

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year A – Fifth Sunday after Epiphany**  
**Gospel Lesson for Adults**

**Scripture: Matthew 5:13-20**

*Because in the mystery of the Word made flesh, you have caused a new light to shine in our hearts, to give the knowledge of your glory in the face of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*  
(Book of Common Prayer, page 378)

Accept the light we have received and shine it forth! It is not about shining the light in other's faces, blinding them, but holding the light in open hands.

**A Notation for This Week's Gospel**

Called to be salt! Who we choose to be seasons our community; and what we focus upon casts light. The call: don't just do something, Be!

**Theme: Let your Light Shine**

**Before Class:** Have various translations of the Bible on hand. Suggested: The Message, the Common English Bible, and New Revised Standard Version. You can find all of these online and simply make copies for your group.

**Beginning:** Ask the group to take a minute to think about at least one person who has been a light to them in their lives.

**Opening Prayer:** Thank you, God, for all those who are light in our lives. Show us how to shine our light, too. Amen.

**The Scripture: Matthew 5: 13-20** Invite readers to read the passage once through in each of the translations that you brought.

**Questions:**

- What might be some “God-flavors of this earth” that we are called to season with salt? (Some possibilities: hope, love, joy, courage, etc.)
- What do we think are some of the “God-colors” our light could bring out? (Showing by our actions that all people are God's people, etc.)
- What is the “law and the prophets” Jesus refers to in verse 17? (The Ten Commandments and the promises the prophets had made through the years.)
- I wonder what “righteousness” as Jesus uses it in verse 20 means? (Being in a right relationship with God, including noticing when we blow it, making the necessary changes and then accepting forgiveness.)

**Option:** Jesus refers to the “kingdom of heaven” three times in this passage. (Matthew mentions it 36 times in the entire Gospel). What do we understand Jesus to mean? Discuss aspects of the kingdom of heaven – as a description of what eternity with God will be like if we choose to be a part of it, as well as a description of what life can be now if we choose to be a part of the

kingdom of heaven. Note: Jesus also chose this phrase to define his mission to call for internal change and his refusal to be the political force people had expected.

**Getting Closure:** Invite the group to reflect on signs of salt and light they have noticed in each other. (An example might be: I have noticed that you (name the person) are open to seeing things in a new way. I see the way you (name the person) reach out to the youngest children in our community, etc.)

**Closing Prayer:** Thank you, God, for the opportunities you show us to be salt and light for you. Guide us as we are called to live into a call to serve you. Amen.

## **Matthew 5:13-20**

### **Salt and Light**

13 ‘You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

14 ‘You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden.<sup>15</sup>No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. <sup>16</sup>In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

### **The Law and the Prophets**

17 ‘Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. <sup>18</sup>For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. <sup>19</sup>Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.<sup>20</sup>For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

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