

Let every living thing praise the LORD! Praise the LORD! (Psalm 150:6)

## **Salt and Light – Matthew 5:13-16**

### **Prepare to Wonder**

#### **Faith Word: PRAISE**

This week's Scripture comes from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew 5–7. These chapters are some of Jesus' core teachings and have been studied by many scholars trying to understand better what a life following Jesus should look like.

Jesus begins his teachings on the mount with what has come to be known as the Beatitudes. Right after these verses comes today's passage often referred to as "Salt and Light." Matthew 5:13-16 can be broken into two parts—5:13 and 5:14-16. Verse 5:13 is about salt and verses 5:14-16 are about light.

Salt is a chemical compound of sodium and chloride, and is an extremely stable compound. That means it's very hard to break down and salt cannot lose its flavor. The only way something can lose its saltiness is by being mixed with so many other things that its saltiness is hidden. Salt can only be salt. If salt has been compromised so much that it is no longer salty, it is no longer salt. Jesus is trying to remind his followers that we are to live a life of authenticity and to not lose what makes us unique.

Light helps us see. We don't really see light, we see what light shows us. Jesus is encouraging the followers to live a life that shows others his love. Jesus encourages the followers to shine bright for all to see.

#### **Spiritual Practice for Adults**

Find some time to praise God through writing. Here is a writing prompt: what makes you who you are? What about you is unique?

# Come Together

## Come Together

**Supplies:** *Class Pack, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Wonder Box, green cloth, battery-operated candle, flashlight*

**Prepare Ahead:** *Set up a Wonder Table (see p. 3) with a green cloth, battery-operated candle, and a Wonder Box (see p. 3). Display the Unit 2 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 12 & 13) and Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4). Place the flashlight inside the Wonder Box.*

- Point to the Unit 2 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4), and invite the children to wonder about what the word *praise* means.
- Invite the kids to join you in a circle.

**SAY:** This month we will hear stories about praising God. This week we will read a teaching of Jesus called, “Salt and Light.”

**WONDER:** What do you think salt and light have to do with praising God?

- In this curriculum, we recommend reading stories from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Allow an elementary-age child to read the story, “Salt and Light” (pp. 148–149) from the storybook.

**PRAY:** Dear God, we are so grateful for you and all of our blessings. Amen.

## Salt and Light – Preschool

**Supplies:** *Reproducible Kids’ Book, crayons*

**Prepare Ahead:** *Photocopy “Salt and Light” (Reproducible 9A) for each child.*

- Invite the preschoolers to use crayons to color the picture.

**SAY:** Jesus told a story about salt and light. He wanted to teach people how special they are and to encourage them to share that specialness with the whole world!

**ASK:** What makes you special?

## Word Search – Younger Elementary

**Supplies:** *Reproducible Kids’ Book, crayons*

**Prepare:** *Photocopy “Word Search” (Reproducible 9B) for each child.*

- Hand out a copy of “Word Search” to each child.

**SAY:** We heard lots of great stories about praise this month. Praise is the many ways we say thank you to God.

**ASK:** Which story was your favorite?

- Invite the kids to find and circle the words listed in the work bank.

## Crossword – Older Elementary

*Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, pens or pencils*

*Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Crossword" (Reproducible 9C) for each child.*

- Hand out a copy of "Crossword" to each child.

**SAY:** We heard lots of great stories about praise this month. Praise is the many ways we say thank you to God.

**ASK:** Which story was your favorite?

- Invite the kids to solve the puzzle.

## July Stars and Constellations – All Ages

*Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book*

*Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "July Stars and Constellations" (Reproducible 9D) for each child.*

- Hand out copies of Reproducible 9D.
- Invite the kids to look over the stars, constellations, and star pictures on the page.

**ASK:** Do you recognize any of the star pictures on the page?

- Invite the kids to share any star pictures they recognize. This sheet shows the same stars and constellations that we saw in May. Use this opportunity to see if any kids in your class have tried to find star pictures in the sky.

**SAY:** This fall, we began looking at the night sky to see star pictures. If you are having trouble finding these shapes, here's a tip.

- Point to Orion on the star chart.

**SAY:** Orion is the figure of a man. His belt has three bright stars that are pretty easy to find in the winter sky. If you can find the belt, you might be able to find some of the other stars and constellations on the sheet.

- Invite the kids to take the sheets home and look at the sky.

# Wonder Time

## Interactive Bible Story

*Supplies:* Reproducible Kids' Book

*Prepare Ahead:* Photocopy "Salt and Light" (Reproducible 9F) for each child.

- Invite several readers to take turns reading the story one section at a time.

**WONDER:** What things make you who you are?

## Share a Story

*Supplies:* Celebrate Wonder DVD, TV, DVD player

- Invite the children to join you and to sit in a circle on the floor.
- Watch the Session 9 video (Celebrate Wonder DVD).

## Wonder with Me

*Supplies:* Class Pack, Wonder Box, scissors

*Prepare Ahead:* Lay out the Wonder Story Mat for Unit 2 (Class Pack—pp. 8 & 17).

*Cut out the Bible story figures (Class Pack—p. 19).*

- Place the Wonder Box on the Unit 2 Wonder Story Mat.
- Show the children the Unit 2 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4).

**SAY:** Today's faith word is *praise*. Praise is one of the many ways we thank God.

- Show the children this week's figure—a writer.

**WONDER** together:

- Why did Jesus talk about salt instead of something else?
- What are you thankful for?
- What is your favorite way to praise God?
- Place the figure on the Wonder Story Mat.
- Open the Wonder Box to reveal the flashlight.

**WONDER:** Why do you think a flashlight is in the Wonder Box this week?

# Experience Wonder

## Charades

**Supplies:** *Reproducible Kids' Book, scissors, bowl*

**Prepare Ahead:** *Photocopy "Charades" (Reproducible 9E) and cut out the twelve cards. Place the cards in a bowl*

**SAY:** We heard lots of great stories about praise this month. Praise is one of the many ways we say thank you to God.

**ASK:** Which story was your favorite?

**SAY:** We're going to take turns acting out the different ways we can praise God and guessing what type of praise it is.

- Invite one kid to draw a card from the bowl.
- Encourage the kid to act out that type of praise.
- Invite the other kids to guess what type of praise it is.
- Whoever guesses correctly gets to act out the next card.
- Continue playing in this way until your group has gone through all twelve cards.

**ASK:** What is your favorite way to praise God?

## Examine the Bible Verse

**SAY:** Our Unit 2 Bible verse is Psalm 150:6. Find it in your Bibles.

**ASK:** Is Psalms in the Old or New Testament? (*Old*) Where is the Book of Psalms located in the Old Testament? (*nineteenth book, almost exactly in the center of the Bible*) In what chapter of Psalms is our verse located? (*150*) What is the verse number? (*6*)

**SAY:** Our Bible verse is all about praising God!

**ASK:** What's your favorite way to praise God?

- Gather the kids around the Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 12 & 13).  
Read it together.

## Peaceful Place

*Supplies:* Leader Guide—p. 114, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, book: Llama Llama Gives Thanks, by Anna Dewdney; paper; crayons or markers

*Prepare Ahead:* Photocopy the Unit 2 Faith Word coloring sheet (Leader Guide—p. 114) for each child.

- Assist the children, as needed, as they interact with the items provided.
- Invite the children to draw a self-portrait.
- Have each child color the Faith Word coloring sheet.

*Tip:* All of the supplies/activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional.

## Go in Peace

### Spiritual Practice – Exploring Praise Through Worship.

**SAY:** A spiritual practice is something we do to help us be present with God. A spiritual practice can be anything because you can be with God any time, anywhere, and any way! This month we are going to praise God through gratitude.

- Guide the children through a spiritual practice:
  - **SAY:** We're going to think about five things we're grateful for. You'll close your eyes and I will say a place. You will think of something you are thankful for at that place.
  - **SAY:** Get comfortable and close your eyes.
  - **SAY:** At home, I am grateful for...
  - **SAY:** At school, I am grateful for...
  - **SAY:** In nature, I am grateful for...
  - **SAY:** At church, I am grateful for...
  - **SAY:** At the park, I am grateful for...

**SAY:** We can praise God for all of the things we are grateful for.

**ASK:** Would any of you like to share what you are grateful for?

**PRAY:** Repeat after me: "God, thank you for our many blessings. Help us always be ready to praise you. Amen."

- Bless the children before they leave. Touch each child on the hand as you say this blessing: "May you feel God's love all around you every day."

## Family Spiritual Practice

*Supplies:* Reproducible Kids' Book; Leader Guide—pp. 111, 112

*Prepare Ahead:* Photocopy "Celebration Chart" (p. 111) and "Family Letter" (p. 112) for each child.

**SAY:** Let's take a look at your Take-Home Pages (Reproducibles 9F–9G). Ask your family to read the Bible story and participate in this week's spiritual devotion with you. There's an extra activity for you to do sometime this week.

- Send home a copy of the Take-Home Pages, a copy of the Family Letter, and a copy of the Celebration Chart with each child.

## Supplemental Activities

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### Preschoolers – This Little Light of Mine

**SAY:** Let's sing a song to help us remember our story from today!

- Invite the kids to sing with you.

**SING:** This little light of mine

I'm going to let it shine

This little light of mine

I'm going to let it shine

This little light of mine

I'm going to let it shine

Let it shine, all the time, let it shine

**ALL** around the neighborhood

I'm going to let it shine

All around the neighborhood

I'm going to let it shine

All around the neighborhood

I'm going to let it shine

Let it shine, all the time, let it shine.

**HIDE** it under a bushel? No!

I'm going to let it shine

Hide it under a bushel? No!

I'm going to let it shine

Hide it under a bushel? No!

I'm going to let it shine

Let it shine, all the time, let it shine.

## Early Elementary and Older Elementary– Flashlight Tag

*Supplies: flashlights, dim space*

**SAY:** Jesus wants us to shine our light! Let's play flashlight tag to help us remember this teaching of Jesus.

- Choose one child to be it and give that child a flashlight.
- It will close their eyes and count to 15. While they count, the rest of the group will find hiding spots.
- When it reaches 15, they will seek the hiders and tag them with the light of the flashlight.
- When a new child has been tagged, they become it and take the flashlight and goes to find other kids while the original it goes to hide.
- Continue playing until you are ready to move on.

## Intergenerational Activity – Thank-You Cards

*Supplies: scrapbook paper, card stock, pens or pencils, stickers, markers or crayons, scissors*

**SAY:** This month we've talked a lot about praise and gratitude.

**ASK:** What are you thankful for?

**ASK:** Who are you thankful for?

**SAY:** We're going to make beautiful cards for someone we are thankful for.

- Invite the participants to make thank-you cards using the supplies provided.
- Encourage the participants to give or mail their cards to the people they are thankful for.

**PRAY:** Dear God, thank you for our blessings. Amen.