

WordOne Bible Study

Thank God for the Light

by Ken Gerike

Text: John 3:14-21 for the Fourth Sunday in Lent, Lectionary Series B

OBJECTIVES

Participants will be:

1. Reminded that they are the focus of God's love.
2. Reassured that they have the Lord's help in the struggle with spiritual darkness.
3. Shown again that they are an instrument of the Lord to help others see God's love enabling them to come into the Light.

GROUP GUIDELINES

This Bible study has been developed for use in a small group of six persons. If your group is larger than this, divide into smaller groups. Choose as the group leader the person whose last name begins with the letter closest to the end of the alphabet. The leader is to keep the group moving through the Bible study, encourage the participation of all members in the group and serve as a timekeeper so that each individual may have opportunity to share (two to three minutes in each activity). Participants should always have the freedom to pass if they do not wish to share their experiences.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

1. Have each person in the group share answers to the following questions: (allowing students time to share and become better acquainted)
 - a. Which room in your home do you like the best? Why?
 - b. What is it that you like the best about your family?
 - c. How does your family celebrate Lent?
2. Answer the following question: Which do you enjoy more--daylight or night? Why?

Strategy "A" - For rooms that can be darkened completely

Have each group go to a separate area of the building where it can be completely dark. Have the member of the group whose last name begins with the letter closest to the front of the alphabet carry a flashlight. Have the group stand in darkness for one minute. Stand side-by-side with the flashlight holder in the lead. Have the leader take the group on a journey in the dark area. They will need to form a "train" in order to do this. After one minute of journeying in the darkness have the leader turn on the flashlight and lead the group for one minute on a faster and safer journey. Then head back to the meeting place. Allow the participants to describe their feelings when they were standing in the darkness, journeying in the dark and journeying in the light.

Strategy "B" - For rooms that cannot be darkened

In order to simulate the experience of darkness and light the leader can lead the group around the room slowly with their eyes closed. For the second experience the groups' eyes can be opened in a dimly lighted room.

The purpose of either one of these experiences is to have participants experience the difference between darkness and light. Allow the participants to describe their feelings when they were standing in the darkness (or with their eyes closed) and moving with the flashlight on or their eyes opened. Have group discuss the feeling of safety and ease of movement in the light as compared to darkness.

LOOKING AT GOD'S WORD

1. Read Numbers 21:4-9. Ask the members of the group, "If you had been one who had been bitten by the poisonous snake, how would you respond to Moses' directive? Think of verse five before you answer. Would you consider this walking around in the dark or following the leader with the flashlight?"
2. Jesus refers to this story in His conversation with Nicodemus. Read John 3:14-17. We often hear these verses referred to as the "Gospel in a Nutshell."
 - a. What do you find in these verses that is so uplifting?
 - b. Why do you suppose Jesus refers to the story of the Bronze Serpent?
 - c. Read John 3:18. What does this verse say to you?
 - d. Read John 3:19-21. Finish the following statements:
 - i. "I face the struggle of the darkness of sin when I..."
 - ii. "I feel like I come into the light when I..."
 - iii. How do you feel when it appears that God is to get all the credit for your salvation?
 - iv. What do you find that comforts you in these verses?

REINFORCING WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNED

Ask participants to complete the following sentences:

1. "From this Bible study I discovered that I..."
2. "I would describe my relationship with God right now as..."
3. "One way in which I can help another person by what I learned in this Bible study is..."

CLOSING

Close with a sentence prayer by having participants in the group thank God for sending the Light, His Son, Jesus. The leader should start the prayer and pass to the next person by squeezing hands. Participants who wish to pass can do so by a squeeze of the hand.

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