

## LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

### JOY/GOYA Session

#### OBJECTIVE:

To children that Christ, the Light of the world, made them all with special gifts and talents. It is their job as Christians to find these talents and let them shine, reflecting the light of Christ.

#### PREPARATION:

- Read the verses of Matthew 5:14-19. Think about ways that you yourself allow you own light to shine. Be prepared to answer when group members may ask you to share.
- Have small **candles** ready, enough for each person in the group, including leaders. Also, have **matches** or a lighter handy, ready to light the candles when it is time to do so.
- \*OPTIONAL: Have one of these songs ready to play for children. For the bridge, either play it for the group, or pass out the lyrics. The song should be about being a "light in the world," allowing yourself to shine to others and not be dimmed down.
  - GOYA: Godspell, *You Are the Light of the World*; Newsboys, *Shine*; Hilary Duff, *Shine*; Rascal Flatts, *Shine On*; Collective Soul, *Shine*
  - JOY: *This Little Light of Mine*

#### OPENING PRAYER:

Lord, You are the light of the world. Let your light shine in our hearts. Amen.

#### ICE BREAKER:

In the event that the children in your group don't know each other well, ask them to simply go around the circle, sharing their names, ages, and favorite sport. Sharing their sport may be helpful for the later discussion.

#### SCRIPTURE:

Give each child a Bible and have them look up Matthew 5:14 – 19

*The Lord said to his disciples, "You are the light of world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say*

*to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."*

Give the group a few minutes to read it to themselves, then either ask for a volunteer to read it out loud, or read it out loud to the group yourself.

#### DISCUSS:

Break down the verse sentence by sentence to discuss what it really means. The discussion should focus on being a "light of the world" – sharing all the good that you have in you and ultimately living like Christ. Accept all answers and reflect back.

- What does it mean to be a "light"?
- Ask how we get this light? (*Given to us by God*)
- How can we strengthen it? (*going to church, receiving communion, reading the bible, praying, doing good works*)
- Does it ever go out? Completely? (*It may dim if we stray from Christ's path, but never completely goes out.*)
- How to be make it burn brighter? (*renewing our faith: communion, church, prayer, good works, etc*)

To summarize, being a "light of the world" means working our hardest to live like Jesus Christ did because he is the best example of a "light of the world"

- How do we share our lights with others?
- How can we let our light shine in our families, at school, with friends, with neighbors, at church, etc?

(If some children are having a hard time coming up with answers, refer back to their favorite sport and ask how they help out their teammates, coaches...etc.)

#### BRIDGE (Optional):

GOYA: Play the song (suggestions above) or pass out the lyrics to the group. If you have extra time, the song from the musical *Godspell* (*Light of the World*) can be really fun to teach a group and do as a small play or skit.

JOY: Play the song *This Little Light of Mine* OR pass out the lyrics. Most children have heard this song before and it can be a nice way for a younger group to remember the lesson and share it at home.

## ACTIVITY

Gather all the participants in a circle and give them each an unlit candle. Explain that it is simply, and unlit candle, doing nothing, producing nothing. Use the candle as a metaphor for their own "lights."

If you are able, turn the lights off so that the room is fairly dark. Light one person's candle and pass the light along. This is showing how they share their "lights." Explain that when the flame flickers, the wax melts, the smoke rises, and the area is illuminated – this represents us. When our "flames are lit," we shine for others. When the candle is not lit, it is useless. But when it is lit, as we should be LIT UP, it produces action. Our lights are better when shared with the world, giving inspiration, light, etc... to others.

## WRAP UP & CHALLENGE:

Have each child take their candles home with them and encourage them to use it as a reminder to be a "light of the world," just as Jesus is. Christ, as the Light of the World, is our source of light, and our "lights" should reflect Him. Challenge participants to care for their lights, making sure the flame stays bright and shining. Review once again the ways that they discussed to keep their lights shining, and challenge them to follow through with those activities.

## CLOSING PRAYER:

Christ our God, We are glad that we have You as a light to show us the way to heaven. Please let Your light shine brightly within us. Amen.