

SMALL GROUP LESSON

A Tale of False Opposites



Lesson Aim

Light stands by itself, without a contrasting darkness, offering awe and wonder to the observant. By housing the light of the world, we can offer the true spiritual solution to our own dark world.

Preparation Necessary

From the internet, connect to a video (or two) of the aurora borealis to show your group; and print off some color pictures of the aurora borealis.

Scripture Text

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven (Matthew 5:14-16)

Additional Scriptures (if necessary)

In II Corinthians 4:6, Paul told us, For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

In John (John 12:35-36), Jesus told his disciples, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

INTRODUCTION

If you have access to wireless, go to YouTube and share a video of the Aurora Borealis. Otherwise, try to print off some color pictures of the Aurora Borealis from the internet.

The Aurora Borealis or the Northern Lights is often seen over the North Pole (and sometimes over the South Pole), where charged particles from the sun interact with air particles above the pole to awe-inspiring light displays of color. Its one of the most beautiful and unexpected natural wonders in history.

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IDEAS

1. Discerning Light

Interaction

Q. Ask for some metaphors/symbols for light.

A. Wisdom / knowledge; direction; heat; weapon (laser); beauty / wonder; purity; truth; love; hope; holiness; life.

Q. Brainstorm some metaphors for Darkness.

A. Ignorance; unsure / cloudy (mind); sin; despair; stagnant; void; oppression; night.

Q. What is your best definition of "light"? NOTE: It is NOT the absence of darkness. (We'll get to this later.)

A. Dictionary.com has 45 different definitions for light that covers physics, art, architecture, physical objects (lighthouse, traffic light), and times of day.

The first definition is the most conclusive: something that makes things visible or affords illumination: All colors depend on light.

This best definition fits with literature—Dante's Divine Comedy follows a man named Dante's journey through hell and purgatory before entering heaven. In Paradiso, the third book, the closer Dante the pilgrim gets to heaven, the more the atmosphere changes into shades of light and white and pearl. In essence, each level becomes lighter as he gets closer to God.

This fits with science—Telescopes in space track light bands that are outside the range of the human eye. The electromagnetic spectrum includes microwaves, X-rays, gamma rays, and radio waves, while also containing various layers of visible light (colors) and invisible light (ultraviolet, infrared). It can be measured even if it can't be seen with the naked eye.

This fits with nature—The Aurora Borealis is dancing light that leaves everyone awestruck.

This refutes most conventional wisdom—you'll often hear that light and darkness must co-exist, that they need each other for contrast and clarity. It's actually bad philosophy.

2: Think about light and darkness as these synonyms:

Honesty and Dishonesty—Honesty can be defined without even including a shade of dishonesty to describe it. The opposite is impossible.

The definition of honesty includes such words as honorable, upright, fair, genuine, and truthful.

The definition of dishonesty starts with not honest and includes such actions as lie, cheat, steal within it.

Purity and Impurity—Impurity can't be defined without a sense of purity, while purity can be easily defined and implemented without once needing a sense of impurity.

The definition of pure can be clear, authentic, 100%, wholesome. You can describe it without an opposite.

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The definition of impure is the very word itself not pure. Its very identity insists on an opposite.

God and Lucifer—God existed at the beginning and will at the end. He’s the Creator of everything. Heaven existed before Lucifer and will continue after him and currently thrives despite him.

All of these pairings are synonyms of light and darkness and show the surprising depth and variety of light. So do stories.

Most stories in almost every medium deal with a theme of redemption—a character who loses his way before discovering or rediscovering something essential or an eternal truth and changing for the better.

CONCLUSION

The problem is that many contemporary stories wallow in the darkness of violence, perversion, and drunkenness before arriving at a bland, unimaginative good. You know the good I’m talking about, it flickers like a fluorescent light; it’s a tolerant, nice, progressive, American good with no transcendent qualities to awe and amaze. It requires no real commitment or sacrifice and what’s worth achieving without sacrifice?

Yet science, literature, nature, and our own imaginations know this can’t be true. So does the Bible.

I John 1:5 says, This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

John 8:12 tells us, Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

Jesus also says, I and my father are one (John 10:30).

Jesus, the light of the world, has unimagined range for anyone brave enough to measure him. When we receive the Holy Ghost, we are given the gift of light a spiritual aurora borealis to shine in a weary world.

A city on a hill can be seen in day and night. It’s a sign of hope and civilization. As Christians, our job is to be seen; to be that city on the hill that can’t be hid. Christ in us means we can be confident that the untapped depths of the light inside us are strong enough to be seen.

To let the light of truth shine to a degree that no one will be confused into thinking that darkness, though in our very nature, is even necessary. Its isn’t. Light exists on its own.

LED-BY-THE-SPIRIT QUESTIONS

Why do so many storytellers struggle with making light dramatically interesting?

What is the connection between light and life?

How do we shine a true light for Christ and not just be generically good people?

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Does the variety of light (ultra violet, colors, infrared) have a biblical parallel with our talents? (Think: body of Christ in Romans 12.)

Is it possible to be a light without worrying about darkness?

PRAYER

Lord, please help me be more of a light to those I sit by in class, to those I mingle with in the library, and to my professors. I know that many times my only goal is to blend in, but please know that it isn't because I am ashamed of You, its because I fear of not measuring up to being the best light. Help me to be sensitive, and aware of the needs of those around me so that then I will be able to show them Your light.

Amen. ★