

A Good Shepherd Story of Jesus

Light of the World

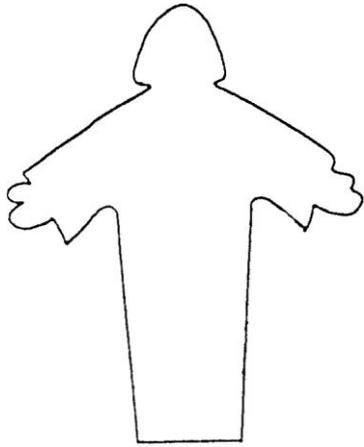
Adapted by:
Brenda I. Stobbe

Illustrations by:
Jennifer Schoenberg & Tiffany DeGraaf
Activity Sheets, Laminated Cards and Art Editing by:
Tiffany DeGraaf

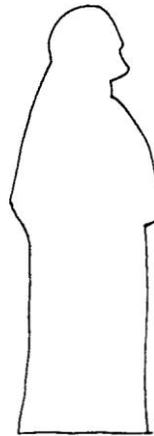
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LIGHT OF THE WORLD MATERIALS NEEDED

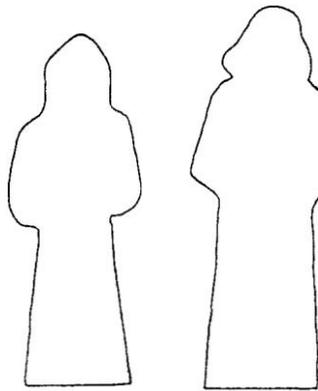
- medium wicker basket to hold
- wooden Jesus figure
- 2 wooden onlooker figures
- wooden Pharisee figure
- laminated Light card



Jesus



Pharisee



Two Onlookers

LIGHT OF THE WORLD ... JOHN 8:12-20

ACTIONS

After speaking, stand and get the story basket from the shelf and return to the circle.

Allow 10-15 seconds of silence as you reverently touch one or more of the wooden figures to center yourself and the children.

Place the Jesus figure toward at the center of the storytelling area.

Rest your hand lightly on the Jesus figure.

Place the two onlooker figures and the Pharisee figure next to Jesus.

Lay the light card just in front of the Jesus figure.

Move the Jesus figure slightly away and follow it with one onlooker figure.

Place the Pharisee figure closer to Jesus.

Touch Jesus as you speak.

Move Jesus slightly away from the other figures.

Touch the Pharisee figure as you speak.

Rest your hand on the Jesus figure.

WORDS

Watch carefully where I go to get this story so you will know where to find it if you choose to make it your work today or another day.

All of the words to this story are inside of me. If you will make silence with me I will find all the words to this story of God's people.

Jesus spent much of his time on earth helping people understand who he was.

When they wondered if Jesus was really the Savior, the Messiah he told them about himself in different ways.

Jesus spoke to the people who followed him many times.

One day he said to them, "I am the light of the world."

"If you follow me you won't ever walk in darkness. You will have the light that gives life."

The Pharisee's, who were leaders of the church said, "You are the only person who says that about you. What you say isn't true."

Jesus told them, "Even if I do speak for myself, what I say is true.

I know where I came from and where I am going. But you don't know.

You judge people like everyone else judges them. But I won't judge anyone.

If I should judge them I would be fair.

Lift your hand, palm up, to indicate God.

That's because I would not be judging alone. God who sent me is here with me.

Hold up two fingers as you speak of witnesses.

Jewish law says I must have two people who saw something to be witnesses to prove anything.

Touch Jesus again, then lift your hand as before to indicate God.

Well, I am one of my witnesses and God the father who sent me is the other witness.

Rest your hand on the Pharisee figure.

"Where is God the father?", asked the Pharisees.

Shake your head as you speak.

Jesus answered them, "You don't know me or God the father. Because, If you knew me, you would also know God."

Outline an area around Jesus to indicate the temple.

Jesus said all these things while he was teaching in part of the temple.

Move Jesus away from the rest of the figures.

No one had come to arrest him yet, because it was not time for him to die.

WONDERING QUESTIONS

I wonder how we can see Jesus light?

I wonder why Jewish law said the people needed two witnesses to prove something?

I wonder if Jesus and God are exactly the same or different?

Place all the wooden figures in the basket, one at a time.

Watch carefully how I put these materials away so you will know how to use them if you choose to make this story your work today or another day.

After speaking, stand and carry the basket back to its shelf. Return to the circle and sit down.

Watch carefully where I return this story so you will know where to find it if you choose to make this story your work today or another day.

Dismiss the children when everyone has had a chance to choose his/her work.

I wonder what you will do for your work today? Let's begin.

LIGHT OF THE WORLD TEACHER HELPS

Jesus was teaching in the treasury of the temple. This is located in the Court of the Women, an outer portion of the temple. This location allowed all who wanted to hear Jesus entrance. Most scholars believe this is a continuation of the teaching Jesus did in the prior chapter, so he would be speaking to the same group of people. The metaphor Jesus used this time was that of light. He probably gave the image of a lamp being held before the people to light the way along a path in darkness.

Throughout the Gospel of John we have two important teachings that are both shown in today's text. First is that people just didn't understand who Jesus was. Jesus aligned himself with God the father as the one who sent him. He was even so bold as to say, "If you know me you know God," vs. 19. This was too much for the Pharisees. They could not accept his words. Even Jesus' attempt to use Jewish law, well known to the Pharisees, by claiming that he and God were both witnesses to his mission was discounted by the Pharisees because they could not imagine God as a witness. The whole concept of the spiritual connection was shown to be outside their imagination.

The second is John's continued use of divine purpose to Jesus' life. This is particularly noticeable in the final statement made by the gospel writer when he said it was not yet Jesus time to die. The writer gives no human reason to why Jesus hadn't been arrested, such as his popularity or the lack of a charge against him. Instead, the writer reminds us that God is the one in charge of Jesus life and God has determined that it is not yet time for Jesus to die.

A little explanation needs to be given to the "judging" statements. The original meaning of the text was that the Pharisee's judged by outward or external appearance. Jesus statement " would judge fairly" meant he would judge as God judges, not by what people seem like on the outside, but by their inner character.

"I wonder how we can see Jesus light?", we ask the children in the first question. Again, we are dealing always with the difficulty of speaking to primarily concrete thinkers in metaphors and concepts. It is best to simply accept the answers and the struggles at this point and enjoy the journey as younger children grow older and begin to think in concepts and metaphors as well as concrete thought.

In the second wondering question we ask why Jewish law required two witnesses to establish proof. I've included this question to help children begin understanding that there were laws, which had to be followed in Jesus' lifetime. One of those laws said that if only one person accused you of something you could not be punished. The same was true for

establishing innocence. Two people had to give testimony. The children will probably take this in a very matter-of-fact way. One person can lie more easily than two.

The final wondering question is truly a theological push. Adults still struggle with the relationship between the divine and the human in the person of Jesus Christ. The question is presented, not to be given a definitive answer, but to start the thinking process that eventually wakes in all of us. When was Jesus human, when was he divine? Was he divine from birth? Was he always human? Was he always both? Acknowledge the difficulty of this question if it arises. Otherwise, simply enjoy the journey!

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Think of the brightest light you can imagine. Now think how Jesus might be like that light. Why is light a good way to talk about Jesus?

Jesus spoke of himself as light and said if we follow him we won't walk in the dark. What does it mean to walk in darkness? What have been some of the darkest times of your life? Who was there for you? Was God part of your darkness?

In talking about not judging others, Jesus meant that God did not judge by external appearances. Why is it so easy to judge others before we even know them? How can you try to avoid that?