

TRUE LIGHT

WEEKLY THEME:

THE CREATING WORD BECOMES FLESH

BASED ON:

John 1:1–14

LESSON AIM:

During this lesson, Jammers will:

KNOW: Describe the difference between darkness and light.

FEEL: Convey interest in researching the Creation story.

DO: Achieve their best in reflecting Jesus.

TARGET

John most likely wrote his Gospel after what are known as the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) were written. Luke, the doctor, wrote to record the deeds and sayings of Jesus (Acts 1:1). John wrote to give evidence of who Jesus really was—the divine Son of God and the Messiah (John 20:31). John uses the common Greek word, *logos*, literally meaning “word” or “message,” in a deeper philosophical sense. As the essential Word of God, Jesus is the ultimate manifestation of God’s wisdom and power. Jesus, the Word, was more than a man sent by God, or a good teacher; He was one in identity with God. Colossians 1:16 and Hebrews 1:2–3 support that Jesus was active in Creation (John 1:3, 10). Jesus was in the beginning with God, as stated in verse 2. He was present in the darkness before God created light. Jesus has an intimate understanding of what darkness represents; therefore, He was sent to Earth in human form to represent light and salvation.

TOOLS

Bibles, student magazines, pens or pencils, white poster paper and markers for WORD!

OPEN THE LESSON

Elicit ideas from Jammers by asking three key questions:

1. What are your thoughts about how the world was formed?
2. Do you know what your purpose is and how you found out? What is the difference between darkness and light?

REALITY CHECK

True Light

Ben loved science class. He loved the way his teacher taught every concept. It was always so hands-on and interactive. He literally ran to her class every day instead of milling around in the halls with his friends between classes. He wanted to be the first to help with any class setup responsibilities.

One day, the class was about the beginning of the universe. His teacher, Mrs. Foster, started talking about the Big Bang Theory. In this theory, the world was said to begin through the development of atoms. This conversation was confusing to Ben because he learned a different story about Creation in his Sunday School class. They learned that God created the heavens and the Earth. He created the human beings and all living things. After class, Ben decided to ask Mrs. Foster about the conflict in the two theories. She told Ben that she did not believe that God existed. Ben was even more confused.

When Ben got home, he talked with his mother about what he had learned in school and how confused he was. His mother shared that there would be many times in his life that he would learn one thing in school and another in church. Many people did not believe in God and so they found other ways to explain the world and how it functioned. When we believe in God and what He says in His Word, then we must believe what He has revealed about the world and how it functions. Ben wrestled with what his mother said all night because he wanted to believe what was

right. He decided to believe what the Bible said about Creation because God had been so real in his life thus far. He knew God existed and had given us His Word.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways do you see the light of God in the world?
2. In what ways do you see the light of God in your life?

PRESENT THE SCRIPTURES IN MY HEART

Recite these verses: “He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind” (John 1:2–4, NIV).

WORD!

On a large sheet of paper write the words “light” and “darkness” on opposite sides. Pass the sheet around so that Jammers can write one-word answers regarding the first thoughts that come to mind when they see these words. Explain to Jammers that there is a stark difference between the two and that when we accept Jesus, we receive His light. He creates this new life in us. The darkness of sin blinds us and causes us to be separated from Christ.

SIDEBAR

The Creating Word Becomes Flesh

Throughout the Bible, light represents holiness and darkness represents evil. God and those who follow Him are identified as light (John 8:12; 1 John 1:5; Matthew 5:14–16). The devil and those who follow his ways are identified as darkness (Ephesians 6:12; Acts 26:18; Colossians 1:12–14). Light and darkness do not refer to skin color. In world history, people decided to transfer the concepts of light with whiter skin and darkness with darker skin, thus identifying holiness with whiter skin and evil with darker skin. This perception is evil. Holiness and evilness have nothing to do with skin color. It has everything to do with whom individuals choose to follow, God or Satan.

EXPLORE THE MEANING

Living in the Light

- L**—Light will ultimately win over darkness.
I—If we believe in Jesus, we can become children of light.
G—God wants us to shine light in the dark places of the world.
H—Help others living in the light.
T—Take time to spend with God so that you can reflect His light.

GOT IT!

A. Jesus Is the Light

Jammers will use “WORD!” to help them with this activity.

Answers: dwelling; recognize; in the beginning; witness; children of God

B. Witness to the Light

Jammers are to write their own paragraphs on persuading people to believe in Jesus. Let them share their paragraphs with classmates and listen to classmates’ thoughts on how they can be witnesses for Jesus.

JAM SESSION

True Light

Jammers will compare and contrast the Scripture with what they previously thought about the Creation story. Jammers will be reminded that Jesus was in the formation of the world and was in here in the beginning. Let Jammers reflect on their purpose in the world and how they can be willing examples of Jesus’ light.

NEXT STEPS FOR APPLICATION

JAM ON IT!

Be the Light

This week Jammers are encouraged to show the light of Christ in every situation. Jammers are encouraged to examine their own lives and ask God for forgiveness regarding the times they haven’t reflected Him. Pray with Jammers to keep this practice as part of their daily routine.

The Creating Word Becomes Flesh

Bible Background • JOHN 1:1–14

Printed Text • JOHN 1:1–14 | Devotional Reading • GENESIS 2:1–3

Aim for Change

By the end of this lesson, we will EXPLORE the meaning of the Word for the world, FIND true inspiration for life in Jesus, and LIVE in relationship with Creator God because of the “light” (grace and truth) that Jesus gives.

In Focus

Sister Nancy is a gifted Christian who serves on her church’s Board of Trustees. However, this was not always the case. She is a recovering alcoholic who used to verbally abuse her husband and children. After years of tolerating Nancy’s behavior, her husband had finally had enough. One weekend Nancy arrived home drunk as usual and found her husband, children, and all their possessions gone.

Nancy had been miserable without her family. One of her coworkers, Mitch, noticed her downward spiral and invited her to come to church with his family the next Sunday. After service, they all went out for lunch together. Mitch’s wife, Bea, asked Nancy what she thought about coming to church with them more often. Nancy said she probably wouldn’t be able to make it. Mitch and Bea pressed her, and Nancy confessed she didn’t feel comfortable going to church when her life was so messed up.

Her co-worker, Mitch, told her about the life-changing relationship he had with Jesus. Jesus was Mitch’s light and life, and from what Nancy could see, it was a glorious light and life. Then Bea asked Nancy if she would like to become a new person in Christ. Right there in the restaurant, Sister Nancy gave her life to Christ. She no longer drinks; she and her family are reunited and happy.

Sister Nancy did not just turn over a “new leaf.” She actually became a new person in Christ.

How would your life have been different if you didn’t have new life in Christ?

Keep in Mind

“All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”
(John 1:3, KJV)

Focal Verses

KJV **John 1:1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

The People, Places, and Times

Gnosticism. Many of the early Gentile believers had been exposed to varying strains of Gnosticism (an early heresy) and did not believe in the humanity of Jesus. As people from diverse backgrounds became part of the church, it became necessary for the apostles to correct errors in doctrine as well as encourage the existing believers. In the Gospel of John, the writer seems to be addressing a mixed audience of believers and unbelievers, Jews, and Greeks. The other Gospels had already been written and circulated. John used his writing not to simply tell stories about Jesus, but to explain Christian theology, especially the place of Christ Jesus.

Background

The author of the book of John identifies himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23; 19:26; 21:7, 20). Most scholars agree that the apostle John is the author of this

book. John was well-known in the early church and was intimately familiar with Jewish life. He would have been an eyewitness to many of the events recorded in the Gospel of John.

Dating of the Gospel of John is a matter of debate, with dates ranging from AD 50 to 95 or later. However, most scholars accept the later date of AD 95. Although we may not know the exact date of the writing, we do know that the first-century church was thriving. Even amid the threats of persecution and heresy, the church continued to grow.

John wrote to encourage the believers, most of whom were Jewish. He affirms their Jewishness as well as their faith in Jesus Christ, contrasting them with the Pharisees, who claimed to be the true or real Jews. The first 14 verses of the book of John summarize the whole Gospel. In these verses, we are introduced to Jesus—who He is, what He does, and the role He plays in the eternal plan of God for the world.

At-A-Glance

1. Jesus Is the Word (John 1:1–3)
2. Jesus Is the Light (vv. 4–9)
3. Jesus Reveals God's Character (vv. 10–14)

In Depth

1. Jesus Is the Word (John 1:1–3)

John introduces Jesus as the “Word.” The word used here is *logos*. The Greeks understood *logos* to mean not only the written or spoken word, but also the thought or reasoning in the mind. Jewish believers also used the word *logos* to refer to God and would have connected this concept to the wisdom personified in the Old Testament (see Proverbs 8). In tandem with wisdom was ability; in this case, God’s wisdom was used to create the universe. Jesus is that wisdom personified. Through Jesus, all things were created. To understand the creation, we must know the Creator. All of these concepts are bound up in the word *logos*.

As believers today, we may not realize all the nuances that the author intended. But what we must learn is clear: Jesus was, is, and always will be. He is God. He is the Creator and the Source of all life. The entirety of our Christian faith rests upon accepting these truths.

How have you seen loaded words used or abused in your life?

2. Jesus Is the Light (vv. 4–9)

John speaks of Jesus as “the light.” Jesus is Life itself, and that Life is our Light (v. 4). When we receive this life Jesus offers, His light replaces our spiritual darkness, and we become more like our Creator. However, many people live in deep darkness, which often connotes sin in the Bible. Even though Jesus is the light to dispel darkness, many people refuse to accept

the light of salvation. It’s the same today. People are so thoroughly entrenched in their sin and ignorance that they are blind to the light.

God can use anyone to pierce through the darkness. In Jesus’ time, God sent John the Baptist to bear witness to Jesus (vv. 6–7). John the Baptist did not want people to believe in him; he pointed the way to Jesus. Today, God uses His written Word and the power of the Holy Spirit to testify to the Light. He also uses believers. Every believer should view himself or herself as a testimony to the truth of salvation through Jesus Christ.

What has the Light of Christ made clear to you?

3. Jesus Reveals God's Character (vv. 10–14)

Although Jesus created the world (Colossians 1:16), the world did not recognize Him as Savior (John 1:10). Jesus came to the Jews first, but most of them rejected Him as their Messiah. His gift of salvation is offered freely to all. When we do receive Jesus, God gives us the right to become His children (v. 12), not physically, but spiritually. We are considered His heirs (Galatians 3:29), eligible to receive all of His promised blessings.

We cannot become God’s children by any means other than through salvation in Jesus Christ whom God sent to the earth to take on human flesh. He came to live with us, to feel our pain, to experience our joy, and to know our sorrow.

John’s Jewish readers would have understood the word “dwelt” to be connected to the word for “tabernacle,” where God’s presence dwelt. As modern-day believers, we can’t physically touch Jesus, yet we can see His glory. We can testify to the miracles He has worked in our lives and the lives of others. We can bear witness to the power of salvation.

Why did Jesus need to become a human to understand humanity?

Search the Scriptures

1. Who is the “Word” (John 1:1)?
2. What is the “light of men” (v. 4)?

Discuss the Meaning

Jesus came to give meaningful, real life to all who will receive Him. He is the living revelation of God, who expressed God's truth in a way we can understand. It is our task to share this light with others. What are effective ways to be witnesses to Jesus' light today?

Liberating Lesson

Jesus came into this world in the form of human flesh, yet those around Him did not acknowledge Him for who He is: God. They chose to continue living in darkness rather than receiving the Light. Things aren't so different in our world today. In modern society, many people have become accustomed to a fast-paced, hectic lifestyle. They are easily distracted, often bored, or generally dissatisfied with life.

Jesus came to free us from the rat race. His light reveals that we are in fact human beings, made in the glorious image of God. Jesus' light burns away our ignorance and reveals our worth. It is then up to us to embrace that worth instead of taking the darker, but easier, path.

Application for Activation

This week, ask God to reveal Himself to you in a new way. Spend time praying, reading the Word, and meditating on what you have read. Let God's Word permeate your spirit so that

you might know God more deeply. Rejoice in the fact that God has revealed Himself to you through Jesus, the Word made flesh, and that He will continue to do so.

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

Sources:

Keener, Craig S. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993. 261.

Tenney, Merrill C. *Expositor's Bible Commentary* (John and Acts). Electronic edition. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelien. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1992.

Vincent, Marvin R. *Vincent's Word Studies*, Vol. 2: The Writings of John. Electronic edition. Hiawatha, IA: Parsons Technology, 1998.

Say It Correctly

Incarnation. in-car-NA-shun.
Gnosticism. NOSS-tih-siz-um.

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

God Created the World
through Wisdom
(Proverbs 8:22–31)

TUESDAY

In Christ All Things Hold Together
(Colossians 1:13–17)

WEDNESDAY

Christ, the Head of All Things
(Colossians 1:18–22)

THURSDAY

God's Well-Ordered Creation
(Psalm 104:1–15)

FRIDAY

Praise God for Creation
(Psalm 104:24–35)

SATURDAY

The Son Reflects God's Glory
(Hebrews 1:1–4)

SUNDAY

The Word Became Flesh
(John 1:1–14)

Notes
