



You Are Salt and Light

(based on Matthew 5:13–20)

Jesus was walking from town to town, from region to region. Many people—men and women, boys and girls—followed Jesus, hoping to hear his teachings and maybe witness a miracle.

When Jesus saw the crowds of people, he went up a mountain. He sat down with his friends and began to speak about God’s blessings. The disciples knew that when a teacher like Jesus sat down, he was going to say important things. So the disciples became quiet, eager to hear what else he had to say. His words were like nothing they’d ever heard before. He said:

“You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world.”

Jesus paused and looked at them and studied the faces of the disciples. He wondered if they understood what he meant.

The disciples looked at each other with questions—“What does that mean?” “How can we be salt and light?”

Peter said to no one in particular, “Salt makes food taste good. And it stops food from going bad.”

“That’s right,” said Jesus. “Salt makes our lives better. Without salt, our life would be a lot harder. When you live in God’s way of kindness and love, you make life better for other people and yourselves.”

“And light,” said Peter, “light makes our lives better by shining in the dark, lighting a path so that we don’t stumble in the night.”

“You are right again, Peter. Light helps us see.” Wonderful, Jesus thought. He gets it.

“Good job, Peter” said Jesus. “When you light a lamp, you don’t cover it with a basket. No, you put the lamp where it will give light to every corner of the room.”

“Just like that lamp, let your light, God’s light, shine brightly so that everyone can see it. Then they will know what good things God has done and they can tell others.”

This brought smiles to the faces of the disciples. And Jesus continued, “God’s law is still important. Pay attention to it, and you will be called great in God’s world.”

The disciples realized that if they lived in God’s ways of love they made the world a better place just like salt. And light.

Soon it was time to go home.

“Don’t forget to be salt and light,” they said to each other, smiling.

They were ready to make the world a better place.



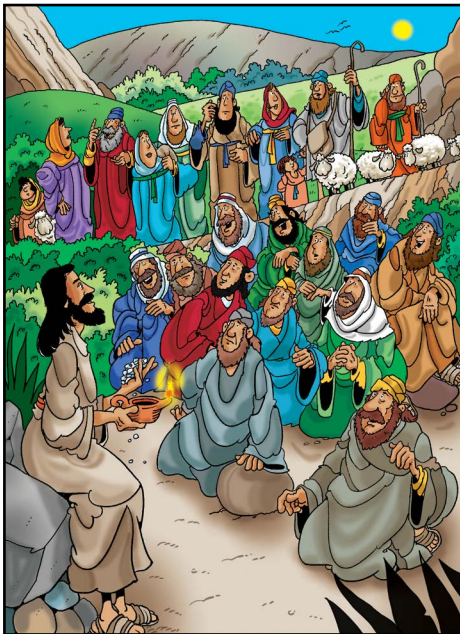
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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- Wonder together: What did Jesus mean when he said that we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world? How can we let our light shine? How can we make a difference to others?
- Name sources of light. Why is it important for us to have light?
- Set out a bowl of salted pretzels. Eat some and ask why salt is so important (for preserving food, for adding flavor). Point out that salt is used in many recipes to give flavor.



Responding to God's Grace

- Draw a picture of a time when you did something “salty” that made a positive difference in your church, school, or community.
- Draw a picture of a time when you let your light shine by sharing your talents with others.
- Print the text of the following verses from the Bible on separate index cards: Matthew 5:13; 5:14; 5:15; 5:16. Give an index card to each person and encourage her or him to learn the verse by heart. Have family members take turns saying their verses aloud. Wonder how memorizing helped them to understand the passage.
- Recall that Jesus compared people who followed God's way to the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Ask: “If Jesus were alive today, how might he describe his followers?”

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Have family worship:
Light a white candle and read John 8:12.

Invite each family member to offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the gift of Jesus, the Messiah.

Sing together “This Little Light of Mine”:

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. (3x)
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.