

John 8:12-24

“I AM the Light of the World”

Scripture: John 8:12-24

Memory Verse: John 8:12b *“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”*

Lesson Focus: Jesus makes two remarkable statements about Himself at the beginning (Light of the world) and end of this section of Scripture (I AM). We will focus mostly on those two statements, see how they are connected, and challenge the kids to know and believe in not just any Jesus, but the actual Jesus revealed in the Scriptures.

Activities and Crafts: Coloring Picture of Guess Who, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Bring It Home Discussion for 3rd – 5th.
Craft for 1st & 2nd: Light of the World Craft

Starter Activity: Maze in the Darkness

Create a simple maze using tables and chairs. Nothing too hard, but hard enough where kids would be sure to “bump” into walls if they went through it blindly. 1st & 2nd grade leaders: Set this up in the room across from your bathroom. 3rd-5th grade leaders: We will do this activity in the Summit Room together.

Have a volunteer go through the maze blindfolded. Ask them beforehand how confident they are in being able to get through the maze blindfolded without touching any of the “walls” (maybe pretend that the walls are electric and that you will get zapped if you touch them!).

After they get “zapped”, ask them if they would like to try again but having you guide them through. You will pretend to be Jesus, the Light of the World who is INVINCIBLE to the zapping, and ensure they get through without getting zapped. After they get through, remove the blindfold and congratulate them!

Then transition into the lesson by reading our memory verse and connecting it back to this activity.

Bible Study:

John 8:12: This is the second of amazing “I AM” statements that Jesus makes revealing Who He is.

Q: What do you typically have on your birthday cake while everyone is singing “happy birthday” to you? Candles! And how often do you celebrate your birthday? Yearly! On your birthday, we remember the day you entered the world and celebrate the life God has given you.

When Jesus said these words, the Jewish people had been celebrating the feast of Tabernacles which was a feast they celebrated every year.

Q: Guess what they would light during this feast?

A: Huge candelabras (experts say they were over 70 feet tall)! The Jewish people would light these candelabras both to remind them of how God led them with a pillar of light by night in the wilderness (**Exodus 13:21**) and to remind them of how God promised to send His Messiah to be light for the world (**Isaiah 42:6**).

So imagine yourself as a good Jewish boy or girl at this feast with your family, having gazed upon these huge lit torches remembering the amazing things God had done and promised and then this Jesus guy appears and says, “This is all about Me! I AM the Light of the world!” * Q: What would you have thought?

Jesus not only says that He is the Light of the world, but He also extends an invitation to follow Him, that people would no longer walk in darkness.

Q: How many of you have been to the Cave of the Winds? On one of the tours deep inside the caves, they completely shut off all of the lights. That moment is a little frightening because it is absolute darkness and you know how impossible it will be to find your way out in the complete darkness. * You feel trapped!

That complete darkness describes the world apart from Jesus Christ! And apart from Jesus we are trapped in our sin and have no way out. But when we believe in Jesus, we follow Him. We live life His way and He shows us how to get out of that cave of darkness and sin. But if we don’t believe in Jesus, we remain trapped in that complete darkness of sin and evil. *

John 8:13-18: The Jewish religious leaders, or Pharisees, always seem able to come up with some excuse for staying in the darkness. * Here they are trying to use a detail of the OT law to disqualify Jesus and avoid coming to the Light. *

In **Deuteronomy 19:15**, God instructed the people to rely upon multiple witnesses when there was a dispute. This is wise and something we still do every day to get at the truth.

Teachers: Think about something unusual or unique that you can do and be prepared to do it for the class. Make a claim to the kids that you can do this thing. Then ask them if they would believe you more if someone else said, “Yes, I know he/she can do this. I’ve seen them do it before.” Make the point that when you have someone else testifying, you are more likely to believe it! Then perform the action in front of them just for fun.

You see, having multiple witnesses gives us confidence in the truth. * Now Jesus has already proved His testimony is true through His signs and miracles so this is a silly challenge by the Pharisees. But even so, Jesus adds in v. 18 that God the Father bears witness to Him! This people heard at Jesus’s baptism. (**Mark 1:9-11**)

John 8:19-20: The Pharisees remain blinded by their jealousy and hatred. How sad that they knew the law of God, but they did not know the God of the law.

Notice the next move the Pharisees make is to try and seize Him. * Jesus is winning this game and the Pharisees are looking foolish in public. The only move they have left is to silence Jesus.

Q: Have you ever gotten into trouble or busted for something and all you can do is yell, “Leave me alone, be quiet, shut-up”? * That’s a little bit like what the Pharisees are doing here by trying to arrest and silence Jesus. They can’t handle the Light and want to remain in the darkness.

Q: But what does it look like when we come into the Light?

A: We say things like, “I was wrong. I am sorry. Will you help me make this right? Will you forgive me?” *

John 8:21-24: Twice in these few verses, Jesus warns these Jewish religious leaders that they will **die in their sin**. This is very serious and if Jesus repeats Himself twice we better listen!

Q: First of all, what is sin?

A: Breaking God’s law: Stealing, dishonoring parents, and lying, are a few examples.

Q: Have you ever done any of these things? Then you have sinned and you also are in danger of dying in your sins!

Q: What happens to someone that dies in their sin?

A: They are punished for their sin forever in hell. (**2 Thessalonians 1:8-9**) In fact Jesus Himself describes hell as a place of utter DARKNESS. Yikes! This is our destiny because of our sin!

Q: BUT look at v. 24 again. We will die in our sins and go to hell unless we what?

A: Believe in Jesus! Trust in Jesus! This is what He says over and over again in the Bible. Come to Me! Believe in Me! Follow Me and you will be saved from that outer darkness!

Teachers: We could stop here and wrap things up. But if you have time, take a deeper look at v. 24 with your kids (see below).

Most Bibles translate “believe that I am *He*” with the *He* in italics. This means it is added in the English, but the original language had just “I AM”.

We talked about this two weeks ago. When Jesus says you must believe that “I AM”, what He means very clearly is that you must believe that He is God!

Key Point: If you don’t want to die in your sins, you must not only believe in “a” Jesus, you must believe and trust in the REAL and TRUE Jesus: The Jesus as described in the Scriptures.

There are a lot of different views of who Jesus is out in the world that are WRONG.

- 1) Mormons: Believe in a Jesus that has not always existed.
- 2) Muslims: Believe in a Jesus that did not die on the cross.
- 3) Hindus: Believe in a Jesus that is one of many gods, not the ONLY God.

Q: Can believing in the wrong Jesus save you? No! While they may be nice, people believing in the wrong Jesus are still trapped in darkness. This is why the church has always sent missionaries to people like this to teach them about the One and only Jesus of the Scriptures.

We are not at liberty to make up our own Jesus! Believe and trust in the real Jesus, the Jesus of the Scriptures and you will be saved!

Optional Small Group Activity:

Write the following verses on the white board: John 3:19-20, Proverbs 4:19, 1 John 1:6

- Label them DARKNESS

Write the following verses on the white board: 1 John 1:7, Ephesians 5:8-10

- Label them LIGHT

Divide the class into two groups with a leader in each. Assign one group the “darkness” verses and the other the “light verses.” Have each group look them up together and describe the person who walks in either darkness or light.

After a few minutes, have the “darkness” group present what they found and then have the “light” group present what they found afterwards.

Circle back with our memory verse, **John 8:12**. When we see the light of Jesus, we begin to see and understand the darkness of sin. We recognize our need to follow Jesus, the Light! When we trust Jesus as Savior, our sins are forgiven. We are free from the darkness of sin!

Finish up by reading **Ephesians 5:8** and challenge the kids to walk in the Light this week!

Bring It Home

(Devotional for the Family)

Lesson Theme: “I AM the Light of the World”

Scripture: John 8:12-24

Memory Verse: John 8:12b *“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”*

Teachers/Parents: We launched into our study talking about ways that we use candles to commemorate things. Discuss traditions where you use light and candles to celebrate. The Jewish people were in the middle of one of their annual feasts with huge candelabras lit when Jesus made His statement that He is the light of the world. Discuss what it must have been like to watch Jesus interrupt the celebration with this astonishing claim.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Read **Psalm 78:12-16**. While at this feast where God’s people commemorated His mighty works He did for them, Jesus referred to Himself as the source of living water (**John 7:37-38**) and as the Light of the world (**John 8:12**). How do you see those two claims of Jesus foreshadowed in these verses?
- 2) In **John 8:12**, Jesus invites everyone to come and follow Him out of the darkness and into the Light. Read **Psalm 119:105**. How does this verse relate to Jesus’s invitation to follow Him?
- 3) When we are in a dark room for a long time our eyes adjust to it. But then what do we experience when the lights are suddenly turned on? How does this illustrate why we need to continually walk with Jesus by faith in the Light?
- 4) In **John 8:18**, Jesus responds to the Pharisees claim that He can’t be trusted because He has no other witness. Why is this a silly objection? Read **Matthew 3:17** for one reason why.
- 5) In **John 8:19**, Jesus makes it clear that these religious leaders did not know God. They knew the law of God, but not the God of the law. In the same way, we want to know the God of the Bible and not just the Bible of God. What is the difference? Discuss practical ways in which you can pursue real relationship with God and not just dead religion.
- 6) Read **John 8:24**. This verse stresses that saving faith requires believing in the right Jesus. We cannot make up our own Jesus, but must believe He is Who He says He is. Can you think of anyone that believes in the wrong Jesus (i.e. Mormons, Muslims, etc.)? Pray for them now as a family.