumpkin wins. (If you have big pumpkins, you might want to alter

the rules a bit. Set a time limit and see which team gets the most corn moved during that time. In rural areas, shelled field corn is an option to the candy corn.)

Ideas for prizes: *Light the Night* pencils (Item #LNJXP12), *Pumpkin Prayer* bookmarks (Item #PPR9BKCA), or *Count Your Blessings* bookmarks (Item #CCYXBK).

Gourd Roll

Form teams of equal numbers and give each team a broom and a gourd. Set up a race course. Each team member, in turn, is to use the broom to sweep the team's gourd to the end of the course, turn around, and sweep it back. When the gourd crosses the starting line, the next person on the team takes the broom and begins to sweep.

No hands or feet allowed! The gourds will roll in unpredictable directions, causing general mayhem, so give each team a wide berth. Also, depending on the age of the children, you may want to shorten or lengthen the race course.

Prize ideas: Glow-in-the-dark magnets (Item # GIDXMT), *Light the Night with Jesus* bookmarks with candy (Item #LNJXJBKCA).

Light the Starry Night

In a defined area inside or outside, hide as many glow-in-the-dark stars as you can. Form teams of two children per team, possibly pairing older with younger children. The teamed pairs must stay together as they fan out over the area to find the stars you've hidden. Let everyone wear a *Light the Night* glow-in-the-dark necklace (Item #LNJXNB12) for both fun and added safety.

Be sure to remove all sharp objects, such as tree branches and rocks, as well as any tripping hazards, ahead of time, and have plenty of trusted adults on hand to supervise.

After a predetermined time, whistle everyone in. Give a *S.H.I.N.E.* reflective slap bracelet (Item # SHN9SBT) to each child on one of the top three star-collecting teams. Everyone else can divide the stars their teams have found and keep them.

Musical Pumpkins

You will need to cut paper or cardboard pumpkins ahead of time—one per player. Attach these to the floor in a circle with a rolled piece of masking tape or painters tape. You want them to stay in place but be easily removable during the game.

The game proceeds like “musical chairs.” Children move around the circle of pumpkins while the music plays. When the music stops, everyone sits down or stands on a paper pumpkin. Instead of eliminating players, allow two or more children to share a pumpkin. Remove one pumpkin after each round. By the end of the game, everyone will have to squeeze onto one spot.

Flashlight Tag

Older children may enjoy playing flashlight tag. Again, be sure to clear the area of branches, sharp rocks, and tripping hazards so that the children can play safely. Give everyone a glow-in-the-dark *Jesus Lights the Night* necklace (Item # LNJXNB12) to wear too, for fun and added safety.

Snack Options

Ice Cream Pumpkins

You will need one navel orange, a black marker, and a CTA Pumpkin Prayer bookmark (Item # PPR9BKCA) for each child. You will also need vanilla ice cream or orange sherbet and a spoon for everyone.

Ahead of time, cut a round lid out of each orange. Hollow out each orange by scooping out the pulp.

Show the children the bookmark and talk about the ways this way of carving a pumpkin differs from the customary way of carving a pumpkin. Give everyone a black marker and one of the hollow oranges, encouraging them to use the symbols from the bookmark to decorate their orange.

As each child finishes, help him or her fill the orange with ice cream or sherbet and put the *lid* back on. When everyone is ready, open the lids and eat the snack!

“Light the Night” Cupcakes and Sherbet Floats

Make chocolate cupcakes with green icing. The icing will glow pumpkin orange under a black light.

Another option could be to pour 7Up soda over sherbet (any color/flavor) and watch it glow under a black light. Use *Light the Night* tumblers (Item #LNJXPT12) to contain the treat; then let the children take their tumblers home. (The tumblers glow in the dark.)