

Walking in the Light 1 John 1:5-7



Background for the Leader

May the light of God's love shine upon you as you prepare to encourage others to walk in that light.

A Note to the Leader

If possible, plan to meet in a room where you can turn off the lights and the members can experience being in darkness. Gather and display on a table at the front of the room several items that give light such as an electric or oil lamp, candles including one large candle, flashlights, tap light, or a small model of a lighthouse. These items are suggested for use in the fourth activity. The numbered planning steps correspond to the numbered activity suggestions below.

1. Think of an experience of being in the dark that you can share if members need help getting started.
2. Arrange for someone to turn off all the lights in the room when you give the signal. Be familiar with the ideas you will summarize about the darkness; if you need a light for your notes, use a small flashlight. It will be helpful to practice in the darkened room ahead of time.
3. Arrange a signal for the person to turn on all the lights. Be ready to share the ideas about the light and to lead the discussion about God as light. Enlist two readers for the reading of 1 John 1:5-7. Ask the first reader to stand on one side of the room and the other reader on the opposite side of the room.
4. Make copies of the assignments for the three groups. Provide Bibles and pencils or pens for making notes.
5. You may want to print the questions for discussion on a chalkboard or large sheet of paper, or you may copy a set of questions onto a piece of paper for each group to use.
6. Gather small candles and holders such as those your church uses in a candlelight service. Have a match or lighter available for lighting the first candle. Ask two members to give out the candles at the appropriate time. Ask two other members to turn off the lights and start music on the CD, tape player, or piano. Possible suggestions for music include the praise chorus "Shine, Jesus, Shine" or the hymns "The Light of the World Is Jesus" or "Stepping in the Light."

Leading the Program

Activity One: Talk About Darkness

Invite members to tell about an experience of being in the dark and how they felt and what happened. (*Members might tell of a power failure, getting up in the night in a dark house, being on a dark road, being in a cave with all lights turned off, or stumbling around and bumping into people or objects*).

Activity Two: Experience Darkness

Signal to the person you asked to turn off the lights. Give members an opportunity to sit

quietly in the darkness for a few moments. People may giggle or whisper in possible discomfort when you first turn off the lights. Just wait this out until there is a sense of stillness. Ask members to think about what might happen if they got up and tried to move around in the darkness.

Share some of the following ideas and Scriptures: From the very beginning, the Bible speaks about darkness in contrast to light. In Genesis 1:1-2 we read, “In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep.”

John wrote. “People loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19) and “If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going” (John 12:35). John also wrote about the darkness in 1 John: “If we say that we have fellowship with God while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true” (1 John 1:6) and “Whoever hates another believer is in the darkness, walks in the darkness and does not know the way to go, because the darkness has brought on blindness” (1 John 2:11). John knew that the darkness of sin and hatred in our lives would destroy fellowship with God and with others. Perhaps we too have experienced that truth. Let’s pause in the darkness for a time when each of us can silently confess the darkness in our own lives to God. That darkness may be fear, anger, hatred, hostility, or other sins that hinder our fellowship with God and with people. Whatever that darkness is in our lives, let’s silently confess and offer it to God. (Give adequate time for silent reflection and confession.)

Then read the following assurance of forgiveness, “If we confess our sins, He who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Continue, “Because of God’s assurance of forgiveness and cleansing, darkness is not the end of the story. We do not have to remain in the dark.”

Activity Three: Experience the Light

Signal for the lights to be turned on. Give a few moments for members to adjust to the light and then ask for reflections on the experience of being in the dark, hearing the Scriptures about darkness, and having the opportunity to confess the darkness in our lives.

Share some of the following: From the beginning the Bible also speaks of light and God as the light. Immediately after describing the deep darkness, the writer of Genesis records, “God said, ‘Let there be light’ and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness” (Genesis 1:3-4). David said, “You are my lamp, O Lord; the Lord lightens my darkness” (2 Samuel 22:29). John wrote of Jesus, “What has come into being in Him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it” (John 1:3-5).

Ask members to listen as readers read 1 John 1:5-7 and be prepared to talk about what it means to them that God is light and there is no darkness at all in God.

Reader 1: “This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all.

Reader 2: If we say that we have fellowship with Him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true;

Readers 1 and 2: But if we walk in the light as He himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

Ask: “What does it mean to you that God is light and there is no darkness at all in God?”
(Members may share some of these ideas: Light reveals. God wants to reveal God’s self to us. God wants to be known by us. The light reveals our sins and imperfections. God’s light guides us. God’s light can be trusted because there is no darkness in it.)

Activity Four: Learn More About the Light

Form three groups and give each group one of the following assignments:

Group 1: God gives us light

Read the following Scriptures. Talk together about what each Scripture says and what that means to your life. Choose from the table one of the items that we associate with light. Decide how you will share this symbol of light and what you have learned from the Scriptures with the larger group.

Psalm 4:6; Psalm 18:28; Psalm 27:1; Psalm 56:13; Psalm 119:105; 1 John 1:5

Group 2: Jesus is the Light

Read the following Scriptures. Talk together about what each Scripture says and what that means to your life. Choose from the table one of the items that we associate with light. Decide how you will share this symbol of light and what you have learned from the Scriptures with the larger group.

Isaiah 9:2; Matthew 4:13-14,16; John 8:12; John 12:46; 2 Corinthians 4:6

Group 3: We are to walk in the light

Read the following Scriptures. Talk together about what each Scripture says and what that means to your life. Choose from the table one of the items that we associate with light. Decide how you will share this symbol of light and what you have learned from the Scriptures with the larger group.

Isaiah 2:5; Isaiah 60:1; Matthew 5:14-16; John 12:36; Ephesians 5:8; 1 John 1:7-9; 1 Peter 2:9

Give groups time to work together and then to share with the larger group.

Activity Five: Relate Fellowship and Walking in the Light

Note that John spoke in 1 John 1:5-7 of fellowship with God and with one another. In fact, he seems to see fellowship with God and with others as two sides of the same coin; they cannot be separated. When John spoke of walking in the darkness or the light, he was talking about the way we choose to live our lives. It’s like the expression we use, “She walks the walk.” John also equated walking in the light with being in fellowship with God and others. Form the same three groups as in the fourth activity, and ask the groups to discuss these questions:

- What is the relationship between walking in the light and living in fellowship with God and others? Is it possible to have one without the other? Why or why not?
- How can we as individuals and a women’s ministry group strengthen our fellowship with God and with others? Do any of the Scriptures you read or heard in the previous activity help you to answer this question?

When groups have had adequate time together, ask all to share their discussion of the first set of questions. Then ask them to share reflections on the second set of questions. Ask all to consider: “What is the relationship between walking in the light and our call to be shepherds of God’s flock? How can walking in the light and in fellowship with God strengthen the possibility of our being shepherds of God’s flock?”

Activity Six: Make A Commitment to Walk in the Light

Say something like the following: “Today (or tonight) we have sat in the darkness and confessed our own darkness to God. We have also experienced the light of God’s love for us and fellowship with one another. I imagine that each of us would say that we like the light better than the darkness. As a response to our commitment to walk in the light and to walk in fellowship with God and with others, we will each light a candle.”

Ask the designated members to give each member a candle and holder. Invite members to join you in a circle. Give the signal for the lights to be turned off and the music begun.

Light a large candle on the table as you say, “*This candle represents Jesus, the Light of the world.*” Light your candle from that candle, then light the candle of the person on each side of you and indicate that members should then pass the light on to the persons beside them. When all the candles are lighted, say, “*Let’s walk in the light of God*” and lead members in walking slowly and silently around in the circle.

You may want to close with a prayer or with the singing of a praise chorus or hymn that carries out the theme of light.

About the Writer

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Walking in the Light

1 John 1:5-7

Walking in the light...but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin.

Every time I read these Bible verses, I remember when my daughter Lidia was small. In the evening, when we were all sitting in the family-room she would want to go to her room to find something she needed. She would always say "Will you come with me please?, it is dark" and my reply was also always the same: "you know where the light switch is, you can turn it on and you will be able to see. Her answer to that was: "Mami, you are my light and if I go with you, even if I trip and fall, you will help me up and then we keep going"...

This is what God is for each of us; a Light and a Support. He is our light and if we walk with Him, no matter what trips us or how often we fall during our daily lives, He will always be there to pick us up. He illuminates our lives. When we live with Him and in Him, we also live with others.

PRAYER:

Our Father, thank you for making us able to walk in your light, to walk with Jesus as a companion of our way, allowing us to have fellowship with one another, knowing that the blood of Jesus purifies us from all sin. Through Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

Rosy Aja
Florida Regions