



LIVING AS HEAVEN'S CITIZENS

Hard to Hide

January 4, 2025

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

Matthew 5:13-16 • “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Proverbs 4:18, 19 • “But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is like darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble.”

Ephesians 5:8-11 • “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.”

1 Thessalonians 5:5 • “You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.”

Philippians 2:14-16 • “Do all things without

complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.”

1 Peter 2:9 • “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

2 Corinthians 2:14-17 • “Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.”

(See additional passages in student material.)

B. WHAT'S TO BE SAID ABOUT “LIVING AS HEAVEN'S CITIZENS”

What does it mean to be the salt of the earth? What good is salt if it isn't salty? What does it mean to be a light to the world? Is it pos-

sible to hide a city on a hill? “Salt” and “light” are powerful illustrations of what citizens of God’s kingdom should be to the world. When Christ calls His disciples to proclaim the good news, He calls them to “be” something more than to “do” something. Oftentimes outreach and witnessing are simply activities we do for an afternoon and then think we are done.

This week the lesson focuses on uncovering each believer’s potential light. Everyone who believes in Christ can be a saltshaker as well as a beacon of light to the world. But what does this look like? The challenge will be for teens to discover how, in their own way, to become salt and light.

C. WHERE WE’RE GOING WITH “LIVING AS HEAVEN’S CITIZENS”

As a result of this lesson we would like the students to be able to:

1. Recognize that a witness is what/who you are more than something you do.
2. Develop an understanding of what we are to be witnesses to.
3. Engage in a lifestyle that is unmistakably bright for others.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity A) candle and matches, large flashlight, small flashlight, laser pointer, camera with a flash; (Activity B) small foods,* such as crackers, bread, vegetables—celery or carrots, blindfolds; (Illustration C) construction paper, paper clips, scissors, magnet, markers.

Connecting • Bibles, student lessons.

Applying • Paper, pens or pencils.

*Be aware of any food allergies and adjust accordingly.

2 BRIDGING

A. WHERE WE’VE BEEN BEFORE

Allow 10 minutes as students are arriving to:

1. Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.
2. Engage in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief highlighted this week.
3. Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for *Adventist Mission for Youth and Adult* at www.realtimefaith.net)
- >> Service project reports

3 BEGINNING

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word.

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • This exercise will require various light-giving devices (i.e., candle and matches, large flashlight and small flashlight, laser pointer, and/or camera with a flash). Gather as many different kinds of light sources as you can, according to how many students you may have in your class. (Try to have one type of light per group of two to four students, or per person.) Each type of light will serve as a metaphor for the different ways people witness to others. The bottom line is that different lights have a different sphere of

influence against the darkness, as do people. Each form of light is needed and valued!

Get set • In order to get students warmed up and talking about light, **ask: How many different types of lights do you have in your house? in a church? in a kitchen? in a car?** Allow the students to discuss this topic for a few minutes. Have them brainstorm about other types of lights they see in their daily surroundings.

Go • Display the various forms of light listed in the Get Ready section on a table where everyone can see them. Assign each student or group of students to one form of light. Provide them with the following list of questions. After 10 minutes, ask the students to report their answers to the rest of the class.

1. What is the primary purpose for this particular light?
2. Under what circumstances would this light be most valuable? Under what circumstances would this light not be as helpful?
3. What are the light source's strengths, and what are its limitations or weaknesses?
4. If this light were to symbolize someone's witness to the world, what would that witness look like? Try to think of specific examples. (For example, a flash on a camera produces a tremendous amount of light for a short period of time, enabling people to capture a moment in time and have it forever in the form of a picture. This could be like a prophet, a traveling evangelist, or a sensational leader whose life is cut short but whose impact is always remembered.)

Debriefing • Ask: When have you seen people lighting the darkness like these lights we're discussing? Why do you think Jesus chose the metaphor of a city on a hill to describe our role in the world? In what way do you think your church is a light to your community? How could it do better? Do you think the city on a hill metaphor is describing individuals or a church as a whole? Explain.

B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • Gather a few small foods, such as crackers, bread, vegetables (celery or carrots), for a taste test. Student volunteers will taste the items while blindfolded, having to identify the salty items simply by taste. Note below the categories that the volunteers should be presented with. Before tasting the items (comparing two at a time), students should feel the foods to determine whether they think they are salted or not. Some of the items should be dusted with sugar instead of salt. The idea is to convey the truth that looking and feeling like salt doesn't make us salty; being "salty" is a result of immersion in God's grace.

Get set • Choose a couple of volunteers for the following taste test. Blindfold both. Each volunteer will experience the following categories or comparisons:

- salty and not salty
- not salty and slightly salty
- not salty and too salty
- salty and sugary (feels like salt but is sweet)
- not salted and not sugary

Go • Ask students to blindfold the volunteers. Conduct the taste test one person at a time, talking through the details as they happen so the other volunteer can hear what's happening but not see it (builds anxiety).

Debriefing • Ask: As you tasted the difference between salted and unsalted, what connections can you make from this exercise to the way Christians should relate to the world? (Some of the items tasted "just right.") Is there a "just right" approach to witnessing? Can we be too salty or not salty enough?

C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

Cut two-inch hearts from construction paper. To each heart, attach a paper clip (if possible, the colorful, plastic coated type). Obtain a strong magnet. As students come in,

give each a heart and have them write their name on it, possibly decorating it with markers. Give each a paper clip to attach to their heart. Collect the hearts and lay them on a desk or other flat surface.

In your own words, share the following:

Jesus shared the symbols of salt and light with us to describe the influence that Christians should have in this world. Another symbol that illustrates this is the magnet and magnetization. Jesus told us in **John 12:32** about His power to draw everyone to Himself as a result of His sacrifice for us on the cross. When someone has been drawn to Christ (place the magnet so that it can “attract” one paper-clipped heart), they, in turn, can draw others as long as they stay connected to Christ, the magnet. (Move the magnet with the attached heart over another heart and let the first heart attract the second heart. Continue to attract hearts to the magnet.) The farther we personally are from the magnet, the weaker is our influence. (At some point hearts will quit attracting other hearts, depending on their distance from the original magnetic source.)

Debriefing • Ask: How does a magnet relate to how Christians should live their lives in the world? (A magnet attracts, but you have to get close enough for it to work. In the same way, we have to get close enough to others for God to work through us, and we have to stay close enough to Christ to keep magnetized.)

4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

Present the following ideas in your own words:

Sports fans often wear clothes that bear the logo and the colors of their favorite team as an outward statement of their loyalty. In a way, they are giving a public witness to something they value. In God’s kingdom we wear His likeness instead of colors by modeling the character and

actions Christ displayed while here on earth. Of course, we have to be careful that we are not just “acting nice” to others; we must “be nice” to others as a way of life. If our witness to the world is something we do instead of something we are, it will be clear to the world that what we do and who we say we are don’t coincide. In Christ’s own words He makes our role pretty clear:

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (**John 13:34, 35**).

While love has many definitions, it stands as the quality that draws others to God. If you do good things for others but carry a spirit of arrogance in your heart, your service will not bear witness to a loving God. You may successfully refuse to participate in evil behaviors the world promotes, but if you don’t love, you may still fail at being a light to the world (**1 Corinthians 13**).

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath’s section of the lesson.

Say: When it comes to being a witness, you need to be willing to tell others what you have witnessed. If you are a true Christian, the time will come when you will have the opportunity to share Jesus and His truth. **Ask:** Have you ever had a chance to be a witness for Jesus? How did you share Him? What does it mean to be salt and light to the world?

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Pose the following scenario:

Have you ever been hanging out with your friends when someone starts tearing different people down? It’s not hard to get caught up in the drama. It’s not hard to just keep quiet either. What would it look like if someone who has been “salted” by Christ were there in such a scenario? What would it be like if there were a “light” present? Would people all of a sudden become

uncomfortable with their conversation but not really know why? What would happen if salt and light were present in one of those moments, and what might be some of the expected outcomes?

Ask: Can you think of moments when someone's presence stopped bad behavior? Can you think of a moment when someone's presence inspired something good to happen?

Have students answer these questions in writing:

1. If you were to make a list of five of the saltiest, most well-lit lights from the stories of the Bible, which would you choose and why?
 2. Does what we do make us who we are, or is it the other way around? Does who we are make us do what we do? Explain.
- At the end, discuss their answers together.

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Say: Get in groups of two to four and think of someone who has been like a light, salt, and magnet to you for God. Each illustration has its own different quality as do the people who have had an influence on us. Try to share a different person in your life for each of the following:

Salt—someone who has brought zest and flavor to your Christian experience.

Light—someone who has helped you make your way through a dark time or circumstance.

Magnet—someone who's life simply compels you and attracts you to God.

Witness—someone who has experienced God's love and has been willing to speak to you about it.

Debriefing • Ask: Why do you think the salt and light metaphors are so powerful? (They are timeless and practical. They use everyday items.) **Agree or disagree:** Witnessing for Christ is much harder today than it was in the time

of the New Testament church. Why or why not? (It is harder because the world is worse, and people are more self-sufficient. They don't feel the need for God since they have so much monetary wealth. It might be easier because more proof and history have made the life of Christ more accepted than it was back then.) **What makes people want to become Christians: better information or better examples?**

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. How can we be salt and light to those who don't understand what Christians believe?
2. When have you been most bold in talking about Christ?
3. What does a person need to do to become salty or lit up?
4. Think of two or three people you can be salt and light to and plan some simple ways you can encourage or help them to get to know Jesus.
5. What can you do consistently to give flavor to your community and to light up hope in the hearts of those who don't know Jesus?

6 CLOSING

SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

Being a witness means experiencing something and publicly telling how the event or the truth you accepted has affected you. As believers in the living Christ, when we experience His love and the plan of salvation we must be willing to testify. Does Christ live in you and does that make you different?

Salty? Light-giving? What salt does to bland food, we need to do to the world we live in. What light does to the darkness, we need to do for people who don't know Jesus, the Light of the world.



STUDENT LESSON

LIVING AS HEAVEN'S CITIZENS

Hard to Hide

January 4, 2025

Sabbath FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34, 35).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 11, Growing in Christ:** "As we give ourselves in loving service to those around us and in witnessing to His salvation, His constant presence with us through the Spirit transforms every moment and every task into a spiritual experience."
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 35-38

HARD TO HIDE

Ernest lived in a country in which military service was mandatory. When he turned 20, Ernest was drafted and sent to serve in another city, far away from home. In the military, orders are law, and every soldier has to follow them immediately without question. Disobeying orders results in severe punishment.

Part of the time spent in military service included mandatory agricultural labor. Ernest did his work faithfully and conscientiously each day of the week. Realizing that the soldiers would have to work on Sabbath as well, Ernest prayed to God with the determination to remain faithful

to His law in keeping the Sabbath regardless of any risk to himself. Then he spoke to his supervising lieutenant and explained that he would not work on Saturday.

The lieutenant was not open to Ernest's request. It was harvesttime, and everybody was needed to work in the fields to gather in the grain. The lieutenant told Ernest that he would report this case of disobedience to the colonel.

"There is a young man here who does not work on Saturday," the lieutenant announced to the colonel.

Immediately Ernest was called in to the office of the colonel and was questioned profusely. Ernest stated his case humbly but confidently:

"Mr. Colonel, according to the Bible, the seventh day of the week is God's holy Sabbath. This is a day of worship and holy convocation. Based on this conviction, my conscience does not allow me to work on Saturday. I am more than happy to work longer hours on other days of the week and even at night if needed, but on Sabbath I cannot consent to work."

The colonel became furious and ordered Ernest to make a written declaration to state his insubordination. Ernest wrote that he was willing to obey the orders of his superiors and work anytime during the week, except on Sabbath.

When the colonel read the written statement, he decided to give the young man a lesson and make him a public example to his peers. He was confident that through peer pressure from the other soldiers, Ernest would quickly renounce his faith.

When the soldiers returned from the fields

clothe	drink	faithfulness	fruit	gentleness	goodness
hungry	joy	kindness	least	live	longsuffering
love	Me	peace	ransom	self-control	send
sent	servant	serve	Spirit	stranger	walk

Tuesday REFLECTING

- » Read Isaiah 43:10-12.
- » Some people think that when the big question comes to them about their allegiance to God, they will be able to stand and say, "I believe in Christ, and I will not deny Him!" When you look at the stories of Scripture, it's not those life-or-death ultimatums that make the great witness for God, but the little moments along the way. "In all ages Satan has persecuted the people of God. He has tortured them and put them to death, but in dying they became conquerors. They revealed in their steadfast faith a mightier One than Satan. Satan could torture and kill the body, but he could not touch the life that was hid with Christ in God" (Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 30). Frankly, if we can't stand up for God when it's easy, why do we think it will be any easier when our life is on the line?
- » Jesus told the disciples to be witnesses first in Jerusalem, starting close to home before working their way out to the ends of the earth. "When the heart is aglow with the love of Jesus, you will express it to others, and become witnesses for Christ" (Ellen G. White, in *Youth's Instructor*, May 4, 1893).

Wednesday BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Match the text with the phrase. All texts are taken from the NKJV Bible.
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|----|---------------------|-------|
| 1. | Hebrews 12:1, 2 | _____ |
| 2. | Matthew 5:13-16 | _____ |
| 3. | Philippians 2:14-16 | _____ |
| 4. | Colossians 4:6 | _____ |

1. Acts 1:7, 8 _____
2. Luke 14:34, 35 _____

- A. "You are the salt of the earth."
- B. "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith . . ."
- C. "That you may become . . . children of God . . ."
- D. "You may know how you ought to answer each one."
- E. "Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor . . ."
- F. "You shall be witnesses to Me . . . to the end of the earth."

Thursday CONNECTING

- » Read Philippians 2:14-16.
- » Review the memory text.
- » Have you ever thought, *If I don't say anything, someone else will?*
- » You may remember a letter written to a person named Philemon in the New Testament. The whole drama is about a slave named Onesimus, who was owned by Philemon but ran away and ended up running into Paul on the way. Onesimus actually means "useful." Paul makes a point to play on this, saying, "I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten while in my chains, who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable to you and to me" (Philemon 10, 11).
- » Poor Onesimus. He has a name that means "useful," but apparently he turns out to be "useless" until he meets up with Paul and becomes a giant help to the apostle, who is stuck in prison. Paul pleads for grace for this man, and we assume he received it from Philemon.
- » The same grace is extended to us, even though we may or may not feel useful to

God at this moment. You may feel as if what you say or do doesn't matter. However, when we receive God's grace in our hearts, we have something to do and say on behalf of the One who saved us. It's safe to say that Onesimus wasn't perfect, but he gave Paul all he could, and it turned out to be a bigger help than he thought. Onesimus was immortalized in the words of Scripture because he did his best to be salt and light for an old person in prison. Who would have thought that in the end Paul would say about him, "I am sending him back. You therefore receive him, that is, my own heart" (Philemon 12)? The important thing to remember from this story is that you may not know the value of your witness until later on.

- » 1. Why is it so important to say something?
- » 2. Why should you or I share Jesus with others? Why can't we just let someone else who is more qualified do it?

Friday APPLYING

- » Read 1 John 1:1-4.
- » "It is through personal contact and association that men are reached by the saving power of the gospel. . . . The savor of the salt represents the vital power of the Christian—the love of Jesus in the heart, the righteousness of Christ pervading the life. The love of Christ is diffusive and aggressive. If it is dwelling in us, it will flow out to others" (Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 36).
- » As you think about how you can be a witness, use the following illustrations to help you plan how you can apply this lesson to your life. Be specific!

Light—How can I make the darkness in someone's life go away?

Witness—How can I take the witness stand for God this week? How can I stand up for Him?

Magnet—How can I attract someone to God this week?

Salt—How can I bring zest and flavor to someone's life this week?

