



Date: _____

Series: Advent
Winter Year 3, Lesson 32

God Changes Us When We Meet Jesus

Primary Scripture: John 8:12

Key Verse: John 8:12, "...He said, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will have a life filled with light and will never live in the dark.'"

How does this address a need in our kids' lives?

As we continue in the Christmas season, we remember kids are still focused on gifts and gift giving. Most of them have heard that Jesus was God's gift to the world that brings everlasting life. Kids need to know that God changes us when we trust Jesus as our Savior. His light shines in our lives and can even shine to others. Others can meet Jesus through the changes that God has brought about in us.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: Jesus came as God's gift. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus offers eternal life to us.

Jesus in us: Jesus coming into the world is true spiritual light. That light fills our lives, guiding us in God's truth.

Jesus through us: We, too, can become light to the world as Jesus will shine through us.

Stamp of Excellence:

Remind the kids what excellent worship looks like. We are in God's presence to honor him. Put on your best manners. This might include wearing your name tag, participating eagerly at all times, listening when the leader is talking, raising your hand to speak, not distracting others, playing the learning game with cooperation, singing enthusiastically, and praying reverently. Offer rewards or positive reinforcement to those who worship with excellence.



Worship

Invocation:

Let kids bring forward the worship symbols such as the cross, candles, Bible, and offering plate. Invite God's presence and call by name Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Attention Grabber:

Capture the children's attention and help them focus on the worship theme for the day.

"Jesus Is the Light of the World"

Supplies needed: candle and matches

Darken the room and then light a candle in front of you as you speak. Refer to the story of the wise men (Matthew 2:1-12).

Children, why do you think that God chose a star to lead the wise men to find Baby Jesus? It was almost like God pointed a super-sized flashlight from the sky to shine on Jesus. Maybe God was trying to tell us that his Son coming into the world would light this whole world up.

Let's read from the Bible. John 3:16 says, "God loved the world this way: He gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life."

The reason we give gifts during Christmas is to remember the greatest gift that God gave us. What is that gift? (Jesus, God's Son, who gives us eternal life.)

When God sent his Son into the world as a gift, he also said this in John 3:19, "The light came into the world."

Who is the light? Right, Jesus is the light. He says in John 8:12, “*I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will have a life filled with light and will never live in the dark.*”

Ask for a volunteer to come forward and hold the candle. Then say:

Does everyone see how we can now see his/her face more clearly as he/she holds the candle?

Speaking to the child:

Can you see more clearly? It is true. The closer you are to the light, the more clearly you can see things. This candle is a gift that helps you see things around you much more clearly.

Jesus came into the world as a gift. When you know him as your Savior and you follow him, you also see things more clearly. You see what is right to do and you want to do those things.

Do all people choose to receive this gift of light? The Bible tells us no. John 3:19, 20 says, “*The light came into the world. Yet, people loved the dark rather than the light because their actions were evil. People who do what is wrong hate the light and don’t come to the light. They don’t want their actions to be exposed.*”

This means that some people would rather keep doing evil things rather than come to God and receive Jesus and his gift of forgiveness. They are afraid that once they receive Jesus they would have to follow him. Then their evil actions would be exposed.

Let’s do one more thing with the candle. Everyone turn around and face away from the light. Do you see more darkness or more light? You see more darkness. You see what it is like for those people who do not want to come to Jesus and receive his gift of forgiveness and light. They would rather look away and see the darkness. They think God will not see the evil things they do or change them.

Turn around now and face the candle. When you are facing the light, it is like receiving God’s light into your life. As you trust Jesus and come closer to God by trusting him more every day, you receive more and more of his light in your life. This is just like walking closer to him.

Have the volunteer walk alongside you and the candle moving across the front.

God changes your life every day. As you trust Jesus, then you become like a light to the world.

Let's face the candle and think about things we need to tell God. We can trust in Jesus as our Savior to forgive us and change us to become more like him.

Songs of Worship:

Choose two or three songs. Briefly introduce songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God!

The Power of the Cross:

Jesus has given his life for us that we might have forgiveness and power to live for him.

Supplies needed: a baptismal candle

Refer to the baptismal candle and talk about words spoken at our baptism. Then say:

Just as Jesus came as a light in the world, *"In the same way let your light shine in front of people. Then they will see the good that you do and praise your Father in heaven."* (Matthew 5:16.)

Song of Response:

Choose a song to help the children turn to Jesus. Or, you may want to help them celebrate what God has done by singing a song of praise.

Offering:

Teach the importance of giving and talk about the mission activities they are supporting.

Place the offering basket by the candle. Ask the children to stop and think of one person they could be Jesus' light to. This person might need some extra love from them or some encouragement. Maybe there is someone who needs an invitation to church. Maybe they can tell this person how much God loves him/her.

Once the children can think of what they could do to share God's love, have them come and make a gesture of taking that thought from their heart and put it in the offering basket. As well, their regular financial gifts are received at this time.



The Word

Learning Game:

Some churches dismiss children from the adult service at this time to join Kids Church. The learning game provides a fun kinesthetic activity to help kids connect with each other. The learning point will help reinforce the theme of the day.

Supplies needed: cotton swabs, small containers or lids filled with lemon juice, clean 8 ½-inch x 11-inch sheet of paper, bowl of water

“Secret Message!”

Since we are talking about how God changes us when we meet Jesus, do the following science trick. Divide the children into six even groups. Give some cotton swabs and a small container or lid filled with lemon juice to each group.

Each group is given a secret message to write in lemon juice on a clean 8 ½-inch x 11-inch sheet of paper. The messages are as follows:

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Give the groups two minutes to draw their pictures with lemon juice. Any child who was not able to participate in the drawing should be asked to bring his group's paper forward to the large group presenter.

After a representative of each group is gathered, the presenter holds the paper close to the candle to discolor the paper and reveal the secret code written upon it. Be careful! Have a bowl of water ready in case the paper catches on fire.

Have the kids guess what the secret message says. The secret message is John 3:16.

Just like the light changed the paper and left a message, so God changes our lives when we receive the gift of Jesus. We become his message to the world.

Bible Presentation:

Help children pay attention by giving them a word or concept to listen for as you read. Consider letting a child read who could do so with excellence.

Read John 8:12:

“...He said, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will have a life filled with light and will never live in the dark.’”

Application:

The application of this theme is seen in the movie *McGee and Me: The Fight Before Christmas*.



Witness and Tell:

Give children opportunities to share how God is working in their lives. It is best to use a microphone to ask children interview questions around the theme for the day.

Have kids tell about someone who shines like a light to the world for Jesus. Have them give examples of what they do to shine.

Have kids tell how they want to shine like a light for Jesus.

Prayer:

Let the kids pray out loud. If you are using a microphone, invite children to form a prayer line and speak their thanksgivings or requests. If you have portable microphones, you can roam the audience. Kids can also go to prayer stations set up for specific types of prayer.

Blessing:

Speak a blessing prayer over the children. Personalize this to your setting. Use a special scripture verse or blessing around the theme of the day.

Song of Sending:

Choose one song. Briefly introduce song so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God.

Supplies:

Attention Grabber:

- candle

Baptismal Renewal:

- baptismal candle

Learning Game:

- cotton swabs
- small containers or lids filled with lemon juice
- clean 8 ½-inch x 11-inch sheet of paper
- bowl of water

Bible Presentation:

- the video McGee and Me: *The Fight Before Christmas* –order from <http://www.family.org/resources/itempg.cfm?itemid=633>

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