



Children's Activity – Shine Brightly!

Overview and instructions

To begin this children's lesson, there are two optional activities. Option 1 is for older children (4th grade and above) while option 2 is for children pre-school through 3rd grade. Devoting about 20 minutes to each segment will result in an 80 minute class. For shorter class periods, you could choose between the object lesson and activity for 60 minutes. The beginning of each segment notes supplies that are needed.

Option 1 – Create an Acronym (4th grade and Older)

Post the letters S H I N E on a sheet of paper or newsprint. If you want to make it an individual activity, give each participant a paper with the letters written down the left margin. If you want to make it a group activity, post it on newsprint.

- Ask participants what words go with each letter to create a phrase. An example:
- S – Son's
- H – Heart
- I – Is
- N – Never
- E – Empty

Jesus' heart is never empty and always giving and generous toward us.

If this is done as an individual activity, share the acronyms with the group.

Option 2 – Read a Book (Pre-School through 3rd Grade)

Read the book Little Mole Finds Hope by Glenys Nellist. Little Mole lives underground, where it is dark, but his mother helps him find signs of life and spring around him.

After reading the book, lead a discussion in which you ask participants how they can see signs of light even when things feel like the opposite.



Children's Activity – Shine Brightly! (Continued)

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 Father 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.”

As you read, ask the children to act out the scripture. Rather than giving them actions, invite them to create actions. You could read the scripture a few times and then see what actions emerge.

Afterwards, ask them to reflect on why they chose certain actions for the various phrases.

Object Lesson

You will need the following supplies: clear plastic cups, tissue paper (yellow and orange), scissors, glue, tea light candles or battery-operated tea lights

Instructions:

Cut the tissue paper into small squares or strips. Mix yellow and orange pieces together to create a warm, glowing effect.

Have the children glue the tissue paper pieces onto the outside of the plastic cup. They can cover the entire surface or create patterns — the goal is to make the jar look like it’s glowing with light.



Children’s Activity – Shine Brightly! (Continued)

Once the glue is dry, place a tea light candle inside the jar or use a battery-operated tea light. Turn off the lights in the room and let the children observe how their lanterns shine and glow. If the room cannot be darkened, they will be able to take them home and see how it works then.

Remind them of the scripture reading from earlier. Discuss what it means to “be the light” in their own lives — how can they show kindness, love, and help others around them?

Encourage them to think of specific actions they can take to brighten someone else's day or to make a positive impact in their community. After the discussion, have a moment of reflection where each child can think about one way they can be a light to others this week. They can write or draw their ideas on a small piece of paper and place it inside their lanterns as a reminder.

Activity: Chalk Art

You will need the following supplies: sidewalk chalk

With permission, invite the children to draw images that depict light on their driveways or sidewalks (or the sidewalk of the church). Examples could include candles, the sun/moon/stars, light bulbs, etc...

By doing this outside, they are making a public witness of bearing light in the world.

Conclude this lesson by reminding the children of the importance of letting their light shine, just as Jesus taught. Encourage them to go out and spread kindness, love, and goodness wherever they go.