

THEME 4

Jesus

Jesus' baptism helped him to prepare for his mission on earth. Students will learn about some of the healings of Jesus and how he was a light to the world. This study begins with Lent and ends with Jesus' resurrection. Unit 8 is the Easter unit.

This theme includes Unit 7: The Light of Christ Has Come, and Unit 8: Jesus Has Risen!

Grade 1—Unit 7

The Light of Christ Has Come

Jesus identified himself as the Messiah by calling himself “light,” an attribute given to God. Students will learn about Jesus’ earthly ministry, as he announced his mission and began to heal people.

LESSONS

1. Jesus Prepares for His Mission
2. Jesus Is Light
3. Jesus Brings Light

Unit 7: The Light of Christ Has Come

Unit Information

SUMMARY

This unit tells stories of Jesus and his ministry on earth, beginning with his baptism and then his healing ministries. Students will be introduced to the idea of Jesus as light.

KEY BIBLE TEXTS

Psalm 4:6 (memory verse)

Psalm 27:1 (main memory verse)

Matthew 3:13-17*

Matthew 5:16 (memory verse)

Matthew 5:14-16

Matthew 5:18

Mark 4:21-23

Mark 5:21-43*

Mark 10:46-52*

Luke 4:14-21*

John 4:46-54*

Luke 8:40-54

John 8:12* (memory verse)

John 4:46-54

**texts used in lessons*

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

The Light Is Made Known

Baptism was a sign of being washed clean of all past wrongdoing and getting a new start. John the Baptist did not want to baptize Jesus. He recognized Jesus as the promised Messiah and felt unworthy. Jesus insisted that John baptize him. His baptism was a milestone and marked the beginning of his ministry.

Following his baptism, Jesus went to the desert to pray and further prepare for his ministry. When he left the desert, he began teaching in the synagogues of Galilee. That Jesus chose to preach in the established places of worship is no surprise; he was raised a devout Jew. Synagogues were the gathering places for men in the community.

As part of the worship service, seven men read portions of scripture. Following the scripture reading, the president of the synagogue would invite a member of the audience to teach. Following the teaching, the people would discuss the ideas presented.

It was within this context that Jesus stood up in the synagogue in Nazareth and read from Isaiah (Luke 4:16-21). After he finished reading, Jesus sat down and began to teach, following the custom. He broke with Jewish tradition by

announcing, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:21). Jesus was announcing to his childhood playmates, relatives, and neighbors that he, the one they knew as Joseph’s son, was the One sent by God.

The Light of the World

To understand the significance of Jesus referring to himself as light, we must understand the role of light and darkness in Jesus’ day. From the dawn of time, people had been afraid of darkness; the dawning of light at the beginning of each day was cause for rejoicing. The sun was the major source of light. Activity decreased significantly when the sun set each evening. Light was not to be taken for granted in the Jewish culture at that time.

Small, clay oil lamps were used as a source of light in most homes. Their shapes varied from a simple shallow dish, pinched at one end, to more elaborate designs with several spouts, handles, and symbolic decorations. Olive oil was used for fuel, and wicks were made from flax or hemp. In homes, the clay lamps sat on a simple lampstand or in a niche carved high in the wall so that the light could be seen by all in the house. Care was taken to keep the lamp burning at all times, since relighting the lamps was a chore.

The burning flame was a symbol of God’s presence. A familiar psalm reminded the people, “The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?” (Psalm 27:1). When Jesus called himself the light of the world (John 8:12), he was equating himself with the Lord, who was light. It was yet another way of telling people who he was.

The Light Spreads

There were many healers during Jesus’ day. The difference between Jesus and other healers was often in the methods used. When Jesus healed people, it was in quiet response to human needs. Other healers put on great shows with their healings. Jesus acted out of love for others.

Jesus’ acts of healing provided proof that he could be believed. If he said he would heal someone and the person was healed, then perhaps his words about things which could not be seen could also be believed. His ability to heal was one sign that he was the Messiah.

Bartimaeus acknowledged that Jesus was God when he addressed him. “Jesus, Son of David” was a messianic title. When Jesus healed Bartimaeus, he did not touch him or perform any ritual as part of the healing process. The blind man’s faith, confidence, and persistence were rewarded. Jesus healed more than Bartimaeus’ eyes. Bartimaeus recognized his need for salvation and recognized that his salvation was found in Jesus. He became one of Jesus’ followers (Mark 10:46-52).

Jesus healed children of prominent persons in the community. When Jesus visited Cana, where he performed his first miracle, a royal official begged him to heal his son. The man had come a distance of 20 miles to seek Jesus’ help. Jesus said simply, “You may go. Your son will live” (John 4:50). The official had faith and went home. As a result of the boy’s healing, all in the official’s household believed (John 4:53).

The son of the royal official was outside the family of faith, the Jewish community. But Jairus, a respected Jewish leader and president of a synagogue, also came to Jesus, seeking healing for his daughter. Jesus went to the child, took her by her hand and asked her to get up (Luke 8:40-55).

While we rejoice in Jesus' compassionate responses to those in need around him, we need to keep the healing miracles in perspective. Being healed was not an end in itself. Being healed was not equated with being holy. All those who Jesus healed and raised from the dead did eventually die!

Healing acts continue today. But we do not know the ways of God. Not everyone who is sick is healed. We must allow for divine mysteries.

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- Jesus was baptized and began his ministry on earth.
- Jesus is the light of the world.
- Jesus healed people and can still heal people today.

WORSHIP

1. Lesson 3, Extend the Lesson, gives directions for writing a class litany about Jesus as one who is light. Use this as a worship time.
2. Use the bulletin board prepared in Lesson 1 as a springboard for worship. Talk about Jesus as light, then about how we can be light to others. In what ways can we be light? Sing "This Little Light of Mine."

BULLETIN BOARD IDEAS

A bulletin board using various paper candles is created in Lesson 1 and referred to in subsequent lessons.

MEMORY PASSAGES

This unit offers the following verses for students to memorize. You may copy and clip the following verses for students to take home.

Many are asking, "Who can show us any good?" Let the light
of your face shine upon us, O Lord.
Psalm 4:6

Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works
and give glory to your Father in heaven.
Matthew 5:16

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

John 8:12

The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?

Psalm 27:1

MEMORY VERSE CONNECTIONS

Make this memory verse connection during Lesson 1, Extend the Lesson:

Read Psalm 27:1, “The Lord is my light and my salvation; who shall I fear?” Discuss this, after talking about Jesus as light.

ASSESSING TEACHING / LEARNING

Observing students and their interactions is one of the best ways to discover if students are practicing the lessons. Look to see if they cooperate with each other, if they use caring words, and if they practice peacemaking skills.

A quiz is also included, at the end of the unit.

The Light of Christ Has Come

LESSON 1: JESUS PREPARES FOR HIS MISSION

Objective

Students will understand that Jesus' baptism helped him to prepare for his mission.

Key Concepts

- Jesus was baptized by his cousin, John the Baptist.
- Jesus told people what he was supposed to do.

Text: Matthew 3:13-16; Luke 4:18-19

Estimated Lesson Time: 30 minutes

Materials

- Bible
- Large pillar candle and matches
- For bulletin board: construction-paper cutouts of 1 large candle and 7-8 smaller candles, markers
- For Extend the Lesson: candle, matches (or battery-operated candle)

Teacher Preparation

- Prepare a bulletin board with the following candle cutouts and labels:
 - Large candle, labeled JESUS
 - 4 smaller candles, labeled as follows: Bring good news to the poor; Release captives; Help the blind to see; Let free those who are oppressed
 - several smaller candles, unlabeled

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

What is a mission? Begin by asking what the students are to do this day. What work will they do? What chores will they do? (*Responses might include: to be in school, to listen to the teacher, to feed their cats or goldfish.*) Ask the students what the teacher is to do this day. What will others (mother, father, grandmother, or grandfather) be doing today? Think about what certain workers, such as bus drivers, nurses, and fire fighters, must do today.

After this discussion, introduce the idea of having a mission in life. A nurse's job, for example, is to help people when they are ill. The nurse's mission, then, is to help people get well. The mission can also be called a purpose in life.

Jesus grew up and had a mission/purpose in his life. Remind the students that in the last lesson, one of the things that Jesus did was to teach others at the temple. This was Jesus' purpose at that time. It helped him to prepare for his mission later in his life.

LESSON STEPS

1. John the Baptist's role. Tell the students that as Jesus grew up and began his mission, John the Baptist had an important role. Does anyone remember who John the Baptist is? (*Jesus' cousin, born to Elisabeth*)

2. Read the Bible story, part 1. Lead into the story by commenting that John’s mission was to baptize Jesus. Yet, John did not think that he was worthy of doing it. Read Matthew 3:13-17.

3. Talk about baptism. Students may have questions about baptism. Perhaps they have already seen a baptism service and would like to talk about what they observed. Allow time for discussion. It might be helpful for the students to hear about why people are baptized:

In the Mennonite/Anabaptist tradition of Christian faith, baptism happens after a person consciously decides to follow God. Baptism is a symbol that one has decided to become part of the family of God, that one’s *mission* is to follow God. (As mentioned earlier, when children are infants, Mennonites and Anabaptists have a special dedication ceremony. This is a way to show that the baby will be nurtured by a community of faith and will be surrounded by adults who love and trust God.) Other faith traditions practice infant baptism. This is also a way to show that the baby will be nurtured by a community of faith and may later affirm their faith when they are older, at the point of confirmation.

Ask what was unusual about Jesus’ baptism, compared with other baptisms the students might have observed. (*A dove—the Spirit of God—descended and said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”*) Explain that this was God’s way of letting Jesus know God loved him and letting people know that Jesus was God’s son.

4. Read the Bible story, part 2. After Jesus was baptized, he went to the village of Nazareth, to the synagogue, and read Scriptures. Because Jesus was God’s son, he had a special mission/purpose for his life. Tell the students to listen closely to what Jesus read in the synagogue, to see if they can hear what his mission was. Read Luke 4:18-19.

5. Jesus’ mission. Ask the students to name things that were mentioned as part of the mission of Jesus. List them on the board.

- Bring good news to the poor
- Release captives
- Help the blind see
- Let free those who are oppressed

Invite the students to think about other missions Jesus may have had. List these on the board, also.

6. Jesus is light. Talk about how each of the people mentioned in Luke 4:18-19, as well as those added to the list on the board, must have felt. The feelings these people had—hopelessness, anger, sadness—sometimes make people feel as if they are in the dark and cannot see their way.

Light the large pillar candle and say, “Jesus came to bring hope to people. Sometimes that hope might look like a light to people who are in darkness.”

Look at the bulletin board, noticing the large candle and the smaller ones labeled with Jesus’ mission. Invite the students to add labels to the candles that are blank.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30 minutes.)

- **A light in the darkness.** Find a dark room, or make your classroom as dark as possible. Talk about what it feels like to be in the dark (*perhaps a bit scary or uncomfortable*). Light a candle (or use a battery-operated candle.) Now, what does it feel like (*everyone can see again and so it's no longer scary or uncomfortable*). Talk about how Jesus is a light, so we don't have to be scared or uncomfortable.

The Light of Christ Has Come

LESSON 2: JESUS IS LIGHT

Objective

Students will understand that Jesus is the light of the world.

Key Concepts

- Jesus said that he is the light of the world.
- Because we follow Jesus, we can also be lights in the world.

Text: John 8:12; Matthew 5:14-15, 18

Estimated Lesson Time: 30 minutes

Materials

- Bible
- For each student: small glass jar or vase, votive candle, brush
- Tissue paper in different colors
- Glue, water
- For Extend the Lesson, option two: “The Light of Jesus” activity sheet (p. 208)

Teacher Preparation

- Mix glue with water to form thin paste. Put paste into small containers for pairs of students to share.
- If using Extend the Lesson, option two, make one copy of the activity sheet for each student.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Darkness and light. Talk about times when the students are in the dark. (If you used the Extend the Lesson activity last time, review that discussion.) How do they feel in the dark? What do they think about? Would they rather be by themselves or with other people? How do they feel if they are in the dark and someone switches on a night light or lights a candle?

LESSON STEPS

1. Jesus is a light. Light the pillar candle you used in the last lesson. Look at the bulletin board together, to review the mission/purpose of Jesus’ life. How is Jesus a light to these people? (*Sometimes people in these situations might feel as if they are in the dark, and Jesus came to bring hope/light.*)

2. Read John 8:12. Allow time for students to talk about what it means for Jesus to say that he is the light of the world.

3. We can also be a light. Tell the students that not only is Jesus the light of the world, but those who follow Jesus can also be a light to the world. Read Matthew 5:14-15.

These verses might remind students of the song “This Little Light of Mine.” Sing the song together. (Music is printed on page 207.)

4. Letting your light shine. Discuss what it means for the students to let their lights shine. (What does it mean to do what Jesus wants them to do, and to help others?) Read Matthew 5:18.

5. Make candle lanterns to remind the children that Jesus is light. Give each student a glass jar or vase and a brush. Invite them to brush the thin glue mixture onto the jar and tear pieces of tissue paper to press onto the surface. This makes interesting patterns of color. Place votive candles inside and watch the light shine in different colors!

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30 minutes.)

- **Different kinds of light.** So far, the lessons have illustrated light by using a candle. Talk about other kinds of light—electric lights or sunshine, for instance. What do the students know about various kinds of light? During what times and in what places are certain kinds of light better?

- **Sharing the light of Jesus.** Hand out the activity sheet, “The Light of Jesus,” and invite the children to draw or write ways they can share the light of Jesus with others.

This Little Light of Mine

Matthew 5:15-16

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the song "This Little Light of Mine". It consists of three staves of music in a treble clef, with a common time signature (C). The lyrics are written below the notes. Chords are indicated by letters above the staff: C, F, G7, and C. The lyrics are: "1. This lit-tle light of mine, I'm gon-na let it shine, This lit-tle light of mine, I'm gon-na let it shine, let it shine, let it shine, let it shine." The first staff starts with a C chord and ends with a C chord. The second staff starts with an F chord and ends with a C chord. The third staff starts with a G7 chord and ends with a C chord.

2. (b) Hide it under a bushel? (c) NO!
(a) I'm gonna let it shine.
Hide it under a bushel? NO!
I'm gonna let it shine, let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine.
3. (a) Don't let Satan (d) blow it out,
(a) I'm gonna let it shine.
Don't let Satan blow it out,
I'm gonna let it shine, let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine.
4. Repeat verse 1.

Actions:

- (a) Hold up forefinger
- (b) Cover finger with other hand
- (c) Shout "NO!" and uncover finger
- (d) Blow on finger instead of singing word "blow"

The Light of Jesus

On each candle and flame, write or draw one way you can share the light of Jesus with others.



The Light of Christ Has Come

LESSON 3: JESUS BRINGS LIGHT

Objective

Students will recognize that Jesus is a healer who brings light to our lives.

Key Concepts

- Jesus healed people.
- Because Jesus heals, people have light added to their lives.

Texts: Mark 5:21-43; Mark 10:46-52; John 4:46-54

Estimated Lesson Time: 30 minutes

Materials

- Bible
- Four construction-paper candles like those made in Lesson 1
- Items for Introducing the Lesson: petroleum jelly, play glasses, tape, mitten
- For Extend the Lesson: large sheet of paper

Teacher Preparation

- Prepare four paper candles, but do not label them. Put them in your Bible or nearby, so you will have them ready to use after reading the Bible stories.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Physical challenges. Invite a student volunteer to find out what it's like to be physically challenged. Choose one or more of the following: put petroleum jelly on lenses of glasses so vision is blurred; tape fingers together (such as thumb to index finger), or put a mitten on one hand.

Then ask the volunteer to do a certain task. If the student is wearing a mitten or their fingers are taped, you might ask them to pick up a pencil and paper and write their name. If the student has blurred vision, you might ask them to read a book.

Ask the student how it feels to try to do these tasks. Then release the student's fingers or hand or take off the blurred glasses. Have the student do the same task a second time. Which time was easier?

LESSON STEPS

1. Jesus healed people. Tell the students that today they are going to hear four stories about people who had difficulty doing certain tasks. Jesus met these people as he walked from town to town, and he healed them.

Divide the students into three groups. Explain that each group will take a turn acting out one story. Identify which story each group will act out, and ask them to listen carefully as you read that story.

2. Read Mark 5:21-43. After reading the story, talk about how, for the sick woman, living with an illness for so long was like living in darkness. When Jesus healed

the woman, she discovered the light of Jesus. Write “Jesus brought light to a sick woman” on one of the paper candles and add it to the bulletin board.

Then discuss how Jairus’ daughter also needed the light of Jesus. Write “Jesus brought light to Jairus’ daughter” on the second candle and add it to the bulletin board.

3. Read Mark 10:46-52, then discuss how Bartimaeus was physically blind and living in darkness, and needed the light of Jesus. Write “Jesus brought light to Bartimaeus” on the third candle and add it to the bulletin board.

4. Read John 4:46-54 and discuss how the officer’s son needed the light of Jesus. Write “Jesus brought light to the officer’s son” on a candle and add it to the bulletin board.

5. Act out the stories. Give the three groups time to prepare their skits about the stories and share them with the rest of the class. Be ready to help as the groups plan.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(This activity will extend the lesson to longer than 30 minutes.)

• **Write a class litany** about the stories, writing one sentence about each person Jesus healed. In between the sentences write, “Jesus brings light.” After noting the four people healed in the stories, add a sentence for people the students know who were healed. For example:

Jesus healed my little sister.
Jesus brings light.
Jesus healed Mrs. Johnson.
Jesus brings light.

Add the litany to the bulletin board along with the candles.

Unit 7 Quiz

Name _____

Circle the best answer:

1. Who baptized Jesus?
 - a. John the Baptist
 - b. Anna
 - c. Noah
 - d. Adam

2. What came out of the clouds when Jesus was baptized?
 - a. Streak of lightning
 - b. Helicopter
 - c. Dove
 - d. Kite

3. Jesus had a mission to _____.
 - a. Help others
 - b. Fight for freedom
 - c. Farm
 - d. Bake bread

Yes or No:

_____ 4. Jesus is the light of the world.

_____ 5. Jesus healed people.

6. How can you be a light to the world?

Answers to Unit 7 Quiz:

1. a. John the Baptist
2. c. Dove
3. a. Help others
4. Yes
5. Yes
6. Answers will vary.