

# THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

## GROUP GUIDE: WEEK 15

### CONVERSATION STARTER

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What is the kindest thing someone has ever done for you or that you've seen done for someone else? Why do you think this act stuck out to you?

### JESUS: THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

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Jesus says, "I am the light of the world." To understand the true power of his words, we have to know the context of *where* and *when* he spoke them. The Festival of Tabernacles, or Sukkot, featured a ceremony of Illumination. At night, four giant menorahs were lit in the Temple courtyard. They were so bright that their light could be seen throughout the entire city of Jerusalem.



The light symbolized how God guided the people through the wilderness as a pillar of fire during the Exodus story and reminded them that, one day, God would send His light into the world to remove the darkness of sin and death once and for all. In the Bible, light was a representation of God's presence. For Jesus to be the light of the world meant that Jesus was a mediator of God's life-giving presence and that Jesus was the one who would save God's people from darkness.

Discuss together as a group. What does it mean for you that Jesus is the light of the world? How is that idea made real for you today?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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1. What stuck out to you about the reading from this week? Was there a verse or idea that was particularly meaningful or challenging for you?
2. Where do you see darkness in our world today? Are there areas of your own life that feel dark right now?
3. No matter how much darkness threatens to cover the earth, God promises to break through with light. What does this make you think about what God is like?
4. Is there a moment you can think of where you feel like Jesus brought light into a dark situation in your life? What was this experience like? How did it change the way you think about your faith?
5. Read Matthew 5:14-16. We know that Jesus is the light of the world, but what does it mean for Jesus to tell his followers that they, too, are the light of the world? What do you think that means for us today?

## WEEKLY PRACTICE

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Just as Matthew 5:14-16 suggests, we are called to Be The Light in the midst of a dark world. This holiday season, we want to challenge you to bring light through doing random acts of kindness without expecting anything in return. This could be anything from paying for someone's coffee to buying a stranger a meal or volunteering with your favorite non-profit.

We encourage you to pick up a stack of "Be The Light" cards at HPUMC or [download them online](#). You can give one away with each act of kindness or use them to write encouraging notes to others. Here are a few ideas to help get you started this week.

1. Write a note of gratitude to a friend or coworker.
2. Leave an encouraging note on someone's car.
3. Give an unexpected compliment to someone - be specific!
4. Help someone who looks like they are struggling in a store or other public place.
5. Keep goody bags in your car to give out to our homeless neighbors.
6. Leave a server the biggest tip you can afford.
7. Get creative! There is no end to the ways you could brighten someone's day with just a small act of kindness.

Finally, as you #bethelight this holiday season, keep this in mind: Being the light for others is not just a one-time endeavor but a rhythm of living that starts first within ourselves. What is one thing you could do to make more room for God's light to flood in?