

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY

Would you rather?

SURVEY GAME: WOULD YOU RATHER?

In groups of 2, ask the following questions and ask the groups to share thoughts with one another based on questions like (you can add more should you like):

Would you rather:

- Know what's going to happen or be surprised?
- Eat a doughnut or a muffin?
- Sit in the front of the sanctuary or back?
- Listen to music or make a new friend?
- Dress up for worship or dress casually?
- Sit in worship with your friends or your family?
- Receive communion or serve communion?
- Spend time inside or outside?
- Share with a neighbor or share with a family member?

DISCUSS

We all have different things we like, different ways to do things, but all of us like to know that God loves us and that our church family loves us. We all want to know that we are welcome just as we are.

In the large group, talk to each other about what it feels like to be welcome. What does it feel like to not be welcome? What does it feel like to share something with another person?

Jesus encourages us to share with others, but in a very particular way. Let's look at this scripture and see if we can make sense of it together.

SCRIPTURE READING

Read the One Great Hour of Sharing focus text in these two versions:

MATTHEW 5:14-16 FROM THE MESSAGE PARAPHRASE:

14-16 "Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous God in heaven."

MATTHEW 5:14-16 FROM THE INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S BIBLE:

14 "You are the light that gives light to the world. A city that is built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 And people don't hide a light under a bowl. They put the light on a lampstand. Then the light shines for all the people in the house. 16 In the same way, you should be a light for other people. Live so that they will see the good things you do. Live so that they will praise your Father in heaven."

SONG

Sing "This Little Light of Mine" and teach the actions. There are lots of action videos on YouTube.

OBJECT LESSON

You will need the following supplies: battery-operated votive candles, bowls big enough to cover the candle. Have enough supplies for all the children participating.

Remind the children about the scripture passage – people don't hide light under a bowl.

Ask the children to light the candle and then go around the room and ask them to name something they are willing to share with another person. You might want to share examples such as love and happiness, or sharing their snack with a friend at school. Let them be creative. Share with them that what they are offering are actually GIFTS they are giving to others.

After they have a chance to share, ask the children to cover their candle and then ask them what happens to the gift (named above) they were going to share?

Give some time for responses.

Encourage them to keep their candles uncovered and lit while they work on their art project. They can also take the candles home with them as a reminder to “let their light shine.”

ACTIVITY – COLLABORATIVE ART

You will need the following supplies: as many different kinds of art supplies as possible – paper, pipe cleaners, glitter, play-dough, markers, crayons, etc.

Invite the children to create a collaborative art project in which they show how they are connected to others and how they can share light with them.

Do not limit their ideas but encourage them to work together on the project.

After it is created, display the art in a prominent place around the church.

Empowered to Share the Light (Youth Activity)

DISCUSS

Ask youth to share about a time when someone offered them a gift or shared something meaningful with them. If they have trouble with ideas, you might share some ideas: a time when someone shared a compliment, a friend who helped with a difficult assignment, or something more tangible.

Discuss what it is like to receive a gift from another. How does it feel? Is it easy to be gracious and thankful? Or is it difficult? What is it like to give a gift to another?

GIFTED (EMPOWERED) TO SERVE

Each of us has been gifted by God to serve others. We are empowered to share the light. Ask youth either at your session or before to take a spiritual gifts inventory. There are many free surveys online; here is one: www.umcdiscipleship.org/spiritual-gifts-inventory. It is also available in Spanish. Another downloadable and printable version can be found here: www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/spiritual-gifts-inventory-download.

DISCUSS

When the youth have their results, ask them to discuss:

- Were you surprised by any of your top gifts?
- Thinking about your top two gifts, how can those gifts help you share light with others?
- Jesus says we should not hide our lights from others. When you do not use your gifts, you are hiding your light. Which of your spiritual gifts have you been hiding? How could you begin sharing those with others?

CREATING EMOJIS

Materials: Cardboard cut into circles big enough to cover the face of youth, markers.

Either break the group into smaller groups of identical spiritual gifts or let them work separately. Ask them to create an Emoji which represents their spiritual gift.

Give them time to work on their Emojis and then ask them to share with the group when they are complete.

Ask them to share HOW the Emoji both depicts the spiritual gift and how they could share the light through their gift with others. For example, an Emoji with a speech bubble might depict the spiritual gift of faith sharing. An Emoji with a Band-Aid across it could depict the spiritual gift of healing.

Find a place in the church to display the Emojis and add a sticky note or some other way to explain how the Emoji represents a spiritual gift.

Conclude the session with prayer about encouraging the youth to share the light in as many places with as many people as they can.