Salt and Light (Matthew 5:13-16)

**Scope and Sequence**

**Doctrine:** Holiness, Christian Life, God’s Glory

**Objective**

Students will be challenged to live out their faith to make a noticeable impact on their peers around them.

**Memory Verse**

Matthew 5:16

Why does the light need to shine?

**Hook:** How to Be Salt and Light

Salt is necessary for life. Salt is used to preserve fruits and meats, to add flavor to food, and even to heal wounds. In Roman times, it was difficult to obtain and was considered very valuable. Soldiers were paid with salt, which gives us the English word *salary* and the phrase to be “worth his salt.”

**Lesson Content:** Being right with God

I. You are the *salt* of the earth (v. 13)

II. You are the light of the world (vv. 14-16)

**Connection:** Make your light shine

Salt and light are meant to be tasted and seen. We as Christ followers cannot allow the culture to transform us. We must allow the Gospel of Jesus Christ to transform us and make our light shine brighter.

**Decision:** Be Salt and Light

I’m going to challenge you to be salt and light in an arena that it is easy to hide in: social media. It is tempting to be a different person, to pretend like it’s a different world. But I am challenging you to be salt and light this week simply by finding things to post and share that show the light of Christ to the world. Simply post a quote, a Bible verse, or a picture and hashtag it #saltandlight.

**Worth Repeating:** Salt and light are meant to be tasted and seen.
**Definitions**

**Righteousness:** The condition of being right with God.

**Checklist**

- Salted and unsalted snacks for introduction
- Blindfold
- Prepared handout or PowerPoint slide with questions for discussion
- Flashlights, 2-3 leaders with flash lights
- A PowerPoint presentation for this lesson is available.

**Resources**


http://www.creativeyouthideas.com/resources/object-lessons/salt-of-the-earth-an-object-lesson-for-youth/#ixzz3t838Mkqd

**Additional Teacher Resources**

“You are the Light of The World” 8 minute video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NO45nSgW-ag

A simple recommendation is to use the introduction activity as an introduction. It almost could be used as the ice breaker if you want it to be. If you don’t want it to cut into teaching time then this is a suggestion.

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**Hook: How to Be Salt and Light**

**Teacher's Note**

Begin the lesson by playing this game. Below is a list of things you will need for this game and some instruction. Be sure to select students who do not have food allergies to play along. This game should take no longer than 10 minutes. (see [http://www.creativeyouthideas.com/resources/object-lessons/salt-of-the-earth-an-object-lesson-for-youth/#ixzz3t838Mkqd](http://www.creativeyouthideas.com/resources/object-lessons/salt-of-the-earth-an-object-lesson-for-youth/#ixzz3t838Mkqd) for more info)

1. Salted and unsalted peanuts
2. Salted and unsalted popcorn
3. Salted and unsalted snacks
4. Dried fruits / salt-preserved fruits
5. Blindfolds

(If you want to add more fun, buy a variety of jelly bean flavors. Jelly Belly has a lot of creative flavors but any Jelly Beans will work.)

**Preparation:** Place the snacks into separate bags or bowls.

**What to do**

1. Blindfold students and ask them to identify the various foods by taste.
2. Ask the student to describe the various foods and the differences. Make a list.

We are going to start our lesson with a game, so I need a few brave volunteers! You will be blindfolded and asked to identify a variety of foods by taste only! I promise nothing you are going to eat is gross or something you would be afraid to eat. Can you identify some ordinary foods by taste alone?

**Teacher's Note**

Select a few students and administer the game. **Ask the students:** Which of the foods has the strongest taste and why? Which of the foods do you think is the
What are some foods that taste better, that come to life, when a little salt is added (potato chips, French fries, peanuts, popcorn)?

What one ingredient made all the foods better? Salt!

Salt is necessary for life. Salt is used to preserve fruits and meats, to add flavor to food, and even to heal wounds. In Roman times, it was difficult to obtain and was considered very valuable. Soldiers were paid with salt, which gives us the English word salary and the phrase to be “worth his salt.”

Did you know that Jesus talked about salt in the Bible? Jesus would often use parables, an earthly story with a spiritual meaning, to teach His followers how to follow Him. We are going to look at two of those: salt and light. We will learn about the usefulness of salt and the need for light from Matthew 5.

So what exactly does it mean to be salt and light in the world? Let’s take a look at what Jesus says:

*Have a student read the passage found in Matthew 5:13-16.*

**Teacher’s Note**

Lesson Content: Being Right With God

Visualize this with me…Jesus is standing and preaching what is typically called the Sermon on the Mount at this point of the passage. He enters a time of ministry where the standard of “righteousness” has been set by some pretty uptight religious leaders called Pharisees. Not everyone could be righteous in the Pharisees eyes, especially if they were not willing to become a Pharisee too.

Jesus begins to tell all the people that they need to be righteous, but it’s different from the Pharisees’ message. When Jesus talks about righteousness here He is talking about the condition of being right with God, not following the manmade rules of the Pharisees.

Here Jesus is talking to everyone. Not the religious elite or the theologians. He is talking to people much like you and me: the “average Joes.” Jesus is doing something the people are not accustomed to; He is helping the average person connect to God.

For them to understand better, Jesus uses metaphors to help them picture these wonderful truths from God’s Word. Every one of them is dependent on salt to flavor and preserve their food and light to see.

This lesson is meant to remind us of how the world can taste and see the goodness of the Lord in our lives! Salt and light are meant to be tasted and seen. There are some big points in this passage of Scripture that will help us focus in on that.

I. You are the salt of the earth (v. 13)
   Have you ever tasted something that lacked salt? Something you really expected to taste wonderful but really lacked what you were expecting? There is often nothing more dissatisfying. However, when salt is added, flavor becomes more intense. This is exactly what Jesus is after from His listeners.
People are tuning in to Jesus. They think WE CAN actually do this! Not only does salt provide flavor and make things taste better, it preserves. It allows things to last longer. In essence Jesus is saying, “You can preserve the truth against evil and enhance the craving for God in the world.” Flavor is something that is satisfying and Jesus is the only One that is truly satisfying.

If Jesus has truly satisfied you with the relationship that you have with Him, then you can be the “salt of the earth.” This preservative that is spoken of is something that lasts. The greatest blessing Jesus gives us is a lasting relationship. This satisfaction through Christ that we bring to the world as Christians is one that truly lasts!

The world that we live in is evil and there is nothing good in us according to Romans 7:18. This broken world needs help and healing. Salt can also be used to bring healing. You can put salt on an open wound to cause it to heal quicker. All around you people are facing brokenness in their lives, and what they need to know is that Jesus is the answer. You can provide the remedy they need as you become the salt of the earth. Jesus can use you to help others because He is working in your life to do the following:

A. **Flavor** – The salt Jesus brings into your life can enhance others’ taste for God.

B. **Preservative** – Jesus can use you to stand against the evils of the world and stand up for what is right.

C. **Healing** – Jesus can make you into someone who promotes healing as you show the love of Jesus Christ.

**Student activity**

Break students up in discussion groups to discuss the following questions. Prepare a handout or PowerPoint slide with the questions on it. Allow three to four minutes of discussion to take place. Have a spokesperson from each group share with the rest of the groups what they came up with.

**In what way can Christian students bring “the flavor” to the world?**

Examples: Not being weird, knowing what the Bible says. Owning your own faith, standing your ground spiritually, letting your friends know you are a Christ follower.

**What would it look like to stand against the evil in school or when you are with friends?**

Examples: Sticking up for someone who is being bullied, befriending a kid whom others make fun or tease.

**How could you promote healing and show Christ’s love in your world?**

Examples: Healing often comes by forgiveness. Forgiving people when they wrong you is a great way to promote healing.

At the end of this activity keep them where they are. There should be no reason to move them around again.

Okay, we are going to break up into groups of three or four and talk through what this means. Each group will have a handout or can look at the PowerPoint slide. Take three to four minutes and discuss and then be ready to report your findings to the group.
After three to four minutes bring the group back together and allow them to share their answers.

Something else that Jesus points out is that if salt loses its flavor, then it is good for nothing. The one thing no one desires is to be good for nothing. The passage talks about this and states that when salt becomes “unsalty” it is thrown on the ground and trampled underfoot. So none of us want this to be our lives, but how can we avoid this?

The answer is, you marinate. Don’t laugh! Let’s continue this word picture and see how we can preserve our saltiness.

Marinating is the process of soaking foods in a seasoned liquid before cooking. Marinating is a way to gain a great and new flavor in meat. It is often used to add flavor to steaks or chicken or other meats before they are cooked. Marinating can only work if meat is put in it to sit and soak for a while in order to gain flavor. Similarly, you can gain some flavor in your walk with Christ by allowing yourself to “marinate” in the Word of God, to sit and soak under its teaching and allow it to soak into your life. This is how we who are the salt of the earth stay salty.

Jesus takes it a step further in His sermon. There is more than being the “salt of the earth.”

II. You are the light of the world (vv. 14-16)

Have you ever been caving?

If you have one, it would be a great point to share your caving story. Also, it would be great to have a headlamp that would enhance the next few points. The following link is to an inexpensive headlamp, http://bit.ly/1IOuXRF.

You can also show a caving video like the one below to show what you are talking about.

“Indoor Caving Adventure | Activity Breaks at Center Parcs UK” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MuNPS9Hqh-k

Caves are extremely dark. Generally what happens when a person goes caving is the guide will ask those with him or her to turn their headlamps off to allow their eyes to adjust to the darkness.

In the world, it is often the exact same way. The people you are surrounded by are used to the darkness! Christians are the only ones that have the true Light in a dark world. People usually do not plan on staying in caves, but while they are there they need the light.

The world needs the light of Christ, which is the power that will drive away the darkness. Christ is the Light of the world, and according to Colossians 1:27 Christ in us is the hope of glory! Paul is saying in Colossians that Christ in us changes everything. He is the power source to the light we have! So let your light shine! Salt and light are meant to be tasted and seen!

There is such a significance to the title “the Light” in the Bible. It was not given to any of the prophets or kings, not even John the Baptist (John 1:8). So it is a bold statement in John 8:12 when Jesus declares that He is the Light of the World!
This makes it so amazing and special that Jesus calls us, His followers, the light of the world! How can that be? We certainly have a lot we need to understand if we are going to do our part to shine His light for all the world to see!

A. The **Power** of Light

1. **More light** shines brighter.

   To demonstrate the darkness of the world you are going to shut the lights off in the room. You may have to prepare ahead by closing window shades, covering exit signs, and so on, to make it really dark. Have two or three other youth leaders prepared to turn their phone on, flashlight app, or bring a flashlight with them. Inform them before the service you will let them know when to turn it on. At this point in the message ask someone to turn the lights off but leave the light you have on. Illustrate that with your light everyone can see so much. Then ask the other leaders to turn on their lights and watch the room grow brighter.

   How many of you are afraid of the dark? It can be scary, but the light overcomes darkness. Don’t be scared, but we are going to shut the lights off now in the room. Wow, it’s pretty dark! But look, I have my flashlight! (Turn your flashlight on.)

   Look at how much we can see with just my flashlight. It isn’t nearly as scary and we can see a little. But watch this; leaders can you turn on your flashlights too? Thank you! Look at how much brighter it gets! If you have a flashlight/cell phone, turn on your light and join our light party!!

   This illustration points to the truth of the message Jesus is trying to make: More light shines brighter together. As we add another light, the darkness continues to flee! As we reach people for Jesus Christ and we all live as lights to the world together, the darkness flees! This is what can happen in your family, in your schools, in your workplace, on your sports team, or wherever you are. You need other believers and they need you to be lights to this dark world.

2. **Lights do not hide** themselves (v. 15).

   Has there ever been a time that you were ashamed of your faith? If so, you are not alone. Many believers, especially teenagers today, have trouble living out their faith and speaking boldly. Please do not think you are a failure. Jesus speaks directly to this weakness here. Lights are meant to be beneficial to those around them. They cannot help others if they are hidden. Jesus is reminding His followers to live boldly for Him and not hide the fact that they are following Christ.

   To walk in the dark is often dangerous. One of the first things we usually do in a dark room is look for the light switch. There are often students around you that need the light that you have. This is why salt and light are meant to be tasted and seen. May we as students walk in this world, guiding others in the light that Christ has given us.

3. Your light is meant to give **God glory** (v. 16).

   What we must recognized is that we are not meant to live for Christ so that we can gain attention for ourselves. We are meant to live for Christ by shining a light so that “they would see our good deeds and glorify our Father who is in heaven.” The goal of living for Christ in front of others is
to bring **glory to God**. Ultimately what we should desire to see is people coming to know Jesus as Savior. They will see that the Gospel has transformed you and that you are living it out daily before others. What brings God glory is when we realize that the salt and light are meant to be lived out in the believer’s life to point others to Him. The question you may be asking yourself is, “Well, how do I actually live this stuff out?”

**Connection: Make your light shine**

Often it is hardest to live for Christ in two arenas: family and friends. It is often the most difficult to talk about Jesus to close family. Maybe you have some family members who do not see Christ in you. Perhaps you have not been salt and light to them.

School is often the most intimidating place on the planet to live for Jesus. In a meeting with some student leaders during camp one summer they were discussing living as an example on the school campus and one high school student said, “It is just easier to keep your mouth shut.” Never forget that statement. It is almost a direct slap in the face to the Lord. Salt and light are meant to be tasted and seen. We as Christ followers cannot allow the culture to transform us. We must allow the Gospel of Jesus Christ to **transform** us and make our light shine brighter. There are some very real questions that need to be asked of you that you need to evaluate right now. Think about these questions:

- Does the life that you live glorify God?
- Do the things you say or the way you act on the sports field shine the light of Christ?
- Does the way you treat your parents season your home with the salt of the Gospel?
- Does what you do with your boyfriend or girlfriend in the dark leave room for the light of Jesus?
- Does what you watch on the computer, on your phone, or on your television reflect the light of Christ?
- Are any of your last five tweets giving glory to the God Who has saved you?
- Does your Instagram account mirror your image or God’s?

The words Jesus spoke to those people 2000 years ago aren’t meant to be forgotten; they are meant to connect to everyone. If salt isn’t flavoring the food it’s applied to, if it has lost its flavor, then it’s worthy of nothing and is to be discarded. Does that describe your faith walk? The very words of Jesus on this subject in Matthew 5 are pretty clear. If you aren’t attracting others to Him by creating in others a greater desire for Him, maybe you need to ask yourself, “Am I living as salt as Jesus desires for me to live?”

**Decision: Be Salt and Light**

Where do you have the most influence? Who are you around the most? Maybe it’s at home, school, sports practice, band, or with your boyfriend or girlfriend. Whatever it is, are you willing to commit to be a light for Jesus wherever you are?
It is tempting to keep quiet. It is tempting to hide. But Jesus has called you to be salt and light. How can you be salt and light if you are hiding and keeping your mouth shut?

I’m going to challenge you to be salt and light in an arena that it is easy to hide in: social media. It is tempting to be a different person, to pretend like it’s a different world. But I am challenging you to be salt and light this week simply by finding things to post and share that show the light of Christ to the world. Simply post a quote, a Bible verse, or a picture and hashtag it #saltandlight. Let’s see what we can do this week together.

Matter of fact, why wait until later? Who wants to get your phone out now and tweet, share, post, Instagram, whatever method, #saltandlight?