



# You Are Salt and Light

**Goal:** To follow Jesus' call to be salt and light in the world.

## RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

### . . . In Matthew 5:13–20

Christians receive new life in Jesus Christ. We are disciples of Jesus, following his word and will. As forgiven by God, we have a new quality of life. This is by God's grace. We live our gratitude for our new life through what we do as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Jesus used two images to indicate ways the community of his followers contributes to life and proclaims God's grace with gratitude.

We are “the salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13). Salt adds distinctiveness, zest, and a deepening of flavor to food. So Christ's community, the church, has a distinctive calling in the world. It provides significance to life, reminding the world that living by God's grace brings true “flavor” to life.

We are “the light of the world” (v. 14). Jesus himself is “the light of the world” (John 8:12). But the church community reflects the light of Jesus, witnesses to Jesus, and brings the will and wisdom of Jesus Christ through living by grateful faith.

We are to let our light “shine before others” (Matthew 5:16). When they see what we do in service to Christ, they will give glory to God. Salt and light express grace and gratitude.

### . . . In Your Children's Experiences

Play 60 is a program in schools and communities to help kids remember to be physically active at least 60 minutes a day. Children are healthier and happier when they respond to this challenge. Perhaps the church can offer the challenge of “Salt and Light 24.” Help children know that they are surrounded by friends of all ages at church who can help them find ways to be salt and light at home, at school, and in their neighborhoods, doing one salt and/or light action each day of the week.

### . . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Children are probably familiar with the salt shaker that sits on tables at home and in restaurants. Though they may not use it themselves, they probably know that it adds flavor to food. They may not know about the other uses of salt described in the story—how in the ancient world salt was used in preserving food and in cleaning. You can help children see how valuable salt was and why Jesus would use it as an example. Help children name the ways they are salt, ways they can make the world a better place.

*Thank you, O God, for sending Jesus to teach me  
how to be light and salt in the world. Amen.*



## Supplies

### Music & Melodies

[bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies](http://bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies)

### Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 10, 24, 25

basic supplies  
(see p. vii)

audio stories (optional)  
(see p. vii)

internet-connected  
device

green cloth

candle

mountain mural from  
last session

small bowl of water

flashlight

bowl of salted pretzels

bowl of unsalted  
crackers such as  
unsalted saltines or  
matzo crackers

basket (big enough to  
cover the flashlight)

## Responding

### Claiming

flashlight, three mirrors

### Celebrating

flashlight

### Extra

card-stock copy of  
**Grace Notes (GN) 1**, salt

## GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Post **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule,” to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii–iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG** **T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

“Claiming God’s Grace” and “Extra Activity” require more prep.

### Welcoming and Preparing

**A** **B** **M** **L** **FA**

Play “This Little Light of Mine”—**SCM 25**—as children arrive.

Welcome each child with, “Grace and peace be with you, (Name).”

Prompt the response, “And also with you.”

Invite the children to help set the scene. Provide a green cloth, a small bowl of water, a flashlight, a bowl of salted pretzels, a bowl of unsalted crackers, a basket, a Bible, and a candle. Hang the mountain mural from last session in the worship space.

Invite the children to try a cracker. Don’t mention that it is unsalted. Ask for their opinion of the taste of the cracker.

Darken the room and ask for a volunteer to read something or find something. Ask the children what would help that person. Turn the lights back on.

Ask some children to help prepare today’s “Responding in Gratitude” activities. Suggest that one or two prepare to lead today’s singing.

### Singing

**A**

Play “This Little Light of Mine”—**SCM 25**—as the children listen. Help the children sing with confidence. If they would rather rap the stanza, let them lead.

### Praying

**L**

Turn on the candle as a reminder of Jesus, the light of the world. Take time to show gratitude for God’s gifts. After each line, prompt the children to respond, “We thank you, God.”

For shining light into the world,

**we thank you, God.**

For the gifts you give us,

**we thank you, God.**

For grace and peace,

**we thank you, God.**

For showing us how to live in your way,

**we thank you, God.**

**Amen.**

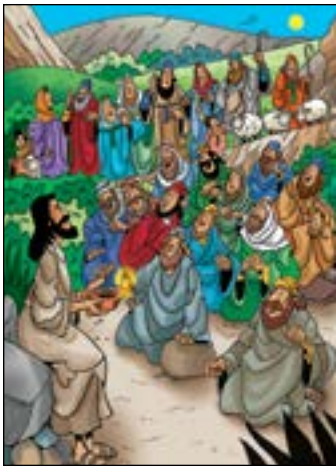


### Preparing to Hear the Story

Draw children's attention to the objects on the table. Ask them to name other sources of light besides the flashlight. Wonder together what the benefits of light are.

Point out the salted pretzels. Ask children why salt is important (*for preserving food, to add flavor*). Point out that salt is used in many recipes to give flavor.

Explain that, in today's story, Jesus talks about salt and light.



Today's story can be found in *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible*, edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim (Louisville, KY: Flyaway Books, 2018), [www.pcusastore.com](http://www.pcusastore.com).

### Hearing the Story

FA L

Invite a child to find Matthew 5 in the Bible. Place the open Bible on the worship table. Read **SCM 10** or listen to the story audio. Conclude the reading by saying, "Word of wisdom, Word of grace," and prompt the children to say, "Thanks be to God."

Read the story again.

- ▼ When you get to the part where Jesus talks about salt, pause and have a volunteer give everyone a salted pretzel to taste.
- ▼ When you read the part where Jesus says, "You are the light of the world," pause, turn on the flashlight, and point it to each person, being careful not to shine it in children's eyes.
- ▼ When you read the part where Jesus talks about putting a light under a basket, pause and put the flashlight under the basket.
- ▼ When Jesus says, "Let your light shine," pause and remove the basket. Cast the beam of light around the room.

**C** *For some children, listening and speaking may take longer. Allow time for these children to feel truly a part of the session. Be patient and encourage other children to do the same.*

### Reflecting on God's Grace

C

Invite children to share any wondering questions they have about the story, such as:

- ▼ I wonder, "What do you think Jesus meant when he said we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world?"
- ▼ I wonder, "What is the light you have that Jesus talks about?"
- ▼ I wonder, "Why might people prefer to hide their light?"
- ▼ I wonder, "How can we be like salt and light in the world?"

### Singing

Give God an offering of music. Play rhythm instruments and sing "I Am the Salt of the Earth"—**SCM 24**.

Turn off the candle.



## RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and for the time available.



A flashlight with a strong beam will work best for this activity.

Be sensitive to children who may be afraid of the dark, and reassure them they are safe.

### Claiming God's Grace

MS M

Turn off or dim the lights in the room. Give a mirror to one person. Ask him or her to hold the mirror chest high. Shine your flashlight on the mirror and point out the reflected light beam.

Send another person to stand in the place where the light beam is reflected. Ask that person to position a mirror to send the reflected light to another place in the room.

Position a third person in the room to catch and reflect the light beam someplace else. Invite other children to try.

Wonder together how you are all like mirrors, reflecting Jesus' light. Ask them what they might do to reflect the light they receive from Jesus.

**SD** *Sensory issues may affect one sense, like hearing, touch, or taste, or may affect a number of senses. For some children, darkness may be overwhelming. Help these children feel more comfortable by providing advance warning. Putting them in charge of the challenging situations, such as turning the lights on and off, allows them a sense of control and time to process the stimuli.*

### Celebrating God's Grace

A SD

Invite children to sit in a circle with you. Explain the game:

- ▼ The person on your left is "salt."
- ▼ The person on your right is "light."
- ▼ The person who is "It" will stand in the center of the circle, shine the flashlight on a person's feet, and say either, "You are the salt of the earth—one, two, three, four, five"; or "You are the light of the world—one, two, three, four, five."
- ▼ The person in the light must call out the name of the correct person (salt on the left or light on the right) before "It" reaches five.
- ▼ If the person says the correct name, he or she becomes the new "It."
- ▼ If not, "It" shines the light on a different person.

Play the game several times. Wonder together what Jesus expects us to do when he calls us "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world." Ask the children to give examples of when they have been "salt" or "light," or how they might be so in the future.



### Praying God's Grace

M C

Comment that Jesus' friends practice being salt and light by praying for God's blessing on other people.

Invite the children to sit and relax. Then ask them to close their eyes and, in silence, breathe in through their nose and breathe out through their mouth, trying to relax even more. While doing this, ask them to think about people in their lives to whom they want to be a blessing of light and salt. Ask them to smile every time they think about someone, taking time to feel how their cheeks go up and their face changes. Remark how being salt and light gives us the chance to be joyful.

When enough time has passed, join for a time of prayer, having each child who wants to mention whom she or he thought about, and then praying that God's blessing is upon the person.



### Extra Activity

C

Recall with the children that Jesus wants us to be salt and light. Hand out card-stock copies of **GN 1**. Invite the children to use watercolor or tempera paints. Have them paint the salt shaker first. Encourage them to paint with more water than dry paint. Give them salt to sprinkle on the wet paint and watch what happens.

Then suggest they use yellow paint to color the light bulb, again with watery paint. Give each child a straw and tell them to blow on the yellow paint, spreading it outward like beams of light. Set aside to dry.

Have the children bring home their paintings and share the story of how Jesus wants us to be like salt and light.

## LOVING AND SERVING GOD

Ask the children to help clean the space.

Ask each person to name one way to be salt to others or to be a light to the world at home, at school, or in their neighborhood.

Play rhythm instruments and sing "I Am the Salt of the Earth"—**SCM 24**. Encourage the children to move to the music.

Say to each child: "(Name), you are the salt of the earth and a light to the world. Go and brighten the place where you are."

Remind the children about the free e-book and challenge them to read the story during the week.

Keep the mountain mural for use in the next three sessions.



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so that you can provide them with the link to [www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads](http://www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads), where they can download coloring pages, *Grace Sightings*, audio stories, and songs (see p. vii).



# Jesus says: Be like

