



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

Bright Lights, Big City / Week 1

SERIES OVERVIEW

SERIES SUMMARY

A series about shining the light of Jesus with your life.

SERIES BOTTOM LINE

A series about shining the light of Jesus with your life.

WEEKLY BOTTOM LINES

WEEK 1: God made you to shine.

WEEK 2: God's light in you brings order to chaos.

WEEK 3: God's light in you brings light to others.

SCRIPTURE

This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: God is light; and there is no darkness in him at all (1 John 1:5 NLT).

"You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father" (Matthew 5:14-16 NLT).

NOTES FOR THIS WEEK

THINK ABOUT THIS

In this series, we're pointing middle schoolers toward understanding what it means to shine the light of Jesus with their lives. At first, this can be an abstract concept for students to grasp. They tend to think literally in this phase, so it's important to take this figurative language and make it more concrete. To do that, talk to students about what light does for us. It helps us see things more clearly, it shows us what's really there, it brings our attention to certain things, and it just generally makes the world brighter. Well, in this same way, we as followers of Jesus were created to shine a figurative light in this world. We can help others see truth more clearly, we can show the world the way Jesus is working, we can bring attention to God's goodness and love, and we can help make the world a better, brighter place. As you encourage your students to take hold of this truth for themselves, remind them that this isn't just a command or call on their lives. It's part of the way God created them, and that means that, right now as middle schoolers, they already have everything they need to shine.

NOTE TO COMMUNICATOR

This week's Interactive, "Created For A Purpose," uses the idea that the way something is designed tells us what we need to know about its function and purpose. Have fun with this, and keep in mind how powerful the application of this is to students: the design of an object determines the function of that object. And in the same way, a student's design says something about their purpose and function.

INTERACTIVE 1: CREATED FOR A PURPOSE

OVERVIEW

For this Interactive, you'll display and explain how two of objects were created for specific functions to draw parallels to how God created each of us for a purpose.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A drum
- A flute or recorder
- Note: If you don't have these items, you can use any two similar items, like...
 - A screwdriver
 - A hammer
 - A nail
 - A piece of wood
- A table to display the objects

PREP

- Place your items on stage to access easily during the Truth section of your talk.

INTERACTIVE 2: LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

OVERVIEW

For this Interactive, you'll demonstrate how a light source can illuminate a whole room to illustrate Matthew 5:14-16 for students.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A lamp
- Access to an electrical outlet
- A short table or chair
- A basket, blanket, or box
- An elevated stand that can hold the lamp
- An adult volunteer

PREP

- Plug the lamp in and place it on a short table or chair.
- Have the elevated stand and basket/blanket/box nearby for easy access.
- Ask an adult volunteer to turn the lights down in your environment when prompted during your talk.

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

- Have you ever been to a big city?
- I loved to drive through and see the lights.
- What if I told you that big city lights are exactly how God created us to be?
- That God made you to shine?
- Our world needs light and life in a big way.

TENSION

- Have you ever experienced a power outage where you live?
- When we're surrounded by darkness in life, it doesn't mean we are experiencing a power outage.
- When I say darkness, I'm talking about the things wrong in our world, like disasters, wars, disease, and so many injustices.
- In our personal lives, darkness can look like continual sadness, fear, or anger in us all the time.
- You might wonder if God is around at all.
- Remember how we talked about the way the big city lights are like how God created us to be?
- That's because God made you to shine!

TRUTH

- *[INTERACTIVE: Created for a Purpose: This is where you'll display and explain how a variety of objects were created for specific functions to draw parallels to how God created each of us for a purpose.]*
- The way something is designed tells us what we need to know about its function and purpose.
- In the same way, your design says something about your purpose and function.
- God created you in the image of God. You were created to reflect who God is to the world.
- Fast-forward in the New Testament to almost the end of the Bible, we read about John, who did life with Jesus. He wrote this:
 - *This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: God is light; and there is no darkness in him at all (1 John 1:5 NLT).*
- God created you in the image of God, and God is light.
- God's light is in YOU.
- Matthew wrote something Jesus told a large group of people.
 - *"You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father" (Matthew 5:14-16 NLT).*
- Jesus said that you are the light of the world. You are a city on a hill.
- God made you to shine.
- According to Jesus, you and I are bright lights, and together, we're a big city.

APPLICATION

- *[INTERACTIVE: Let Your Light Shine: This is where you'll demonstrate how a light source can illuminate a whole room to illustrate Matthew 5:14-16 for students.]*
- The Greek word Jesus used translated "shine" is *lampo*. *Lampo* is where we get our word "lamp" from.
- Like a lamp, each of us can be a light in a dark world. We can bring hope, clarity, support, and love to those around us.
- But it would be pointless to have all this light to shine and then keep our light hidden, right?
- You place a lamp in a high place where it gives light to everyone.

LANDING

- God made you to shine, so don't hide your light!
- How can you shine God's light on the people in your life?

TEACHING SLIDES

All bolded words and phrases in the Teaching Script are also provided as teaching slides for Premium Tier subscribers.



TEACHING SCRIPT

Bright Lights, Big City / Week 1

BOTTOM LINE

GOD MADE YOU TO SHINE.

INTRODUCTION

1 MINUTE

Have you ever been to a big city? Maybe you even live in a big city. I grew up right outside of a big city, and I always loved when I got the chance to visit. I would love just the chance to drive through and see the stadium lights after a big win or just look up in the sky to see how beautiful the lights were.

Now this may feel like a strange turn, but what if I told you that big city lights are exactly how God created us to be? Exactly how God wants us to live? What if the energy you feel from places like New York City is the same life-giving energy that people in your home, school, friend group, and team need from you? And what if I told you that God has perfectly equipped you to display that energy for all to see?

That **God made you to shine?**

Whether you believe that or not, it's not a stretch of the imagination to admit that our world needs light and life in a big way, is it?

TENSION

1 1/2 MINUTES

Let me ask you this: Have you ever experienced a power outage where you live? You don't have to live in a big city or a smaller, quiet town to know how inconvenient that can be! I've experienced major storms affecting the neighborhood I lived in, and the entire block was dark! No streetlights or anything! And a power outage anywhere creates more than one issue. It can affect water, heat, and even the food in the fridge! Where you are, it may even be an everyday thing.

Listen, the same can be true for our lives. When we're surrounded by darkness in life, it doesn't mean we are experiencing a power outage. When I say darkness in this sense, I'm talking about the things wrong in our world like disasters, wars, disease, and so many injustices. Even in our personal lives, darkness can look like continual sadness, fear, or anger in us all the time. It can feel like there's no hope around, and you might wonder where God is in your situation.

Remember how we talked about the way the stars in the sky or big city lights are like how God created us to be and how God wants us to live? That's because **God made you to shine!**

TRUTH

2 1/2 MINUTES

Let me explain.

INTERACTIVE: Created for a Purpose

This is where you'll display and explain how a variety of objects were created for specific functions to draw parallels to how God created each of us for a purpose.

Now, the way something is designed tells us what we need to know about its function and purpose. For example, a drum is designed as a percussion instrument. [*Pound the drum.*] You don't play a drum like a flute. You pound a drum. A flute is designed as a wind instrument. [*Play the flute.*] You don't pound a flute like a drum. [*Carefully pound the flute like a drum.*] It literally doesn't work like that!

What do drums and flutes have to do with you?

Well, everything! The design of an object determines the function of that object. In the same way, your design says something about your purpose and function.

In the beginning of the Bible, the creation story in Genesis tells us that you and I were created in the image of God.

Let's stop and think about that. **God created you in the image of God.** You were created to reflect who God is to the world.

And if you fast-forward in the New Testament to almost the end of the Bible, we read about John, who did life with Jesus. He wrote this:

This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: God is light; and there is no darkness in him at all (1 John 1:5 NLT).

Hold on! Let's stop and think about this, too. **God created you in the image of God, and God is light.** God is light, and you are made in God's image. Are you tracking with me?

God's light is in YOU.

Sandwiched between Genesis and 1 John, Matthew wrote something Jesus told a large group of people.

***"You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father"* (Matthew 5:14-16 NLT).**

Jesus said that you are the light of the world. You are a city on a hill. You were not created to be hidden. You were created to do what light is supposed to do.

God made you to shine.

According to Jesus, you and I are bright lights, and together, we're a big city.

But if we are created to be bright lights, a big city, how do we become brighter and bigger?

APPLICATION

1 1/2 MINUTES

This is where you'll demonstrate how a light source can illuminate a whole room to illustrate Matthew 5:14-16 for students.

[Ask your volunteer to darken your space.]

When Jesus said that we should let our good deeds “*shine out for all to see*,” the Greek word He used translated “shine” is *lampo*. *Lampo* is where we get our word “lamp” from. What does a lamp do? It radiates light. *[Turn on the light.]* That means that, as Jesus’ followers, we are to radiate God’s light, love, and heart into the world. Just like this lamp brought light into this room, each of us can be a light in a dark world. **We can bring hope, clarity, support, and love to those around us.**

But it would be pointless to have all this light to shine and then keep our light hidden, right? Jesus said that no one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. *[Cover the light.]* Instead, you place a lamp in a high place where it gives light to everyone. *[Uncover the lamp and put it in a high location.]* Like a city on a hilltop that can’t be hidden.

Bright lights, big city.

LANDING

1 MINUTE

God made you to shine, so don’t hide your light!

When you head to Group, here’s a question I’d like you to ask yourself: **How can you shine God’s light on the people in your life?**



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS
