

# Children of the Light

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## Series Aim

This term we want to inspire the children with how knowing and following Jesus changes us. Jesus brings light into our darkness, so we can understand who He is; we are then changed to live as children of the light. This series is particularly focused at preparing our children to consider how we live differently as Christians in a world that loves darkness rather than light. This difference is motivated by loving and knowing Jesus more and more.

I particularly want us to encourage our older children, as they prepare to go to secondary school; we want to cheer them on to live for Christ in all that lies ahead, to live as lights for Jesus where He takes them.

We have taught the concept of Jesus being the light before (our "I AM" series) but this time I want us to take it a little further, to look at how the New Testament applies the difference light makes and how we live as lights whilst waiting for Christ's return.

We are given 2 big illustrations in the New Testament of how light changes things, firstly the truth of who Jesus is is revealed to us, like light shining into darkness, the change is DRAMATIC! Secondly the light shines out of us in the way we live, Jesus' life was light to a dark world, we are to do the same powered by His spirit at work in us, the change in us is AUTOMATIC. We are called to live as lights in the darkness, until one day we are with Jesus forever in heaven, where there is no more darkness, and all of heaven is filled with the light of Jesus.

## Lesson Overview

Week	Story	Passage
1	Jesus is the Light of the World	John 8:12 – Jesus says "I am the light of the world"
2	Jesus brings light to our darkness	John 9:1-11 – Jesus heals the Blind man
3	Jesus' light transforms us	Acts 9:1-22 – Saul is changed by the light of knowing Jesus
4	Live as Children of the Light	Ephesians 5:8-13 – Being IN Jesus changes us to be like Him
5	Let Your Light Shine	Matt 4:14-16 – Jesus shines out of us to others
6	Look Forward to the Light	Rev 22:1-5 – Jesus is the light of heaven, we will be with Him

## Week 1

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### Jesus Is The Light of the World

#### JOHN 8:12

##### Aim

For the children to understand that Jesus is the light of the world, he is the one who brings truth and purity, He shines into our darkness, transforming us, then shining out of us into the world around.

## **Where are we going?**

We want to enthuse the children for the Series that lies ahead, and explain the concept that only Jesus brings light to our darkness by His truth. We are then changed by knowing Jesus, and promised a future where there will be no more darkness.

## **Notes to help with understanding the passage**

Jesus is light, only truth and purity are found in Him. Jesus brings life, without light there is death, into the darkness of our world God spoke light at creation, light expresses the nature of God to us. Into the darkness of our sin, God spoke Jesus, the word of God in skin, God expressed to us, a light to bring us life, to bring us truth, to call us to purity.

## **Story in Church**

This talk is to enthuse us for the series, and to introduce the foundations we will build on over the coming weeks, the visual will be referred back to, so make it robust if poss. so it lasts the 6 weeks. I did wonder about making a brain window... We understand who Jesus, and then a heart light... We live differently, the same torch, Jesus, lights up our understanding, and lights up our lives.

This term we are going to learn more about how knowing and loving Jesus changes us, and the change is big! It's a total difference; it couldn't get more dramatic... It's from darkness to light.

Have you ever been away, maybe camping, on holiday somewhere in the middle of nowhere, when it's dark, no lights, no street lights, you can't see your hand in front of your face! In Wales this week in our holiday house, it was SO dark, Isaac called it SUPER Dark, when you wake up in the night, you can't find your pillow! David fell out of bed, and couldn't find his bed; he got in Ernie's by mistake! They were shouting at each other, get out of my bed! It was only when the light was tyres on that we could make sense of what had happened. The light is TOTALLY different to the dark!

Just like we need light to understand what's going on, to see where we are going, we need Jesus, that's why Jesus said, "I am the light of the world" he is the light into our darkness, He makes sense of what's going on, where we are going, his light in us changes everything.

When we love Jesus, we are different, not because we try harder, or are better people, but because we are IN Jesus, we belong to Him, and we are changed so he shines out of us, we become children of light.

Produce torch with word Jesus written on

Jesus is the Light of the world

We learned that in our I Am series, and we are going to think about that some more this time, how the light of Jesus changes what we understand, how we live, and what we are looking forward to.

The light of Jesus changes us - hold up large person cut out of black card with a heart shape cut out of middle, keep cut out piece stuck in, and have a little piece of white paper / tissue paper stuck over the back, as you say "changes us" remove the heart shape

We are changed by the light of Understanding who Jesus is, it's like taking a blindfold off, or turning a light on in a dark room... Suddenly it makes sense!

The light of Jesus changes us, into our darkness... He shines His light

Then the light of Jesus shines through us,

Hold torch behind the person and shine through the heart shape

Those around us see What Jesus is like in what we do, how we live, because we are changed to being in Him, he

shines out if us, not because we're amazing, but because He is, and We are full of Him!

And the light of Jesus is what we have to look forward to,  
Put some sunglasses on and look relaxed...

Light is what we can look forward to

In our world today, there is still darkness, people who live with their eyes tight shut to who Jesus is, those who would rather stay in the dark, who pull their blindfolds on tighter and shut God out, but one day, Jesus promises there will be no more darkness, heaven will be full of light, and it won't be from the sun, as in the sunshine.. It will be from Jesus being there, in all His glory, and all His brilliant light.

A wonderfully bright future awaits us! So bright... We may heed sunglasses!

It's going to be a BRILLIANT series!

## **CRECHE**

### **Story Time**

Build a den together – drape blankets / material over a table, sit inside with the children, turn a torch on, what happens to the dark when the light goes on... it goes away! The light helps us see, helps us know where we are going, is fun to play outside when it's light, God made light, and God sent Jesus to be a light for us, we need to know and love him.

### **Play Time**

Using a large torch, Shine the torch on the floor, children have to run to where the light is.

### **Make**

Stick glow in the dark stars on a card door hanger with "Jesus is light" written on for the children to hang in their bedrooms.

## **JUNIOR CHURCH**

### **Game**

Pin the flame on the candle – as in pin the tail on the donkey

The point of this is to try and illustrate understanding – in the dark with the blindfold on, it's hard to get it right, when we can see, in the light, it is easy!!

Make a den – put blankets / dark material over a table at the other side of the room, so the den is dark, fill the den with bean bags / ball pool balls of 2 different colours, children in 2 teams, have to go in and find the right coloured ball / bean bag for their team. Time them

Repeat the game, this time give the teams a torch, they pass on to the next in line relay style... how much easier was the game with a light, when you could see!

### **Younger Ones**

#### **Teaching Time**

Ask the children to think about what light does, and the difference it makes – if I am walking down the street, what difference does light make? If I am choosing what jumper to wear, the red or blue one, can I do that in the dark? What difference does a light make? If I am standing in front of a beautiful painting, can I understand how nice it is if I have a blindfold on? If I plant a seed, in the ground, and then cover it with a black box, will it grow? Light makes a massive difference, we can see, we can understand, we can grow, have life. Knowing Jesus makes this much of a difference, because He is the light of the world.

#### **Discover and Do**

Have a pre-cut cardboard door hanger, ask the children to write, "Jesus is Light" on and decorate with glitter, pens, glow in the dark stars etc., they can then hang this on their bedroom door at night and see the difference the light makes, and remember that Jesus brings light.

### **Older Ones**

Look at the verses – think about why light illustrates Jesus, talk about what light does – helps us see where we are going, helps us understand, see in colour, see the world, know what things look like, light brings truth. Write out a list of the difference light makes.

### **Discuss and Act**

Using sharpie makers Write "JESUS IS LIGHT" onto the outside of a paper lantern bag, write in smaller letters around the edges a list of the difference light makes from the facts list you made before. Put a battery operated tea light inside – you have your truth light!

# Week 2

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## Jesus Brings Light into our Darkness

### JOHN 9:1-11

#### Aim

For the children to understand that Jesus brings light to our darkness. Jesus brings light because He is light, he helps us see who He is, He brings truth to our understanding. Jesus does the work, we are so stuck in the dark, that we don't know what light is... Jesus initiates, Jesus opens our eyes.

#### Where are we going?

We are building on last week, Jesus the light, this week we see Jesus demonstrate his light as he brings light into the blind man's darkness. last week we began with an overview – Jesus shines his light into our darkness, his light shines out of us, his light is what we look forward to, this week we are zooming in on the first bit – light into our darkness to work on understanding that a bit better.

#### Notes to help with understanding the passage

Many people believed that any form of disability was due to the direct sin, either of the child, or of the parents, with no regard for the actual people involved, and no thought for their feelings the heartless Pharisees want to have a theological debate with Jesus / argument. Jesus answer is clear – the effects of sin are everywhere and its consequences hit us all, we are all in the dark, and the point of this man's blindness is to enable Jesus to demonstrate to us that he can beat it. He can open blinded eyes to see Him, we are all stuck in the dark, and blind, we need Jesus to shine His truth into our blind hearts.

We will not focus particularly on the spit and the mud – children tend to get a little over obsessed with the fact that Jesus did spitting!!! Which mummy would tell me off for, when the point of this is to highlight Jesus "sent" from God into our world, the man trusting and obeying Jesus – older ones can look at this in small group time. The contrast between the blind man who sees and understands that Jesus could not do this unless He was telling the truth, sent from God, and those who can physically see, but remain spiritually blind is what we want to focus on.

It's also worth noticing that the ignored man on the side of the road, is the one Jesus SEES and goes to, Jesus initiates, Jesus sees him as more than an issue to discuss, Jesus initiates the rescue light into darkness, we too are stuck in the dark, unable to help ourselves, needing Jesus to do it all for us!

#### Story in Church

**Before you begin, have someone inside a large cardboard box in the corner at the front of church, (one of the young people) ideally before church begins so people don't know they are there.**

**Use last week's man prop with cut out heart – add cut out eyes for this week**

What to say	What to do
We are learning in Junior Church about how knowing and following Jesus changes us into children of light	Volunteer comes on dressed in high viz jacket, bright clothes, with head torch on

Well, you look wonderful, certainly noticeable, but I don't think you've quite understood what we mean!	... "I'm ready to shine for Jesus and be a glow in the dark child"
You see Jesus is the light of the world He shines his light into our darkness so we understand who he is He shines his light through us to the word around And he is the light we have to look forward to... heaven will be brilliant!	Props from last week... Hold up torch with Jesus written on Shine torch onto face Shine light through heart Put sunglasses on (replace heart window to reuse later)
This week we are going to learn more about the light of Jesus shining into our darkness, you see Jesus never said something He didn't mean, the things he said were true, the things He said were amazing, He said "I am the light of the world" Now that is a pretty bold statement to make – I am Light, and not just I'm sometimes bright and cheerful, but I am THE light of THE WHOLE WORLD. WOW! That's something to put on your CV!!	Turn globe light on
Light is pretty important stuff, we need it to see where we are going, we need it to bring warmth, and life, to make plants grow, to give us food, we need light to stay alive, so if Jesus is the light of everywhere, then he must be what everyone needs!! WOW	
Jesus didn't just say he was the light, he showed he was the light by what he did next. You see on the side of the road where Jesus was walking, there was a man who had lived his whole life in darkness. He could not see, he didn't know what light was like, he had never seen a tree, or a bird, or a sunset, or his families faces, he needed help to know where to go, he couldn't see what was going on. He was stuck in the dark	Go to volunteer in the box
"Hello, how's life in there? There are lots of people out here you know, visitors, baby Caleb's family and friends, there's cake at the back, it's bright and full, how's life in there Would you like to stay in the dark, or would you like to come out and be with us in the light?"	"well it's just dark and empty"  "I think it sounds much better out there!" Help volunteer out of the box "WOW, much better!"
The man on the side of the road was stuck in the dark, But Jesus could see him, Jesus went to the man, Jesus the light, went to the one in the dark, and showed everyone that when he said he was the light, it was true! Jesus brought light to the man's darkness	Remove eye cut outs from figure Shine the torch through the eye cut outs
The watching crowd were amazed, they did not understand who Jesus was, they wondered how he could have done this, this can't just have happened, people don't do this sort of thing, is this Jesus good or bad??	
The man who Jesus healed had something amazing to say, once I was blind, and now I can see, if Jesus was not the one God sent as light into the world, he would not be able to do this.	
He has met Jesus, Jesus has shone his light into his life, and now the truth of Jesus is shining out of him	Remove heart window and shine torch through
Would you rather stay in the dark, or let the light of who Jesus is light up your life	Point to the box Point to the cut out man
Let's Pray	Sing My Lighthouse

## Crèche

## Story Time

Ask a child to try a blindfold on, it is dark, can't see, the man who met Jesus today could not see, he was stuck in the dark hold up a simple picture of a man with a strip of paper stuck over his eyes. Ask the children if they like the

dark? Jesus said something amazing, he said he was the light of the world... turn a lamp on. If Jesus is the light, and this man is in the dark, who can help him... JESUS CAN – and Jesus did! Take the strip of paper off.

We are stuck in the dark too, not with our eyes, but with the things we do wrong, we need to run to Jesus, the light and ask him to help us.

### **Play Time**

Children have a go at guessing the contents of a feely bag – pump bag with a few toys in, they can do this with a blindfold on, or by just pulling the top of the bag shut once their hand is in so they can't see – it's hard to know in the dark, the light is better.

### **Make Time**

Fold a paper plate in half – stick strips of paper / pipe cleaners along the curved plate edge as eye lashes, open plate and stick large coloured circle of paper and black dot inside as an eye – write Jesus brings light on.

### **Game**

Feely Bag Game – children have to guess contents of the bag / box with blindfold on – make some easy, i.e. a toy car, a hairbrush, make some harder / more disgusting – a tin of spaghetti... could be worms!!

### **Younger Ones**

#### **Teaching Time**

Have a light / lamp on one side and an action man on the other with a blindfold on

Remind the children that Jesus said he was the light of the world, turn light on. Remind them that there was a man who was stuck in the dark, hold up action man. This man could do nothing to sort out his problem... what did he need? He needed the light! What did Jesus do? Jesus is the light God sent into the world to sort out the darkness, Jesus did this to prove this is true, so we could understand who he is, he is telling the truth. He is the light, he is truth! We might be able to see OK with our eyes, but how are we stuck in the dark? *Our sin, the things that we do wrong, means we are **stuck** in the dark* we need a light to help us, we need Jesus to beat the dark for us.

The man whose eyes Jesus opened told everyone what he had done, some did not want to believe that Jesus really was the light they all needed, they tried to say that Jesus was a liar, but what he had done had proved his words were true! The blind man understood, Jesus is the light, he changed me from dark to light, only someone who is from God can do that.

#### **Discover and Do**

Make a picture with a sliding open eye – or a folded paper plate eye (see crèche suggestion)

Make a little credit card sized piece of black card, stick a single glow in the dark star on the background, children can put these in their pockets / pencil case to remind the children that Jesus shines his light into our darkness.

#### **Teaching Time**

Give a few spot the difference activities – some hard some obvious

Use this to link to the passage – the difference for the man was dramatic – couldn't be bigger – total darkness to light. Encourage them to see the link back to what Jesus said about being the light of the world, this is a big claim, he proves he is truth by proving it. This kicks off a big argument, is Jesus good or bad, truth or a lie, light or dark... as the healed man says, he is the proof!

## **Discuss and Act**

Look at the passage

How are we stuck in the dark without Jesus? How are our lives also proof of what Jesus said being true?

We are stuck in the darkness of sin; we need the light of Jesus to save us. When Jesus changes us, we are proof of him being the truth by the way we live.

# Week 3

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## The light of Jesus transforms us

### ACTS 9:1-22

#### Aim

For the children to see how the truth of Jesus shining into Saul's life totally transformed him from being against Jesus, to being all for him. We need the light of Jesus to transform our lives too.

#### Where are we going?

The light of who Jesus is totally transforms us from going our own way to following Jesus. Saul's life was so dramatically changed, from darkness to light, from killing Christians to planting churches. Our transformation in Jesus is just as dramatic.

#### Notes to help with understanding the passage

V1 – Saul was breathing murderous threats against those who loved Jesus, v2 he was on the lookout for Christians, men OR women to throw into jail. Into this utter darkness; Jesus shines His light, how great is his mercy!! No one is beyond his reach, no one is too bad for his grace to reach them, not the murdering terrorist, the craziest dictator, the light of Jesus can save anyone, and totally transform them, it has me! My sin may not be as obvious to the onlooker, but the source is the same, rebellion against God and rejection of Jesus is living a life set against him.

Saul isn't a pantomime villain; he is a murderer, breathing murderous threats against the Lord's disciples he sets to drag people to prison for believing in Jesus, you would be totally terrified of him as a Christian. Walking from Jerusalem to Damascus, Saul would have passed Calvary, the very place where salvation for all who believe, and indeed his own salvation was sealed – WOW! Grace on grace, I would love to think that just as he was in the shadow of the hill of Calvary the light of salvation shone into his eyes.

V 4 - The light from heaven shines into his eyes, and the voice of Jesus speaks – “ you are persecuting me”, Jesus takes the suffering of his people personally, when they ridicule you, they ridicule Jesus, when they reject you as his followers, they reject Jesus. Jesus the light of the world the risen son of God speaks to this man, this enemy of the gospel and says – “you're mine, I've a job for you to do”, WOW talk about fast track discipleship programme.

Ananias gets surely one of the scariest jobs ever – go and help Saul, v15-16, God explains that Saul is the chosen instrument to spread the good news of the gospel far and wide. Jesus has redeemed his passion and fervour and scripture training and is redirecting it for his glory, how brilliant is that. God can save anyone!!

V20 look at the total transformation from v1 – Jesus is the son of God!!!

We are all like Saul, enemies of the gospel, transformed by the light of Jesus shining into our lives, before you look down your nose at terrible Saul; remember the only good thing about you is what Jesus has put there. Before you get depressed about the state of the world, your family, your mates, remember Jesus can save and radically change absolutely anybody, and you might be the nervous Ananias sent to help them!!

#### Story in church

**Have the cross set up to one side with a large plugged in light on it**

What to say	What to do
<p>We are learning in Junior Church about how knowing and following Jesus changes us into children of light            You see Jesus is the light of the world            He shines his light into our darkness so we understand who he is            He shines his light through us to the word around            And he is the light we have to look forward to... heaven will be brilliant!</p>	<p>Props from last week...            Hold up torch with Jesus written on            Shine torch onto face            Shine light through heart            Put sunglasses on</p>
<p>This week we are going to see how the light of Jesus totally changed someone's life from going one way to the other, from darkness to light.</p>	<p>Put hands over your eyes – darkness            Take hands away - light</p>
<p>There was once a very mean man called Saul.</p>	<p>Put a tea towel on your head, shake your fist at people             Go slow! Make eye contact. Grab their attention!</p>
<p>He did not like anyone who loved Jesus. In fact he hated them, he went out searching for anyone who followed Jesus</p>	<p>Talk slowly all the way through!             Walk down the aisle looking both ways</p>
<p>He wanted to catch them and put them in jail.</p>	<p>Grab a person and throw into crèche room</p>
<p>He travelled near and far to find them, anyone would do, men women, children, all the Christians were terrified of Paul, when he came in the room, people would try and hide.             Saul set off on a mission to Damascus to hunt for more Christian's to beat up and kill, as he walked he was hissing and spitting</p>	<p>Walk down aisle muttering and hissing, "hate Christians, kill Christians"</p>
<p>As he walked along, suddenly a bright light flashed from the sky</p>	<p>Get a helper to turn on the light strapped to the cross at Saul</p>
<p><i>Drop to your knees in front of the cross with your hands over your eyes – wait a while</i></p>	<p>Fall onto knees. Close your own eyes.</p>
<p>The light of who Jesus is, and all he had done shone into Saul's life, and he was never the same, the risen Jesus spoke to Saul, and called him to follow him, to be totally changed, and he was</p>	
<p>We all need to get to this point, perhaps you might not feel you're as bad as Saul, I mean, you're in church, so that's a start right!? But unless you are here – kneel before the cross, letting the light of Jesus totally change you, then you are just as against Jesus as Saul was at the beginning!!</p>	<p>Point to the cross, kneel back there</p>
<p>From that day, Saul was totally different. He had met the risen Jesus, he realized he'd got it all wrong, he stopped hating people. He stopped hurting Christians, he stopped hating Jesus, he started loving Jesus, He stopped being mean, and he started to be a missionary. He started to</p>	

<p>preach in churches telling everyone Jesus is the son of God, Jesus saves! He would tell anyone he met.</p> <p>You would think he would be the worst person ever to speak for Jesus, but Jesus can save and change anyone! He can make someone who you would think was the worst person to do this job, the best!!</p>	
<p>He was so massively different that he even changed his name so everyone would know he had changed. He wasn't Saul anymore, but Paul</p>	
<p>When we know who Jesus is and what he has done, it's like we have come out of living in the dark and we want to tell others about our brilliant saving Jesus, we wouldn't want anyone else to stay stuck in the dark</p> <p>The light shines into me, the light shines out of me to others</p>	Recap with prop
<p>Jesus is the light of my world, is He the light of yours??</p>	Sing – my lighthouse

## CRECHE

### Story time

Hold up a simple sign post, made from a lolly stick that says My Way on one side, and God's way on the other. Remind the children that Saul lived his own way, hating Jesus, hating anyone who followed him, and he was stuck in the dark, bring out a play figure, tie a strip of material over its eyes. Saul went away from Jesus; Jesus is the light, so Saul was in the dark.

But Jesus shone his light into Saul's darkness, and turned him around – flip signpost; take the blindfold off the play figure. The light of Jesus changed Saul, it made him different, once he knew Jesus, he loved and followed him for the rest of his life.

### Play Time

Talk about opposites, very simple – up and down, hot and cold, day and night, dark and light, use to re enforce the change that Jesus made to Saul, it was as big a difference as that.

### Make Time

Stick a silhouette Saul figure / cross in dark coloured card on the outside of a lantern bag, write, the light of Jesus changes me on the bag, put a battery tea light inside.

## JUNIOR CHURCH

### Game

Blindfold obstacle course – children in 2 teams, have to cross the room and return with a ball of their teams colour, they are asked to complete this with a blindfold on... almost impossible! With the blindfold off – can't fail, the difference is dramatic.

Play a version of captain's coming – instead of port / starboard, it's my way, God's way, kill Christians, plant churches etc

## **Younger Ones**

### **Teaching Time**

**Either** – show the children a few pictures – would these people be good at this job?

Ballet Teacher – Big Hairy builder / wrestler

Security Guard – Mr Tumble

Cage Fighter – Kate Middleton

Olympic runner – Granny on Zimmer

Nursery Teacher – Darth Vader

No – they would need to be very different – Saul started off hating Jesus, he was terrible and horrible, and he ended up loving and following Jesus, he started churches, he encouraged Christians even today by writing a lot of the Bible!! What made this massive change??? THE LIGHT OF JESUS, that's how amazing he is, that's the difference he makes, to me, to you, to anyone, enemy to friend. Dark to light.

**OR** – Talk about opposites, ask the children to tell you the opposite of up, hot, dark etc., the light of Jesus changed Saul to going the opposite way.

### **Discover and Do**

Make the light of Jesus changes me – decorate a lantern bag, cut out a Saul figure and a cross from dark card, and stick on the outside of a lantern bag, ask the children to write Jesus changes me on the bag and put a battery operated tea light inside.

**OR** – Make a Saul spinning figure – cut out figure on a lolly stick, one side is black, the other is decorated with bright colours, sequins etc., showing the difference – dark to light.

## **Older ones**

### **Teaching Time**

Play a quick game of opposites / spot the difference

Look at the passage – pay particular attention to v1 and v21 – spot the difference! Talk about opposite! What is it that made this change?? V3 – Jesus. Have a look through the New Testament – Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians etc. – who wrote them?? PAUL! Murderer to missionary, destroyer to encourager, Paul wrote half of the New Testament, the change in him was MASSIVE! The light of Jesus made that change – powerful stuff!

### **Discuss and Act**

Try and challenge the kids to think about if there is anyone they think Jesus can't won't save? Remind them that Jesus' disciples would have been terrified of Saul – he was their enemy, he became their friend and leader. What a picture of what happens in all of us. Are we better than Saul?? What is it that makes us different? The light of who Jesus is.

# Week 4

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## Live as Children of Light

### EPHESIANS 5:8-13

#### Aim

For the children to understand that the light of Jesus in us is what makes us different, not because we try hard, or do good, but because we are in Jesus, we are children of light, that changes our identity, not just our behaviour.

#### The Big Idea

It is about more than just having light in us; it is about being children of light, belonging to light, being in Jesus. So when we come into contact with darkness we make a difference. We can pretend we are still in the dark, and try to live like we used to, but that is crazy. When we come into contact with people in the dark, we bring the light of Christ, and when we leave, they are left in the dark.

#### Notes to help with understanding the passage

This passage is about pure living, v1-7, the light of Jesus opens our eyes to understand the truth of who he is, and changes our hearts and lives to show the truth of Jesus in the way we relate to one another, the way we keep promises, live purely, and love what is good. The change is fundamental to who we are, v8, we are now children of light, so embrace this change, live a light filled life, v9, and get to know the source of the light better still, v10 by knowing Him better, we will be more like him. V11 living like this automatically exposes what is not good, what is darkness.

What makes this change is not us being goody two shoes, or better than others, but that our whole identity has been changed, our whole outlook has been changed by the truth of knowing Jesus. Once the blindfold is off, and you can see what is going on, you can't pretend not to see anymore! , V 15, 16 is a warning not to waste the privilege we are given and to make the most of the opportunities we have. We are light, we can't help but show up the darkness, so don't hide it, don't pretend, shine brightly!

#### Story in church

**You will need** – 3 volunteers with black clothing on, high viz jacket, 3 scarves, table with cups, jug of water, crisps, bread / cakes on. Props from last week.

What to say	What to do
We are learning in Junior Church how to be children of light. When we know and follow Jesus, we are changed into children of light <i>TAKE THIS SLOWLY!!</i> You see Jesus is the light of the world He shines his light into our darkness so we understand who he is  He shines his light through us to the world around  And he is the light we have to look forward to... heaven will be filled with the light of Jesus, it will be so bright!	Use cardboard man prop  Hold up torch with Jesus written on  Stick light bulb on head  Remove heart shape and shine torch through  Put Sunglasses on

<p>This week we are going to learn a bit more about how being children of light makes us different. You see before we knew Jesus, we lived in the dark</p>	<p>Have 3 volunteers out in black clothes, with blindfolds on, pushing and shoving each other, bumping into things and grabbing at food on a table and trying to pour a drink. “out of my way, me first, that’s mine, I hate you, get out of my way”</p>
<p>Life in the dark is all about yourself, pushing, fighting, striving to sort yourself out, who cares about anyone else But when the light of Jesus changes us, everything about us is totally different!! YOU ARE NOW A CHILD OF LIGHT! We can see, we understand what life is really about, we see ourselves differently, we see others differently, we see that they are still stuck in the dark</p>	<p>Take blindfold off 1 volunteer and stick high viz jacket on</p> <p>Other volunteers carry on grabbing, shoving, LIGHT guy now looks on horrified!</p>
<p>Now how should a child of light live differently here – he has 2 choices, he can pretend he still can’t see. But what a waste! How silly to pretend that he isn’t different!!</p>	<p>Light guy joins in half-heartedly grabbing</p>
<p>Or he can be a light in the darkness, he can show up the problem</p> <p><b><i>Pause and wait for drama action</i></b></p>	<p>Light guy pours other 2 a drink,</p> <p>“here, let me help you” “if I share this out there’s enough for us all” Others answer, “he’s tricking, don’t listen, how do you know!!” <i>Light guy waits for explanation</i></p>
<p>Because he is in the light, he can see the problem, he understands what they need he can point them to the solution</p>	<p>Light guy answers, I know, and I can help because I am different, I can see, let me help you!</p>
	<p>First dark guys says, “get lost; I’m fine on my own shove off!” Second dark guy says, “OK, you help me” Light guy hands him a drink, and then takes his blindfold off. Volunteers sit down</p>
<p>When we know Jesus, we are changed, everything about us is different, we are not children of darkness anymore, we are children of light, we have a different identity, just like Saul was changed from Saul to Paul, we are changed from dark to light.</p>	
<p>We still live in a world of darkness, with people who do not know Jesus, we shouldn’t pretend to be like them, we shouldn’t pretend we are the same, we should be a light that is a help to others and points them to the one who can help them, Jesus!</p>	
<p>The more we understand and love the light of Jesus, the truth of who he is, the brighter it will shine through us to others!</p>	
<p>SING</p>	<p>My Lighthouse.</p>

## CRECHE

### Teaching Time

This is harder work with the little ones as we are teaching a concept, rather than a story!! Use 2 coloured lantern – e.g. a red glass garden lantern, or a coloured jar, put a battery tea light inside 1, ask them which lantern is shining –

the one with the light inside, which one can they see in the dark?? The one with the light inside, the one with the light in is different, and it makes a difference, it shines out, can you see the colour it makes around, it's lighting up the room – (if necessary do this under the table) when we know Jesus, it changes us to be like this light, we are different, and we make a difference, we show others the light of Jesus.

### **Play Time**

Play putting lights inside different coloured jars / pots / bags, talk about how light changes, shines etc.

### **Make Time**

Make a shine for Jesus pot – use a clear plastic tub – (mini microwave bowl with lid) make a face on the lid with collage material, pipe cleaner smile, pom pom eyes etc., decorate the inside with tissue paper if you like, put stickers on the outside – finish by putting either a light, or a glow stick inside the tub, the light of Jesus can shine in me.

## **JUNIOR CHURCH**

### **Game**

Light up chain relay – children in teams, run across the room to collect a glow stick / tea light, run back and link the next person in the team who has to go and get a light etc., first Lit up team wins! Use this to illustrate that we bring others to the light.

### **Infants**

#### **Teaching Time**

Use 2 coloured lantern – e.g. a red glass garden lantern, or a coloured jar, put a battery tea light inside 1, ask them which lantern is shining – the one with the light inside, which one can they see in the dark?? The one with the light inside, the one with the light in is different, and it makes a difference, it shines out, can you see the colour it makes around, it's lighting up the room, when we know Jesus, it changes us to be like this light, we are different, and we make a difference, we show others the light of Jesus.

#### **Discover and Do**

Make a children of light tub, use a small plastic tub with lid (mini microwave bowls in pound land) draw / use collage materials to make a face on the lid, e.g. pipe cleaner smile, pom pom nose, stick on eyes, or draw, decorate the inside with tissue paper, draw stick people around the outside. At the end, put a glow stick / battery tea light inside – now a child of light, the light makes the difference.

### **Juniors**

#### **Teaching Time**

Look at the verses 8 – 13 together, what difference do children of light make? They want to know Jesus more, they are different, they expose darkness for what it is. Talk about situations in school where they are light in darkness, talk about the option they have, they could pretend that they are not different, they can be who they really are in Christ, children of light bringing His light to others.

#### **Discuss and Act**

The older ones don't really like being told what to do in a craft type activity, but often working on something helps them talk more freely – either decorate tea light holders with sharpie markers, give them a load of materials, tubs etc., and ask them to design their own lamp.

OR – in groups act out a situation in school, show how a child of light can make a difference.

# Week 5

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## Let Your Light Shine

### MATTHEW 5:14-16

#### Aim

For the children to see that if Jesus is in us, he will shine out of us to others, you can't hide it, just like you can't hide the light of a city on a hill! Jesus makes the difference, so he gets the praise.

#### Where are we going?

This is building on last week – we are different, we are lights in a dark world, but we don't become arrogant, or proud – the light in us is Jesus, the glory is his not ours. Neither do we become shy or hiding, because the light in us is Jesus!! When Jesus is in us, he will shine out of us, it is just what happens, so shine brightly and the glory will go to Jesus.

**NOTE** – encourage the children that Jesus **IS** changing them, they are children, they have doubts, they don't need to bear yours too! Resist any urge to point out negative behaviour, but build them up – the way you welcome new people, the way you encourage one another, the way you listen and help, it all shows me that Jesus is working in you! As we know him more, we will show him more, more light in. means more light out! Let's enjoying knowing more of the light and truth of Jesus together, and helping one another be brighter lights to the glory of Jesus!

#### Notes to help with understanding the passage

This is part of Jesus teaching on the beatitudes, he is explaining how to live for Jesus, how we are different, and the main difference is that because we are IN Jesus, we belong to Him, and He is light, we are therefore lights where he places us – a window

V14 gives us a picture of something that is impossible – a city up on a hill is really easy to spot, you can't pretend it isn't there! Even at night, it is lit up like a Christmas tree – people who are changed by Jesus are really easy to spot – they can't hide it! A light is made to shine, it would be crazy to light a lamp and hide it under a bowl, it is not doing what it is made for – so with us, we are made to glorify God, and enjoy him, anything else is missing the point! Instead we bring light, safety, joy to those around by doing what we are made for, and when we show people the change that Jesus has made in us, the glory goes to Him! We are a mirror that reflects him to others, the more we know Jesus, the more we show Jesus.

#### Children's story in church

#### You will need

Props from last week, torch, sunglasses, photo of lollipop lady on screen, lamp, box, mirror

What to say	What to do
We are learning in Junior Church how to be children of light. When we know and follow Jesus, we are changed into children of light <i>TAKE THIS SLOWLY!!</i> You see Jesus is the light of the world He shines his light into our darkness so we understand who he is	Props from last week...  Hold up torch with Jesus written on Shine torch onto face Shine light through heart

<p>He shines his light through us to the word around</p> <p>And he is the light we have to look forward to... heaven will be filled with the light of Jesus, it will be so bright!</p>	<p>Put sunglasses on</p>
<p>This week we are going to learn a bit more about how being children of light makes us noticeable, it makes us stand out like the lollypop ladies coat!</p>	<p>Show picture of local lollypop lady</p>
<p>Jesus told his followers that when we live for him, we will stand out because we are different, we belong to him, and His light shines through us.</p> <p>This light is doing what it's meant to do, shining!</p> <p>Imagine if your mum came into your bedroom at night, turned on your light, and then stuck a big box over it!</p> <p>That would be daft –there's no point in having a light, and hiding it! It's not doing what it's made for! We need to see it</p>	<p>Turn on a bedside lamp</p> <p>Put bowl / box over the lamp</p> <p>Take box off</p>
<p>We need to show the light of Jesus through us, by the way we behave, the way we treat others, welcome new people, share what we have, encourage one another, by living like that, we are showing people what Jesus is like.</p>	
<p>Jesus said "let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your father in heaven"</p> <p>When live like lights, when we act differently, and stand out, it's not so people think that we are really good and amazing, it's so they can see that God is really good and amazing!</p>	
<p>Light does some pretty cool stuff – it reflects – look what happens when I shine a torch on this mirror</p> <p>The light has bounced of this mirror, and shone out way up there!!</p> <p>Jesus shines his light into us, we shine it out to the world, and it tells everyone how great God is, the glory reflects back to him!</p>	<p>Shine torch onto a mirror – wiggle the mirror around so can see a light block / reflection on the ceiling</p>
<p>How could you be a super Jesus reflector in your school this week, How could you show people the truth of what He is like when you are in the playground, when you are at home with your brothers / sisters.</p>	
<p>Let's sing</p>	<p>My lighthouse</p>

## CRECHE

### Teaching Time

Hold up a torch – ask the children what it does... shines a light, helps us see in the dark. Put the torch under a bowl / black bag, is it doing its job now? Is it helping anyone see, can we see its light, it sad that we can't see the light doing what it is made for. We are made to know Jesus, and to let his light fill us and shine to others, we are made to know Jesus and enjoy Him – take the light out, knowing Jesus, and showing him to others is what we were made for.

### Play Time

Have the children try shining the torch onto a heart shaped mirror – we can see the same light coming out again, the light that goes in, comes out, that is what it is like for us, Jesus light shines into us, and shines out of us to others.

### Make Time

Stick a mini mirror onto a heart shaped background, decorate with stickers – glow in the dark stars etc. write shining for Jesus on.

OR Make a light reflector / sun catcher – stick stickers or a face onto an old cd and hang from a string.

## **JUNIOR CHURCH**

### **Game**

## **INFANTS**

### **Teaching Time**

Hold up a light – lamp or torch – what is this made for? It is made to shine? What will it do? Help people to see where they are going, help in the dark. So what happens when I do this... stick the torch in a black bin bag, is it doing what it was made for, is it doing its job? We are made to know God, to enjoy him and to help others know Him, when we are doing that, we are doing what we are made for, life makes sense, and we make a difference to those around us.

### **Discover and Do**

Make a heart mirror – either decorate a heart box and stick a mirror inside, OR use a heart shaped background and stick a mirror on, and decorate with sparkles / glow stars. Get the children to experiment with the mirror they have made and shine a torch on it, use this as a base for chatting how the light of Jesus shines into us, shines out of us, and the glory goes back to him.

## **JUNIORS**

### **Teaching Time**

Remind the children that God is light, He Made light, and when we think about light and understand what it does and how it works, it helps us understand something about what God is like. Get them to think in groups about the difference that light makes in the world – note down ideas and share.

Look at the verses – a light is made to shine, a city can't help but be seen, as children of light, we are doing what we are made for when we are showing what God is like, when we are showing His light in the world.

### **Discuss and Act**

Using a mirror and a torch explain to the children how the light that comes into the mirror bounces out of mirror, and the amount of light in, is the same amount that comes out! (this might be difficult to see in the light room – so you could use a you tube clip / image of reflection experiment)

Light brings detail, light brings colour, light is a spectrum through which we can see the world, light moves in ways we don't fully understand – dual wave theory – this is the way to think about God's world and the things he made – they reveal more of Him to us!

Set up some light experiments – plant 2 seeds – cover one flower pot in black paper – can it survive without light? Try signalling with a light and a mirror across the room.

Talk about reflection – when we show the light of Jesus, the light is from him in the first place, so the glory goes back to him too! We reflect Him to others, we reflect the glory from Jesus, and back to Jesus – this is what we were made for! One day we will be able to do that perfectly and forever!

# Week 6

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## Looking Forward to the Light

### REVELATION 22:1-5

#### Aim

For the children to understand that heaven is a place where there is no more darkness it is filled with the light, it will be a fabulous place for us to enjoy. Looking forward to heaven helps us to keep going in a world of darkness.

#### Where are we going?

We have learned that light is amazing life giving, reflecting, energy filled, bouncing stuff that brings beauty and colour to the world, but also that not everyone loves light, some people prefer the darkness, so will not like our light! Jesus promises his followers that one day there will be no more darkness, the sin and our fight with it will be over, we will be in heaven, a place filled with the light of Jesus. When we are there with him, there is no more struggling to get it right, no more standing out in the dark, we will be in a place of only light, enjoying being with Jesus forever. We can look forward to a very bright future!

#### Notes to help with understanding the passage

The book of revelation summarises the themes that are taught throughout the whole of the Bible, all of the images it picks up on from the Old Testament expect us to be able to jump on board with these ideas – it is the last book of the Bible after all! We are given a beautiful word picture of heaven, in these few verses the picture builds and builds like a crescendo, it is a place of purity, v 1, a place where God rules, a place where the lamb is on the throne. A place where the goodness of Eden is restored – tree of life, a place of plenty – crops for all the people every month, v 2, a place where ALL nations receive healing. There is no more curse, the sin problem, and all that it stains and affects is gone! Verse 3 such a wonderful summary, sin is gone and God is with His people, the throne of God and the lamb is in the city, in the middle of the people, there is no more separation needed, no temple, no curtain, no divide, and we are able to serve him, we will have great tasks to enjoy, to do, to get our teeth into, to discover more, to know more, serving God without any effects of the curse will be such a delight!! And the crescendo builds again, more than that, we will see God's face! Those in Bible history that had the privilege of seeing God – Moses, Elijah, they saw a glimpse, the trail of his garment; we get to see God's face and to belong to Him.

The word pictures we are given in Revelation are to try and get us in our limited human understanding, to catch a tiny glimpse of the glory of heaven, we are told that Jesus is the light of heaven, it is more significant to understand that there is no more darkness, than it is to wonder about whether there will still be sun moon and stars – Jesus is the light of heaven, it's so pure and bright and sparkling that you don't need a light on, and you wouldn't even need the sun to shine, because THE SON is shining in and through everything! Just when it couldn't get any better, verse 5 finishes with the best firework – all this we get to be part of, and enjoy.... FOREVER!!

#### Children's story in church

**You will need** – props from previous weeks, a simple picture you have painted of some scenery and a photo, power point slides of photos of river, tree, sun with the words BETTER appearing across the picture.

What to say	What to do
We are learning in Junior Church how to be children of light.	Props from last week...

<p>When we know and follow Jesus, we are changed into children of light <i>TAKE THIS SLOWLY!!</i> You see Jesus is the light of the world He shines his light into our darkness so we understand who he is</p> <p>He shines his light through us to the word around</p> <p>And he is the light we have to look forward to... heaven will be filled with the light of Jesus, it will be so bright! This week we are going to look at the words written down for us in the book of Revelation telling us what heaven is like.</p>	<p>Hold up torch with Jesus written on Shine torch onto face Shine light through heart</p> <p>Put sunglasses on</p>
<p>Who here likes painting?? Who here has done any painting, and I don't mean just painting a wall, I mean painting a picture of something or someone you think is ace Can you tell what this is?? It is a good painting, but the real thing is even better!</p>	<p>Hold up a painting you have done – e.g. of a mountain and a lake</p> <p>Show a photo of the real thing</p>
<p>John – one of Jesus disciples, who loved and followed him, he was shown pictures of what heaven was like, and he told us all about what he saw, not with a painting picture – because that wouldn't be enough, but with lots of word pictures that help us get an idea of what it is like.</p>	
<p>John tells us that heaven is a place where there is a beautiful clear sparkling river We know what rivers are like, they are pretty, fun to play in, bring us water down to the lakes so we can drink and have baths, rivers are fabulous! But the river in heaven, well the water is the water of life, and it doesn't come from the rain running down the hills, it comes from God's throne – it's better than the best river we can imagine</p>	<p>Show photo of a river</p> <p>WORD BETTER appears over the river pic</p>
<p>John tells us that in heaven there are trees – we know what trees look like, great for climbing, great for growing all kinds of fruit, some trees are used to make medicine – but John tells us trees in heaven are even better – the leaves of these trees can heal whole countries and nations full of people, and they don't just have fruit on once a year, they have enough to feed everyone – every month!</p>	<p>Show a picture of a tree</p> <p>Word – BETTER appears over the tree pic</p>
<p>John tells us that in heaven there is light – we have learned something about how good light is, showing us where to go, bringing energy and life, bringing colour and beauty – well guess what – light in heaven is even better – because it doesn't stop, it's light all of the time, there is no more night time, no more darkness, you won't need a torch, you won't need a lamp, you wouldn't even have to have the sun – because Jesus, the light is there – Jesus the shining son of God is on the throne of heaven</p>	<p>Show a picture of the sun</p> <p>Word – BETTER across the sun</p>
<p>Why will all these things be better in heaven?? <i>Take this slowly</i> Well because God is on the throne of heaven, He is the one that all good things come from, Coming out of His throne is the river of everything brilliant, pouring from him, and there is nothing stopping us knowing, loving and enjoying him FOREVER!</p>	<p>Show a picture of a throne Word – THE BEST across the throne</p>
<p>Heaven is so much better than everything we understand, it's all the great things, made greater still, because all darkness, all sin, is gone forever, and you know the best bit of heaven will be that we get to be with God, face to face, there is no more sin problem, we will be able to be super reflectors for Jesus all of the time!</p>	
<p>I can't paint you a picture of heaven, because it wouldn't be good enough, the word pictures John gives us help us understand that heaven is better than we can imagine! Knowing Jesus now, shining for Jesus now, means being with him one day in a bright and wonderful place</p>	<p>put sunglasses on</p>
<p>Sing</p>	<p>My lighthouse</p>

## **CRECHE**

### **Story Time**

Show children a picture of a tree, a river – talk about how lovely all of these things are, ask the children what places they like to go to, the woods, the beach, the park. These are all fabulous things that God made, and in heaven they will be even better! Show a picture of the sun – the sun brings us light, when the sun goes down, it is night time, but Heaven will be full of light you won't need a torch or even the sun because heaven is where God is so nothing that is dark can be there. If we know and follow Jesus, we will go to heaven one day.

### **Play Time**

Play with the children making a great land – use green towel for grass, a scarf for a river, fill with good things – toys, animals etc. talk about how heaven will be full of good things that are even better than what we see now, put a torch on a chair in the middle of the “land” to remind them that God is the best thing in heaven and he fills it with light all the time.

### **Make Time**

Make a sparkly castle – use an up turned paper cup, stick “ramparts” round the top, cover the outside with sparkly paper, tin foil, stick on gems, use a cocktail stick to make a little flag to stick in the top that says JESUS – use this to remind the children that Jesus is the one who changes us, and fills us with light, so we can go to and enjoy heaven one day.

## **JUNIOR CHURCH**

### **Game**

Play blind man's buff – child is blindfolded and has to touch / tag other children – use this to illustrate how much harder things are in the dark, by contrast, in heaven there will be no more struggling and no more darkness

OR – play a blindfold treasure hunt, children have to wear a blindfold, and then collect the treasure they can't see, don't let them see it before they have blindfolds on – i.e. put blindfolds on, then put chocolate coins on the mat – use to discuss that we can start to get an idea of what the heaven is like

## **INFANTS**

### **Teaching Time**

Show children a picture of a tree, a river – talk about how lovely all of these things are, ask the children what places they like to go to, the woods, the beach, the park. These are all fabulous things that God made, and in heaven they will be even better! Show a picture of the sun – the sun brings us light, when the sun goes down, it is night time, but Heaven will be full of light you won't need a torch or even the sun because heaven is where God is so nothing that is dark can be there. If we know and follow Jesus, we will go to heaven one day.

Ask the children how knowing that this is what God promises us will help us shine for him even when it's hard. Remind them that it can be difficult to shine for Jesus in a dark world, to stand out for Him means we will get noticed, for good, and for bad, but remembering all that waits for us one day, should help us keep going, and keep shining!

### **Discover and Do**

Either make individual castles – like crèche, or work together to decorate a large cardboard box castle – make it look as amazingly bright as you can, but chat to the children as you make it reminding them that heaven will be even better than any palace or castle we have ever seen, and it will last forever, the walls won't crumble, because no one will ever attack it, no problems will happen, because there will be no more sin.

## **JUNIORS**

### **Teaching Time**

Read through the passage and talk about the word pictures that John gives us, draw on a large piece of paper the shape of a river – thin at the top – wide at the bottom, ask the group to fill the river shape writing down with coloured markers the good things that God gives us, that we see and enjoy now.

Once the “river” is filled – draw a throne at the top write God and the Lamb on

Write the words – BETTER and FOREVER at the bottom

This is our own word picture to help us understand that all good things flow from God, that heaven will be full of His goodness, but it will be even better than what we know now, and will last forever.

### **Discuss and Act**

Talk about how remembering what God promises us in the future helps us live for Jesus now when it is tough.