

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD LEADER'S NOTES

SECTION I.

In many religions and in ceremonies connected with those religions, light such as fire, lamps and candles, is important. The summer and winter solstices are times of celebration in many present day cultures, as well as in many ancient cultures. Some internationals may not have thought specifically about any special meaning for light in their cultures, but with time may identify some meanings.

In American culture light and dark, white and black, are very clearly attached to good and bad. Think of the old western movies. The *good guy* rode a white horse and had a white hat, the *bad guy* wore black. Witches wear black clothing, and saints are depicted with shining orbs of white light around their heads. Angels appear in dazzling white clothing.

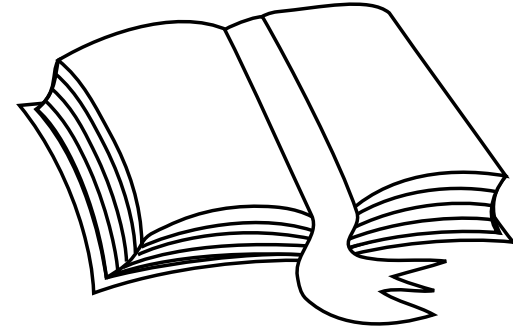
In many countries, such as India for example, light skin is more highly prized than dark skin. They have whitening creams to lighten their skin. Think of the old name for African Americans, *blacks*. It was considered derogatory, because the African American was a slave.

SECTION II.

The Bible says that without God we live in *darkness*. We are sinful people. Note that the Proverbs verse also says that people stumbled around. Even evil people do not usually choose to stumble around. The implication is most likely that they are ignorant as well as evil.

SECTION IV.

Many different people in different ages believed they were spiritually *enlightened*. We must be aware that people from other cultures may think that they and their cultures are already enlightened. You might explore the difference between *being enlightened* and being the light. Buddha was enlightened, but he never claimed to BE the light.



THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

SECTION I. Introduction

- A. In your culture, does light have any special meaning?
- B. Do you have any special holidays, folk stories or religious ceremonies which talk about the idea of light and darkness? Explain.

SECTION II. The Bible often speaks about light, and the opposite of light, darkness. In the creation story we read about it. Read Genesis 1:3-5.

- A. What did God create the first day? What did He say about it?
- B. How is *light* good in our lives? (either physical or spiritual light)
- C. In what ways might *darkness* be bad for us?

SECTION III. Now read Proverbs 4:19.

A. How does this verse describe the connection between darkness and wicked?

located

in a certain place

B. The people are described as evil. What else does it say about the people?

lamp stand

object to set a light on

SECTION IV. Read John 3:20.

A. Do you agree with the connection this writer makes between evil deeds and darkness? Why?

B. If people are in darkness, does that mean that they are always intentionally wicked? Why?

SECTION V. God's people in Old Testament times, the Israelites, spent 40 years in the desert. The Bible says that God was always with them. Read Exodus 13:21-22.

A. Describe how the people knew God was there.

B. While they were making God's presence known, how do you think the cloud and the fire may have helped the Israelites?

C. Do you think God makes himself known to us in our lives today? If so, how?

SECTION VI. Many years after the time in the desert when God's presence was visible, God made a promise to the Israelites through the prophet Isaiah. Read Isaiah 9:2 and describe the promise.

glory honor and praise

Psalm 119:105

lamp to cause something to become bright

path a road or track

Psalm 119:130

gullible easily deceived or tricked

Romans 13:12-14

decently socially acceptable

get rid of to throw away or discard, stop doing

sexual immorality doing sinful things that are sexual in nature

promiscuity having sexual intercourse with many different people

rivalry the act of competing with someone else for something, such as honor, money, etc., with the desire to win it from the other person

jealousy envy or desire for what does not belong to you

sinful nature the part of humans that is sinful

Matthew 5:14-16

hidden to keep out of sight

SECTION VII. When God decided it was the right time, He kept His promise to send a light for the people who walked in darkness.

A. Read John 8:12 and John 12:44-46.

1. What does Jesus say that He is?

2. Why has He come?

3. What does Jesus say we must do to walk in the light?

B. In our present lives in the twenty-first century, where do we get spiritual light?

1. Read 2 Corinthians 4:6. Who is responsible for the light in our lives?

2. Read Psalm 119:105 and 130. Where do we find that light?

C. When we really have *light* in our lives, what are the results?

1. Read Romans 13:12-14.

2. Read Matthew 5:14-16.

3. Read Acts 13:47.

D. What are some things in your life which have kept you from the light or helped you to come more fully into Jesus' *light*?

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD VOCABULARY

Genesis 1:3-5

separate to move apart

Proverbs 4:19

wicked evil, very bad

stumble to walk unsteadily, to trip while walking

John 3:20

expose to make something visible or to make it known

Exodus 13:21-22

a column of smoke smoke which looks as if it is rising straight up like a pillar (a slender, vertical support for a building)

Isaiah 9:2

shine to give light

shadow no direct light

John 8:12

Pharisee a Jewish leader who emphasized strict obedience to the law

2 Corinthians 4:6

servant a person who is paid to work in another person's house