

SALT AND LIGHT

MATTHEW 5:13-16



Teacher's Devotional

What qualities of salt and of light can you quickly list? We are so connected to salt and light, it may be hard to think about life without them! But without light, there can be no life on Earth; without salt, our lives cannot flourish. A light burning brightly in a closed-up closet is worthless. Salt that sits in a shaker has no value—for both light and salt have value only when they are used! Is this not the very reason that Jesus called His followers “light” and “salt”? God doesn’t need Christians who are content to be items in a spiritual museum—no, He made us to *be* salt and light so that we will “salt” and “light” those places where He put us! (Notice that “salt” and “light” are both noun and verb!)

So what does it look like to salt and light our world? Kind deeds and words, like salt, preserve, heal, purify and flavor. Merciful and truthful words and actions, like light, cause darkness to flee, bring warmth and make the path clear. When God’s love motivates an action, lasting good is accomplished. And the best news for us “salt and light people” is that we can come to our Father God and gain power from the source for all loving acts! Ask His Spirit to draw you deeper into a love relationship; seek His Kingdom first—you’ll discover that He then does through you good things that make people see and glorify Him (not you!).

This is also the way in which the kids you teach will understand what it means to be salt and light—by watching your life! Be sure they also understand that they can be salt and light: As kids show God’s love, even the smallest act of kindness has powerful results!

GOD’S WORD

“Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

Matthew 5:16

FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN:

“Do good things to show God’s love.”

GOD’S WORD & ME

Our everyday actions of love and obedience to God show others who God is.



PLANNING PAGE

Choose which centers you will provide and the order in which children will participate in them (see pp. 14-18 for schedule tips and pp. 24-25 for guidelines in combining older and younger children). Also plan who will lead each center (for staffing tips see pp. 19-21). Use the reproducible planning sheet (p. 238) to record your plans.

BIBLE STORY CENTER

BIBLE STORY

Salt and Light • Matthew 5:13-16

ADVENTURE BOX (YOUNGER CHILD)

Use props (salt shaker, a small flashlight and a large bowl) to demonstrate story action

ADVENTURE BOX (OLDER CHILD)

Use props (salt shaker, either a small flashlight or a candle and matches, and large ceramic bowl) to demonstrate story action

ART CENTER

YOUNGER CHILD OPTION

Make star rubbings and talk about what it means to shine like stars when we love and obey God

MATERIALS

Bible; star-shaped cookie cutters; pencil; cardboard; scissors; construction paper; unwrapped yellow, orange and red crayons

OLDER CHILD OPTION

Make sun-catchers and talk about how people who love and obey God are like light

MATERIALS

Bible, scissors, 2-inch (5-cm) squares of tissue paper in a variety of colors, glue sticks, hole punch; for each child—9-inch (23-cm) black construction paper square, 9-inch (23-cm) waxed paper square, 18-inch (45.5-cm) length of ribbon

GAME CENTER

YOUNGER CHILD OPTION

Play a game to collect cards picturing different kinds of light and tell ways to do good things and obey God

MATERIALS

Bible, Lesson 2 Pattern Page (p. 70), scissors

OLDER CHILD OPTION

Repeat the words of Matthew 5:16 while playing a game with rainforest catchers

MATERIALS

Bible, stapler, glue, aluminum foil; for each child—two colorful paper plates, colorful paper bowl

COLORING/PUZZLE CENTER

YOUNGER CHILD OPTION

Review the Bible story while completing coloring page

MATERIALS

Lesson 2 Coloring Page (p. 71) for each child, crayons

OLDER CHILD OPTION

Review ways of obeying Matthew 5:16 while completing puzzle page

MATERIALS

Lesson 2 Puzzle Page (p. 72) for each child, pencils

WORSHIP CENTER

FOR THE YOUNGER AND OLDER CHILD

Participate in large-group activities to review Bible verse and to worship God together

MATERIALS

Bibles, *Parable Quest* CD-ROM and CD player, song charts (pp. 246, 253), balloons, one or more large garbage bags, permanent markers, several flashlights

BONUS Theme Ideas

Bonus Theme Ideas can be used at any time during this session: as an additional activity center, to extend the session for a longer time, or for added theme excitement.

WALK INTO THE RAINFOREST

Add an atmosphere of adventure to the room where children gather for *Parable Quest*. Use one or more of these ideas: (1) Make drops of water or cut streamers from shiny, iridescent paper and hang from doorway; (2) Lay inexpensive blue plastic tablecloths at the entrance for a river through which children must walk; (3) Just for fun, at the beginning of one session set out an inflatable wading pool filled with several inches of water through which children walk barefoot and then onto several beach towels; (4) Play "Rainforest Sounds" from CD-ROM.

Post a note alerting parents to the use of food. Also, check registration forms for possible food allergies.



RAINFOREST TREATS

Collect bananas, plastic knives and spoons, chocolate chips, disposable bowls, plates and napkins. Cut each banana in half and place chocolate chips in several bowls. Give each child a banana half, plate, plastic knife and napkin. **Let's make a treat with two foods that grow in the rainforest.** Child peels banana and then slices it in half lengthwise. Child uses spoon to create a long "ditch" in the banana (see sketch). Be ready to help as needed. Child uses spoon to place chocolate chips into the ditch and then eats this tasty rainforest treat. (Optional: Provide whipped cream for children to add to snack.)



COLORS OF THE RAINFOREST

Before class, collect red and blue food coloring, spoon, vegetable oil, tablespoon, bowl made of clear glass and water. (Optional: Collect a set of supplies for groups of four children each.) **In the rainforest we can see many birds and flowers with brilliant colors. Let's try an experiment with colors.** Stir two drops each of red and blue food coloring into one tablespoon of vegetable oil until food coloring breaks up into little drops. Fill bowl with water and pour food coloring mixture into it. Have children watch to see how the colored drops slowly sink and mix with the water to form color bursts.

BIBLE STORY CENTER

FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN • MATTHEW 5:13-16

INTRODUCTION

Welcome your rainforest explorers by asking them all to pretend to be parrots squawking to say hello to each other. Then show Adventure Box. **What do you think is in our Adventure Box today? Let's find out!** Untie box. Remove items from box and use them to demonstrate story action as you tell the story.



ADVENTURE BOX

In a cardboard or wooden box labeled "Adventure," place a Bible and these props: salt shaker, small flashlight and large bowl. Tie rope or brown yarn around the box or crate.

TELL THE STORY

One day, Jesus was sitting outdoors with His friends. He was teaching His friends about God. Jesus and His friends were sitting on the side of a big hill. Many, many people were listening to hear Jesus' words. Jesus was telling His friends about the good things God does, even when things are hard and it seems like there is lots of trouble.

Then Jesus said a very surprising thing to His friends! He said, "You are like salt! Now, if salt isn't salty anymore, it's not good. It doesn't help your food. It's not good for anything!" *(Show the salt shaker. With child's permission, sprinkle a little salt in each child's hand for child to taste.)*

If we make a recipe of cookies and forget to put in the salt, the cookies don't taste good. So when Jesus talked about His friends being salt, He meant that people who love God make the world better, just like salt makes food better. When we show God's love to other people, it is a good thing, like putting salt on food is a good thing. When we are kind and care about people, we show God's love. It makes everything better!

Next, Jesus talked about light to His friends. He said, "You are the light of the world. You are like a city that is up on a hill." If a city is up on a hill, everyone can see its bright lights at night. It makes the darkness go away! *(Turn on flashlight and shine it on ceiling.)*

Then Jesus said, "If you had a light in your hand and you needed to use it to see, would you put the light under a bowl?" *(Invite child to hold bowl upside down over the light.)* Of course not! A light is made to shine! So you don't try to hide it. You use it to see!

"If you have a light," Jesus said, "you put it up high! That way, it helps everyone in the house to see at night!" *(Remove bowl and shine flashlight around the room.)*

But Jesus wasn't finished. He went on, "Showing God's love by doing good things is just like shining a light. When you do good things, people see God's love coming from you. Then they will be glad about God and will praise Him!"

Being kind shows God's love like a flashlight shows light in a dark place. When people see the kind things you do, it shows them more about who God is. That is the way you can be like a light.

GOD'S WORD & ME

Jesus said that people who love God are as important as salt and light. We're important because when we love God, we do good things. That helps other people learn to love God, too. The Bible says, "Do good things." Every day we can do good things like tell the truth and help people. Pray, Dear God, thank You for each person here today. Help us do good things every day. In Jesus' name, amen.



SHINE
YOUR LIGHT

BIBLE STORY CENTER

FOR OLDER CHILDREN • MATTHEW 5:13-16

INTRODUCTION

Introduce the story by leading children to play a game of Charades. To play the game, secretly tell a volunteer the name of an item that uses light (flashlight, lamp, searchlight, candle, laser pen light, light switch, etc.). Volunteer acts out the use of the item for others to guess. Repeat with additional items. **What was the same about each of our charades? That's right. They were all about light! We use light all of the time, so we know how important it is. Today we're going to find out why Jesus compared some people to light.**

What do you think is in our Adventure Box today? Let's find out!

Untie box. Remove items from box and use them to demonstrate story action as you tell the story.



ADVENTURE BOX

In a cardboard or wooden box labeled "Adventure," place a Bible, and one or more of these props: salt shaker, small flashlight, large bowl. Tie rope or brown yarn around the box or crate. (Optional: Instead of flashlight and large bowl, put a candle, matches and ceramic bowl in the box. Ahead of time, print a nighttime map from the Internet and bring it to class.)

TELL THE STORY

One day, Jesus was outdoors with His friends. Crowds and crowds of people were milling around, waiting for Jesus to begin teaching them. So Jesus walked a little way up the side of a mountain so that when He spoke, everyone could hear Him. He began teaching His friends about God's Kingdom. The crowds of people down below were probably very quiet, straining to catch every word Jesus said!

Jesus began by telling His friends how they could be part of God's great Kingdom. He talked about the good things God does, even when things are hard and it seems like there is lots of trouble.

Jesus said, "Even when people say bad things about you because you love and obey Me, be glad! People saying bad things about you only means that you can expect good things to come to you in heaven. Remember, people said bad things about God's messengers long ago. They didn't like to hear the truth about God from the prophets, either. You are in good company!"

Then Jesus said something very surprising! He said, "You are the salt of the earth!" What do you think Jesus meant by that? *(Show the salt shaker. Children pass shaker and sprinkle a little salt in hand to taste if desired. Invite children to tell how salt tastes.)*

Jesus continued, "Now, if salt doesn't taste like salt—if it isn't salty anymore—then what is it good for? Salt that isn't salty won't make your food taste better. It won't clean your sores. It won't even help to keep your fish from spoiling. Un-salty salt isn't good for anything!" *(Invite children to tell other uses of salt.)*

Jesus meant that people who are part of God's Kingdom and members of His family show His love to others by doing things that make the world around them better. God's love, like salt makes things clean. It keeps things from going bad and makes things better, just like adding salt to food makes the food better or putting salt all over fish keeps it from spoiling. When we show God's love to other people, what we do changes things. Those acts of love and obedience to God make a big difference—just like salt does!

Next, Jesus said, "You are the light of the world. You are like a city that is built on the top of a hill." *(Light candle or hold flashlight.)* If you see a city is on a hill at night, how does the sky look? If a city on a hill is lit up at night, everyone can see its bright lights. Now that we have electric lights, there a glow in the sky wherever there is a city!

(Optional: Show nighttime map of the world.)

Then Jesus said, "If you had a light in your hand and you needed it to see, would you put the light under a bowl?" *(Invite student to hold bowl down over the light.)*

Of course not! A light is made to shine! So you don't try to hide it. You use it to see! *(Remove bowl.)*

"If you have a light, you place it where everyone in the house can use it to see!" (*Stand with candle or flashlight in a dark spot in the room.*)

But Jesus wasn't finished. He went on, "When you show God's love by doing good things, it is just like shining a light. When you do good things, people see God's love coming from you. They will understand more about who God is. They will be glad for what you did, but they'll see that it came from God—and they will praise Him!"

GOD'S WORD & ME

Sometimes we are kind or patient or helpful because we want people to like us. But there is a more important reason to act in these good ways—it's because we love God! And we can show others God's love in the same way as the flashlight shines light in a dark place.

When people see us being kind, they notice that there is something—or Someone!—behind such kindness. When we show God's love and obey Him, it helps others understand more about who God is. By God's power, you can make a difference in our world—being like salt and like light!

- What are some ways salt or light change things?
- How are our actions like light? How did Jesus answer this question? Invite a student to read aloud Matthew 5:16. **Jesus said that the things we do and say every day can be like a light that shines and shows others more about who God is.**
- What are some right actions a kid your age can do? (Tell the truth when you're about to get in trouble. Be kind to a kid no one else likes.) Pray with children, asking God to help them show their love and obedience to Him in their everyday actions so that others learn about God.



Game Center

FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN • MATTHEW 5:13-16

COLLECT

Bible, Lesson 2 Pattern Page (p. 70), scissors; optional—markers.

PREPARE

Photocopy at least two Pattern Pages. Cut apart to make a set of matching game cards. (Make a set for each group of five or six children.)

DO

1. Children line up at one side of open play area, forming teams of five or six children each. Place game cards facedown across the room from the play area.
2. Children take turns running across the room to collect a game card. As game cards are collected, team members place matching cards together. Continue until all cards have been matched.
3. Repeat game as time and interest allow, changing the way in which children move across the room each time (jump, walk backwards, skip, etc.).

TALK ABOUT

- At night, we can see the light from the stars. In our Bible story today, Jesus talked about light. We need light to see what to do. Jesus said that the people who love God are as important as light. People who love God do good things.
- When we played our game today, I saw you taking turns. That's a good thing to do. When are some other times you and your friends can take turns? (Playing with toys. Riding a scooter.)
- The Bible says, "Do good things." When we do good things, we show that we love God. We help other people learn about God. They can learn what God wants them to do.
- One good thing we can do is pray. Pray briefly, Dear God, please help us do good things every day. We love You and we want other people to love You, too. In Jesus' name, amen.

FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Before running to collect a card, child repeats Bible verse. (Optional: Photocopy each team's set of cards on a different color of paper. Before class, hide cards around classroom. Team members take turns hunting for cards. When a card is found, team member returns to team and next player takes a turn. Team who collects complete set of cards first wins.)

GOD'S WORD

"Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

Matthew 5:16

FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN:

"Do good things to show God's love."

GOD'S WORD & ME

Our everyday actions of love and obedience to God show others who God is.



Game Center

FOR OLDER CHILDREN • MATTHEW 5:13-16

COLLECT

Bible, stapler, glue, aluminum foil; for each child—two colorful paper plates, colorful paper bowl.

PREPARE

Make a rainforest catcher for yourself and each student. Staple the edges of two paper plates together with tops facing in, leaving an opening on one side. Glue a paper bowl to one plate. Set aside to dry.

DO

1. **In the rainforest, supersized flowers and leaves catch the rain that falls. We're going to play a game today where we use rainforest catchers.** Crumple up a piece of aluminum foil, toss it up in the air and try to catch it while wearing the catcher (see sketch). Give each child a catcher and foil and let them make foil balls and practice tossing and catching the balls.
2. Collect foil balls. Children form a circle. As you toss the ball to any child in the circle, lead children in saying the first word of Matthew 5:16. Child catches ball and tosses it to another child in the circle, while everyone says the second word of the verse. Continue until entire verse has been quoted.
3. Optional: Child who catches foil ball when the word "deeds" has been said, tells an action that is an example of a way he or she can show obedience to God in everyday life.

TALK ABOUT

- **What are some ways you need light every day?** Matthew 5:16 says that when we obey and love God by doing good things, it's like we are light. We help others see God and learn who He is.
- **What are some examples of good actions that you think would make your school a better place to be?** (Telling the truth. Not making fun of others. Treating others with patience.)
- **When is a time someone you know has been like light because he or she obeyed God? What did the person do?** (My older sister was patient and didn't get mad when I accidentally broke her CD.)
- **Think of one place you go every week. Now think of a good action you can do or something good you can say to let your light shine.** Lead children in prayer, asking God to help them show others who God is.

FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

Instead of making catchers, set out eight bowls in two rows. Children take turns telling the names of people whom they can treat in good ways or telling good things they can do to obey God before tossing foil balls into bowls. Allow children to stand as close to the balls as needed in order to be successful in tossing balls into the bowls.

GOD'S WORD

"Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

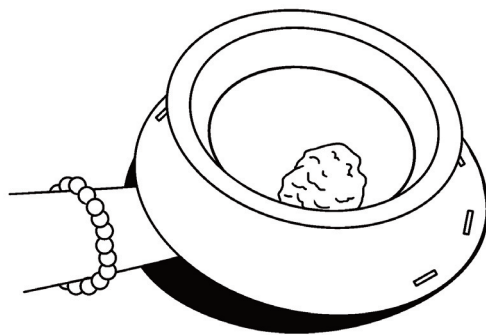
Matthew 5:16

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GOD'S WORD & ME

Our everyday actions of love and obedience to God show others who God is.



ART CENTER

FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN • MATTHEW 5:13-16

COLLECT

Bible; star-shaped cookie cutters; pencil; cardboard; scissors; construction paper; unwrapped yellow, orange and red crayons; optional—tape, die-cut stars, star shapes cut from sandpaper and/or loosely-woven cloth.

PREPARE

Trace around cookie cutters to make at least a dozen cardboard star shapes in a variety of sizes.

DO

1. Child places a star shape under a sheet of paper and rubs over the shape so that the design of the star appears on the paper. (Optional: If children have difficulty holding shapes securely, tape the shape and/or paper to the table while child completes the rubbing.)
2. Encourage children to make rubbings of a variety of stars, placing the star shapes to create an interesting design.

TALK ABOUT

• At night, we can see the light from the stars. In our Bible story today, Jesus talked about light. We need light to see what to do. Jesus said that the people who love God are as important as light. People who love God do good things.

• What is a good thing someone in your family does to help you? (Plays with me. Helps me learn to ride a bike.) What is something good you can do to help someone else? (Share a favorite snack. Do a chore without complaining.)

• The Bible says, "Do good things to show that you love God." When you help someone, you are doing good. Who is someone older than you to help? Who is someone younger than you to help? Briefly pray, including the names mentioned by children and asking God's help in obeying Him.

FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Provide children with lightweight cardboard and let them cut out their own shapes to use in making rubbings. Children may make shapes that represent items they can use in doing good.

GOD'S WORD

"Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

Matthew 5:16

FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN:

"Do good things to show God's love."

GOD'S WORD & ME

Our everyday actions of love and obedience to God show others who God is.



ART CENTER

FOR OLDER CHILDREN • MATTHEW 5:13-16

COLLECT

Bible, scissors, 2-inch (5-cm) squares of tissue paper in a variety of colors, glue sticks, hole punch; for each child—9-inch (23-cm) black construction paper square, 9-inch (23-cm) waxed paper square, 18-inch (45.5-cm) length of ribbon.

DO

1. Give each child a sheet of black paper. Child folds paper in half two times and then folds the square into a triangle (see sketch a). Child cuts several shapes from each of the folded sides and opens the paper.
2. Child glues tissue paper squares onto waxed paper, creating a design of his or her own choosing, and then glues the black frame on top of the waxed paper sheet.
3. Child punches hole in top of frame, inserts ribbon and ties to make a hanger (see sketch b). Child hangs sun catcher in window in classroom or at home.

TALK ABOUT

- **What might our world be like if there was no light?** (Plants and trees wouldn't grow. We would not be able to see.)
- **In our Bible story today, Jesus told how important light is. Light helps us see where we are going. Why did Jesus say that people who love and obey God are like light?** (When people obey God, their actions show who God is. Their actions and words help people "see" or learn about God.)
- Read Matthew 5:16 aloud. **What does this verse say is the result of our actions when they show love and obedience to God?** (People praise and thank God.)
- **What good action would you like God to help you show to others this week?** Tell your own answer to this question before leading children in prayer, asking God's help in acting like light.

FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

Instead of making frames, children simply glue tissue paper squares onto waxed paper. Punch papers and let children insert ribbon. Tie ribbon to make hangers.

GOD'S WORD

"Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

Matthew 5:16

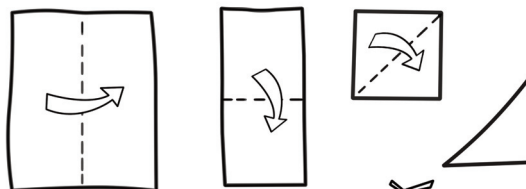
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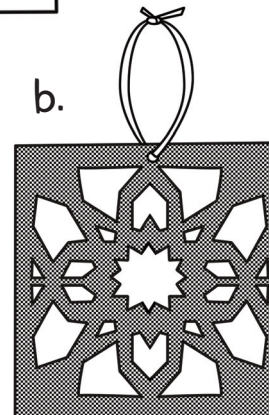
GOD'S WORD & ME

Our everyday actions of love and obedience to God show others who God is.

a.



b.



WORSHIP CENTER

MATTHEW 5:13-16

COLLECT

Bibles, *Parable Quest* CD-ROM and CD player, song charts (pp. 246, 253), balloons, one or more large garbage bags, permanent markers, several flashlights.

PREPARATION

Blow up a balloon for each child plus a few extras. Place balloons in garbage bag(s).

Team Game

Give each child a balloon. Children take turns using markers to write their names on the balloons. Be ready to help children if needed. (Optional: Each child also writes on the balloon one word that tells a favorite sport, book, game or food.) Children stand holding balloons. Play "Name to Come Song" and invite children to begin batting their balloons around the room. If space is limited, have children pass balloons from one to another. After 5 to 10 seconds, stop the music. Each child holds one balloon and sits down. Children take turns reading aloud the names on the balloons. As each name is read, the named person stands up and high fives you or another nearby leader. Continue until each child has been introduced.

BIBLE VERSE GAME

Give flashlights to several children. Say Matthew 5:16 aloud with children. Children holding flashlights turn them on when the words "light," "shine," "see" and "praise" are said. Pause after each of these words is said so that children can turn on and then off the flashlights. Repeat verse several times, letting other children use the flashlights.

SONG

You, or another leader, lead children in singing "Salt," adding motions and/or clapping if desired.

PRAYER

Think of one way you are already letting your light shine and obeying Matthew 5:16. Then think of one way you would like to start obeying this verse. Briefly tell your answers before inviting kids to pray silently or aloud. Lead children in a closing prayer, thanking God for His help in obeying.

SONG

You, or another leader, lead children in singing "Following Jesus," adding motions and/or clapping if desired.

GOD'S WORD

"Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

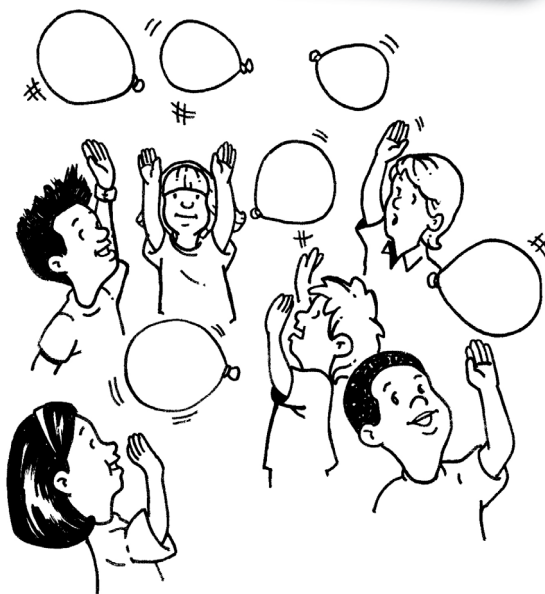
Matthew 5:16

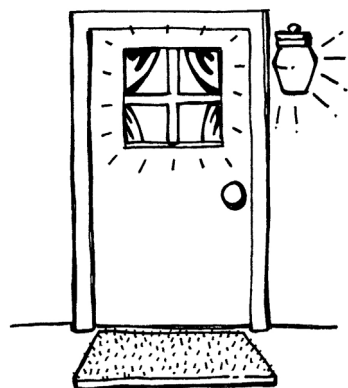
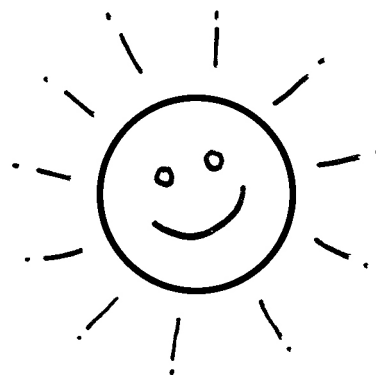
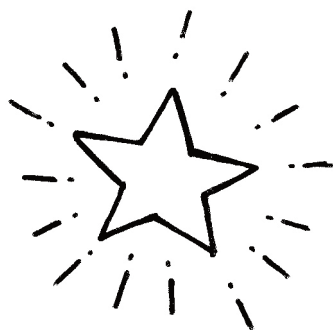
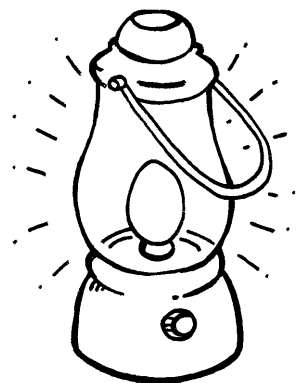
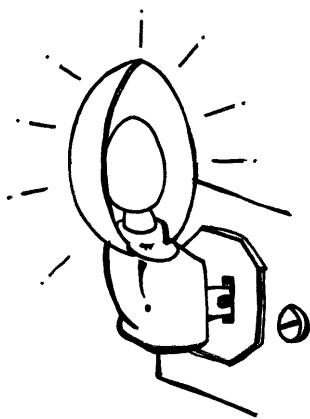
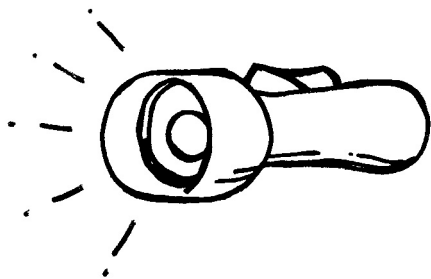
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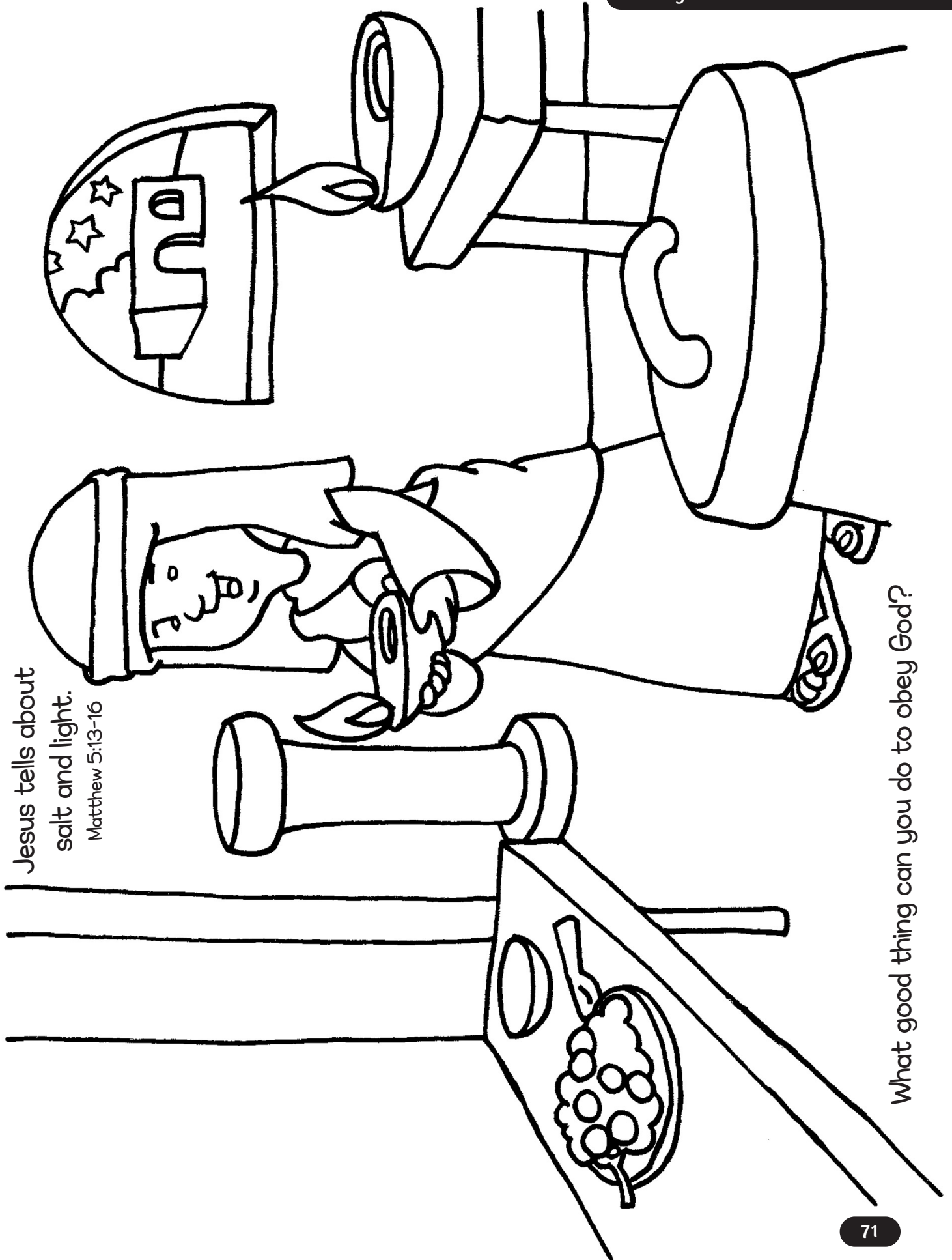
GOD'S WORD & ME

Our everyday actions of love and obedience to God show others who God is.





Jesus tells about
salt and light.
Matthew 5:13-16



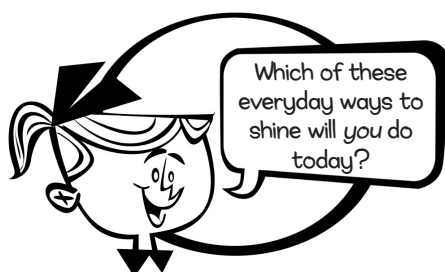
What good thing can you do to obey God?

SHINE EVERY DAY!

Help Reuben and Rachel move through the maze—and through every box!

Tip #1: There may be more than one path!

Tip #2: It's OK to go "under" paths!



You're a shiner!

SHINE!

