



WEEK ONE – SEPTEMBER 2024 – PRETEEN

Bible Story: *Lights Up | Matthew 5:14-16*

Key Question: *How can you be a light?*

Memory Verse: *“Let your light shine so others can see it. Then they will see the good things you do. And they will bring glory to your Father who is in heaven.”. – Matt. 5:14-16 (NIV)*

Virtue: *Compassion – Caring enough to do something about someone else’s needs*

Basic Truth: *I should treat others the way I want to be treated*

Series Overview: Think back to a time when someone made time for you. No matter what it is, when people make time for us, it can bring us joy. It’s like a light shining on a dark day. Caring for one another isn’t always the easy thing to do, but it certainly is what Jesus asks of us. When Jesus gave the command in Matthew 5 to let our light shine, it wasn’t just to bring joy into each other’s lives, but also to bring glory to God. We are reflections of Who God is, and as we “Live Bright” this month, we’ll discover exactly how we can shine God’s light.

Bottom Line: How can you be a light? There are so many different types of light—from the sun, to a flashlight, to a candle, and so many more! Each kind of source functions in a different way, but its purpose is the same: to bring light into someone’s world. We hope this question gives preteens a chance to hold great conversations about what it means to shine God’s light—not just at home, but everywhere they go.

9:05 - 9:20 | 11:05 – 11:20 | EARLY ARRIVERS ACTIVITY

Opening Small Group Activity

Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

What You Need: Cups; Ball

What You Do:

- Welcome kids by name as they arrive with a fist bump or high five
- Invite everyone to gather around in a circle.
- Set out the cups (facedown) in the middle.
- Ask kids to watch as you place the bouncy ball underneath one of the cups.
- Explain that you are going to mix the cups around, keeping the ball hidden under one.
- Tell kids they should try to keep track of the cup that is hiding the ball.
- Mix the cups around to make it challenging for kids to follow the one with the ball.
- Invite kids to guess which cup the ball is under.
- Reveal the ball and congratulate those who guessed correctly.
- Play again, allowing a kid to mix the cups around.

What You Say:

“It was challenging to know where the ball was when it was hidden underneath the cup, wasn’t it? *[Transition]* Today, in Large Group, we’re going to hear about something we should not keep hidden. Let’s go check it out now!”

9:20 - 9:50 | 11:20 – 11:50 | LARGE GROUP

Large Group Overview: We start the month in Matthew 5:14-16 with the Sermon on the Mount. In this passage, Jesus announced to the crowd, “You are the light of

the world.” Each of us can shine God’s light to the world around us. When we shine our light by living God’s way, we bring glory to God and show people what God is like.

9:50 – 10:10 | 11:50 – 12:10 | SMALL GROUP

Discussion Questions

[Talk About God | Bible Story Review]

Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: N/A

What You Do:

- Ask:
 - Who do you know that needs light in their life?
 - How can you be a light?
 - Do you ever want to hide your light?
 - What can sometimes stand in your way of shining?
 - Do we have to be perfect to shine God’s light

Verses to Take With You

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Need: Bibles, “Verse Lights” Activity Page, “Verse Lights Key” Activity Page, string, die, hole punches

What You Do:

- Divide the group into two teams and ask each team to line up on one side of your group space.
- Place a set of the prepared “Verse Lights” Activity Page across from each team, on the other side of your group space.
- Give each team a Bible.
- Ask each team to work together to look up Matthew 5:16 using the Bible Navigation Tips below:
 - ***Finding verses with 4th-5th graders:*** Our verse is from Matthew. Ask kids to tell you whether that’s in the Old Testament or the New Testament. (*New*) So we know it’s toward the back of the Bible. It’s the first of the four gospels (*Matthew, Mark, Luke and John*). When they find Matthew, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Tell them to find chapter 5. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Tell them to them find verse 16 in chapter 5.
- Ask for a volunteer to read Matthew 5:16 out loud for the entire group.
- Give each team a piece of string, a “Verse Lights Key” Activity Page, a hole punch, and a dice.
- Explain that teams will work together to collect a set of light bulbs across from their team.
 - The first kid from each team’s line will roll their dice, then check their “Verse Lights Key” Activity Page to see what color light bulb they should retrieve from their team’s pile.
 - Next, have kids run to their team’s set of light bulbs, find one in that color, and return to the back of their team’s line so the next kid in line can do the same.
- Direct each team to repeat this until they have gathered all their light bulbs.
 - Kids may need to keep re-rolling to retrieve the remaining colors they need.
- Once a team has gathered their entire set of bulbs, instruct them to work together to punch holes in each light bulb and string them together in verse order (referencing their Bibles as needed).
- The first team to correctly string their lights is the winning team!
- Ask:

- Who loves looking at lights at Christmas time?
- What do you love about looking at lights?
- Why do you think most of us are drawn to light?
- Hold a discussion about light.
 - Explain that we are naturally drawn to light because it provides us with warmth, comfort, safety, and energy! Plus, lights are usually pretty to gaze at when they're on display like during the holidays. Because we are attracted to light, people tend to notice when we shine God's light! They will see our good deeds and bring glory to God!
- Lead the group in a prayer, allowing each kid to say one way they want to ask God to help them shine this week.