

TRUE LIGHT

WEEKLY THEME:

THE CREATING WORD BECOMES FLESH

BASED ON:

John 1:1–14

KEEP IN MIND:

John 1:2–4

FROM YOUR BIBLE:

The Scripture text is in the student lesson under “Learning From God.”

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON

During this lesson, Juniors will explain what John means by the phrase “the Word present with God at Creation; recognize that nothing is too great for Jesus to handle; and walk in the light of Christ as the children of God.

BEFORE YOU TEACH

1. **Suggested Materials**—Bibles, student magazines, pens or pencils, 37 sunshine shapes from yellow paper, and three objects (a sponge, an apple, and a small ball) inside a closed bag.

2. **Lesson Background**—For background information, read John 1:1–14. Be sure to read the student lesson. Also see Bible Study Guide 5 in the white pages of this book, as well as in the UMI Annual Commentary, *Precepts for Living*®.

Although nothing in the Gospel of John indicates its author, early Christian tradition gives credit to John, an apostle of Jesus. He writes of “the beloved disciple.” The Gospel of John was written about 80 to 90 AD. In this Gospel, Jesus is the *Logos*, the Word of God who was *with* God and *was* God. Jesus is God in the flesh. He was not just someone sent by God; He was God. John emphasizes Jesus’ Lordship and Deity throughout the Gospel of John.

John juxtaposed concepts in this early writing: light vs. darkness; acceptance vs. rejection; in the beginning vs. in the flesh; the man, John the Baptist vs. the Word, God; and understanding vs. not comprehending.

John 1:1–18 may be grouped into three categories: verses 1–5, Christ the Revealer of God; verses 6–13, the response of unbelief and faith; and

verses 14–18, the experience of believers. John the Baptist, called a man, knew his purpose was to prepare the way of the Lord coming. He clearly stated he was not God. He was not the light. Yet, John the Baptist witnessed God coming in the flesh to bring light.

The Word became flesh. The Word brought life. The life brought light into the darkness of the world and people’s souls. By God living in the flesh, humankind was given the opportunity to see God’s glory, to understand the light, and become children of God.

OPEN THE LESSON

Get Started Activity

Review last week’s “Doing My Part” activity.

Prepare a bag with a sponge, an apple, and a small ball. Before opening the bag, ask Juniors to take turns describing these objects. They will have a challenging time giving specifics. Then, allow Juniors to pull out one object at a time. Hold it, smell it, describe it. Why is it easier to describe something when you can see it and feel it? Explain that today the Scriptures tell why God came as The Word and in the flesh.

What’s It All About?

Teaching time about 4–8 minutes

Student Story: True Light

Trevor watched as his 4-year-old sister Leticia sat on Grandma’s lap. Grandma had spent the past hour reading book after book to Leticia. “Grandma, let’s get my paints. Will you paint me your house by the ocean?” Leticia asked.

“Mom, Leticia acts like she has known Grand-

ma forever, but this is the first time she’s even seen Grandma in person,” Trevor complained. This was Grandma’s first visit to their home in Idaho since Leticia was born.

“That’s true, but we send pictures, and we’re on Zoom and Facetime every week. You’ve helped Daddy and me tell Leticia all about Grandma since she was a baby. The pandemic hit just when we had saved money to fly to Florida and visit Grandma. This time, Grandma decided to come to us, just as she promised. She made this happen,” Mama said.

Trevor asked, “Grandma, when you’re done painting, will you tell more stories about when Daddy was my age?”

“I’d love to!” Grandma exclaimed. “You look like him when he was your age. Just wait. Oh boy, do I have stories to tell!” Grandma chuckled as she winked at Daddy.

Trevor loved hearing Grandma tell stories of his daddy when he was a boy. Hearing stories on the phone was good but hearing them in person was so much better!

Later that night, Daddy joined Trevor for bedtime prayers. Trevor said, “You know, Daddy, having Grandma here reminds me of our story in Sunday School. The Jewish people knew about God in the Scriptures, but finally, they met Him in the flesh! It must have been exciting to be a disciple and talk to Jesus in person.”

“Grandma promised she’d come here someday,” Dad said. “Now, Trevor, you can watch your little sister sitting on Grandma’s lap, painting together, and talking in person.”

If you were Trevor and Leticia, what would you want to do with Grandma when she visited? What would you have liked most about walking with Jesus in real life?

PRESENT THE SCRIPTURES

Learning From God

Teaching time about 10–15 minutes

Jesus is God. The Bible explains that the same Jesus who came to live on Earth existed before the beginning of time. “The Word” (called *Logos*) spoke creation into being. Genesis 1 tells us that God created everything. Genesis 1:26 says in

part, “Let us make man in our image.” In the beginning of time, God existed. Jesus was in the beginning with God. “*Logos*” became flesh and lived with us. God brought light to the world’s darkness.

What I Have Learned

Teaching time about 5–8 minutes

Juniors will answer the five questions.

Answers: 1. In the beginning; 2. Everything; 3. Shines in the darkness; 4. John; 5. flesh

Juniorway® Bible Activities

For additional material, see the activity for this lesson in the *JBA® (Juniorway® Bible Activities)* book.

Keep In Mind

Teaching time about 2–3 minutes

Before class, prepare 37 sunshine shapes from yellow paper. Print words of the “Keep In Mind” verse on each. Hide the shapes around the room: some in the light; others in the dark. Have Juniors hunt for the shapes and reorder the verse. Ask, “How did the room’s light and dark spots affect the shapes coming into view?” Discuss how God makes everything come into being.

EXPLORE THE MEANING

Choosing What’s Best

Teaching time about 4–8 minutes

Have Juniors read four statements of “how to get to heaven.”

Answers: Juniors must circle #4. Explain: Jessie trusts in his family heritage. Mary trusts in people’s decisions. Michael trusts in “the will of man,” or the good things he does. Eva trusts in Jesus Christ and what He offered. Eva believes in Jesus. Be prepared to pray with any Junior who is ready to accept Christ.

NEXT STEPS FOR APPLICATION

Doing My Part

Teaching time about 2–3 minutes

Have Juniors reflect, search their hearts, and evaluate if their lives indicate Christ’s light living in them.

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
