1, 2, 3 John & Jude

Lesson 1: God's Light

**Lessons in this series:** **1**[2](http://www.teensundayschool.com/324/lesson/a-life-of-love.php) [3](http://www.teensundayschool.com/328/lesson/dont-believe-the-lies.php)

LESSON OBJECTIVES
Goals

1. To introduce students to the book of 1 John
2. To inspire students to love the God of Light
3. To instruct students on ways to live “in the Light”

Topics

Community, False Teaching, Fellowship, Light, Outreach

Scripture Memorization

1 John 1:5

OPENING PRAYER (5 to 10 minutes)

GROUP BUILDING (10 minutes)

If you have the space and ability to make the area pretty dark, play a game of flashlight tag. Here are the rules:

1. Find a place to be base. This is where the “IT” person starts, and where all the hiders want to end.
2. Choose one player to be “IT”.  This person has the flashlight.
3. The person who is “IT” waits at the base and counts while everyone else hides. Hiders can move around during the entire game.
4. The “IT” person looks for the hidden players with the flashlight. The flashlight must stay on at all times and cannot be covered.
5. Meanwhile, players try to run to base without being caught.
6. Players are tagged if “IT” spots them with the flashlight AND calls out that player’s name.
7. Each tagged player is sent to the base to wait (make them sit down to distinguish them from people who are making it there safely) until the very last player is caught.
8. The last person tagged is “IT” for the next game.
9. Set a time limit for the game, if no one is tagged during that time frame, switch the person who is “IT”.

GETTING STARTED (10 minutes)

Light is all around us, and we take it for granted. Have you ever noticed how important light is? We set our days by it. When there’s not enough around, we use electricity so we can see. Many people are scared of the dark, but have you ever met someone who is scared of light? Not usually.

Light is, generally speaking, a really good and helpful thing.

**Discussion Questions:**• Can you think of a time when you were in the dark and frightened?
• Can you think of a time when you needed more light?
• Why do you think light is so important to us?

Well we’re going to talk about spiritual light today as we start looking at the book of 1 John.  Turn to 1 John 1.

DIGGING IN (30 minutes)

We can be pretty confident that John, the disciple of Jesus, is the author of this book. While this letter is anonymous (like Hebrews, which we studied earlier), the early church fathers all indicated that John, son of Zebedee, penned it.  There are numerous other reasons for this confidence, such as the claim of closeness with the Lord, and the eyewitness testimony which is spoken of in the first few verses of the letter.

1 John has a lot to say, and we can’t begin to cover it all in depth. Instead, we’re going to split it into two parts. In this first chunk, we’re going to lay ground work for John’s comments. They revolve around one easy-to-identify theme: that God is Light.

 **Read 1 John 1:5-7**

**Discussion Questions:**1. Who is the “him” in verse 5? *(Jesus. See verse 3.)*
2. What is the point of repeating, “in Him there is no darkness at all”? *(For emphasis. God is completely pure and good)*3. Does claiming to have fellowship with God mean you have it? *(No.)*
4. How can you know if you have fellowship with God? *(You walk in the Light as God is in the Light. Verse 7.)*
5. According to verse 7, what additional outcome(s) is there from walking in the Light? *(We have fellowship with one another, Jesus’ blood purifies us.)*

The talk of God being Light begins here, but it doesn’t end here. John talks about not sinning, not loving the world, gives warnings about false teachers—and much more. All of it revolves around this idea that God is illuminating the truth. He is Light.

 **Read 1 John 2:8-10**

**Discussion Questions:**
1. What do you think it means that (through Jesus) the “darkness is passing and the true Light is already shining"?
2. How does treating one another serve as an indicator of how “in the Light” we are? *(If we love each other, we’re in the Light. If we don’t, we’re not.)*

John connects this truth to a change that must happen in our lives. It is dispersed throughout the passage. Let’s read some of those challenges now.

 **Read 1 John 2:1-6**

**Discussion Questions:**1. Why does John say he writes this?*(So you will not sin.)*
2. And what happens if we do sin? *(We have the Light—Jesus—atoning for our guilt.)*
3. Verse 5 says that God’s love is complete in a person when what happens? *(They obey God.)*
4. Why do you think there is such an attachment to obedience and the love of God?

There is further challenge issued in 1 John 2:15-17.

 **Read 1 John 2:15-17**

**Discussion Questions:**1. What challenge does John issue here? *(Not to love the world.)*
2. What do you think it means to “love the world”?
3. Why should we not love the world?*(It is not from God and it is temporary.)*

 **Read 1 John 2:18-27**

This passage talks about antichrists. In the early church, this designation was used for lots of people who opposed Jesus’ teaching. In particular, it was a label used for heretics. False teaching is warned against in this passage—another obstacle of being in the Light.

**Discussion Questions:**
1. False teachings are very prevalent today, just as they were then. How do we differentiate between those and true teachings? *(Anyone who denies Jesus is a liar and false teacher.)*2. What does John urge the followers of Christ to do in verse 27? *(Remain in Jesus.)*

So we know that darkness is opposed to light, the world to God, and the truth to lies. But how do we—in the 21st century church—learn to remain in the Light of God and flee the darkness.

That’s what I’d like to talk about next.

MAKING IT REAL (10 minutes)

**Read 1 John 1:1-4**

You might think it’s strange that we saved the first part of this passage for last. But I believe in these verses that John outlines how it is we can become devoted to the Light.

**Be Exposed to the Light**
In the same way that you have to get outside to be in the sunshine, you have to be exposed to God’s Light to live in it.

**Re-read 1 John 1:1-2**

**Discussion Questions:**1. When John states, "that which was from the beginning," to whom or what is he referring? *(Jesus)*
2. How has Jesus made himself known, according to verse 2? *(By appearing.)*
3. How has man bore witness to the Light, according to verse 1? *(By seeing, looking, touching Him.)*
4. What was the reaction of those who saw the Light? *(To bear witness about it.)*

The spreading—or bearing witness for—the Light comes later. And it could NOT happen without the light appearing to us.

5. In what ways has God’s Light shined in your life?
6. How have you been uniquely exposed to the Light of God?
7. Do you remember the first time you felt God’s presence in your life? What did it feel like?

 **Surrender to the Light**
These emotions we have when we are exposed to God’s Light lead us to a point of surrender. It happened in John’s day, too.

**Re-read 1 John 1:3**

**Discussion Questions:**
1. What is the “so that” of verse 3? *(You may also have fellowship with us.)*2. When people fellowship with each other in the Light of God, with whom do they also enjoy fellowship?*(God)*
3. John so desperately wants others to surrender to the Light of God that he proclaims it with his life. Who proclaimed it to you so that you would surrender?
4. In what ways is it hard to fight off darkness and surrender to the Light?

 **Spread the Light**While it is difficult to “be in the Light” at all times, the challenge to do so in this passage—and in this whole larger section of 1 John—is obvious. Furthermore, our responsibility and privilege to help others find refuge in the Light of God is one we should take seriously.

**Re-read 1 John 1:1-4**
This time, have your group count up the amount of times John says “proclaim,” “testify,” or a similar word.

**Discussion Questions:**1. So, how many times did you count? *(I counted 5 in the NIV, including one reference to writing.)*
2. Why do you think proclaiming the truth of God’s Light is so important to John?
3. How is it still important today?
4. How many people, purposes, or institutions that you know of stand for and spread the darkness?
5. If we don’t spread the Light, who will?

CLOSING PRAYER (2 minutes)

Pray that your students can live in the Light of God, in whom there is no darkness. Pray that they have the wisdom to flee the darkness and honor God with their lives.