

Living in the Light



- Great for Sunday school, VBS, and other summer programs
- Five large group sessions
- Five small group sessions for Kindergarten-Grade 3 and Grades 4-8
- Five original dramas
- Large selection of crafts and activities
- Complete—no other resources to buy

LEADER'S GUIDE K-8 SUMMER BOOK 7

Living *in the* **Light**



Grand Rapids, Michigan

Any questions or comments about this unit?
We'd love to hear from you:

Faith Alive Christian Resources
1-800-333-8300
E-mail: editors@faithaliveresources.org

RCA Children's Ministry Office
1-800-968-3943
E-mail: childrensministry@rca.org

Presbyterians for Renewal
1-502-425-4630
E-mail: office@pfrenewal.org

Walk With Me curriculum has been developed by Faith Alive Christian Resources in cooperation with the Children's Ministry Office of the Reformed Church in America and with Presbyterians for Renewal.

We are grateful to Roger Groenboom, Alison Groenboom, and Susan Thornell for their work in developing this unit of *Walk With Me*. We also thank artist Margo Burian for providing illustrations.

Unless otherwise indicated, the Scripture quotations in this publication are from the Holy Bible, Today's New International Version, © 2001, 2005 by International Bible Society. All rights reserved worldwide. Used by permission.

Walk With Me

Kindergarten-Grade 8

Summer, Book 7: Living in the Light

© 2008 by Faith Alive Christian Resources, 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49560. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America.

www.WalkWithMeOnline.org

ISBN: 978-1-59255-246-7

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Contents

- How to Use This Book 4
- Tips for VBS and Other Summer Ministries 6
- Tailoring Your Sessions to the Ways Children Learn 8
- Sample Summer Celebration Program and Program Notes 9
- Session 1: John the Baptist
 - Large Group Session 12
 - Small Group Session, K-3 16
 - Small Group Session, 4-8 26
- Session 2: Bartimaeus
 - Large Group Session 36
 - Small Group Session, K-3 38
 - Small Group Session, 4-8 46
- Session 3: Zacchaeus
 - Large Group Session 56
 - Small Group Session, K-3 60
 - Small Group Session, 4-8 68
- Session 4: Mary
 - Large Group Session 76
 - Small Group Session, K-3 80
 - Small Group Session, 4-8 88
- Session 5: Paul
 - Large Group Session 96
 - Small Group Session, K-3 100
 - Small Group Session, 4-8 108
- Dramas 115
- Songs 135
- Reproducible Pages 149
- Leader’s Evaluation 191



How to Use This Book

“I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in the darkness.”

(John 12:46)

Jesus’ words bring hope to us all—and especially to the kids you’ll be working with in this summer program! We live in a world that’s used to darkness and brokenness; but this summer you’ll have the privilege of sharing with kids the amazing truth that Jesus brings light—he’s the Light of the World. His light turns our lives around!

The Scripture stories in this unit feature people who received and lived in Jesus’ light—John the Baptist, Bartimaeus, Zacchaeus, Mary Magdalene, and Paul. We hope the reenactment of each of these personal encounters with the living Lord will draw the children you work with to believe in Jesus and to desire to live in his light.

As you build on the theme of this unit from session to session, share with the children the personal joy *you* have experienced as you follow Jesus, the Light of the World.

Goal and Theme

The unique format of this five-session course allows you to use it as a lively and exciting curriculum for your summer church school or for an entire week of summer ministry such as vacation Bible school (see pp. 6-7 for helpful tips).

Whether you choose a church school or summer ministry setting, the goal of this course is to teach children five stories that reinforce this wonderful truth: Jesus is the Light of the World! We pray that leaders, children, and all who participate in these sessions (and in the final celebration program) will want to know Jesus better and live in his light from day to day. To meet this goal, we’ll introduce the children to five biblical characters who encountered Jesus in powerful and life-changing ways. And, more importantly, we’ll come to know that we, too—like John, Bartimaeus, Zacchaeus, Mary, and Paul—can live in Jesus’ light and share his amazing love with others.

To support our theme, this book offers a variety of ideas and options for large group sessions, small group sessions, and a summer celebration program. Use the ideas and options that work best with your church school or summer ministry. Ideally, the large group session would take about 15-20 minutes, after which kids break into their small group sessions for 30-40 minutes. You may also want to schedule an extra practice time or two if your church is planning to host the summer celebration program.

Finding time to do everything in this book will not be possible—or even desirable—for most churches. Choose what your group can handle in the time you have available.

Be sure to purchase one copy of this book for each of your leaders. As purchaser of this book you are granted permission to photocopy the dramas (pp. 115-134), patterns, and activities on reproducible pages 149-188.

Getting Started

Because these materials suggest a different format and approach than the regular *Walk With Me* units, you’ll want to spend some extra time planning and preparing to teach these sessions. Although each church situation is unique, you may find some of the following suggestions helpful:

- In early spring, organize a small team to read through this book. They can review the session plans, dramas, and songs, then choose what they think will work best for your church.
- After the committee makes its recommendations, recruit teachers, song leaders, accompanists, and drama participants.

- Recruit volunteers who are willing to gather materials for these special sessions. Give them plenty of time for this task (a month or two) since they will likely want to ask the congregation to save and/or gather some of the items.
- Schedule rehearsals for the drama team.
- If you're planning to use the summer celebration program, schedule a final rehearsal for everyone involved in the program.

Large Group Sessions and Summer Celebration Program

The large group session materials include a drama for each week and a list of songs to learn as a whole group. Presenting a drama may, at first, sound intimidating, but these dramas are written in such a way that children as well as adults will enjoy performing and/or viewing them. Each drama takes about eight to ten minutes and requires five to eight actors (more actors are optional). The costumes may be as simple or elaborate as you like.

You'll probably want middle school kids or a team of older teens to play these roles (although adults would be fine too). Most of the dramas offer ways to include younger children in nonspeaking roles, if you wish to do so. Please see session 1 for more information on using the dramas.

The dramas and songs can be used for each large group session and also for the summer celebration program. You'll find a sample program along with ideas for organizing and producing it on pages 9-11.

Small Group Sessions

Small group sessions will give you the opportunity to help apply the story to the children's lives. If you are unable to present the story as a drama in the large group setting, you can still use the drama or another form of the story in the small group setting. It's a story you want children to hear!

Each small group opens with a *Hello* step designed to catch the children's interest and get them thinking about the lesson's theme.

Next comes the *Know* step (telling the story). If the children have already heard the story in the large group session, you'll want to use this time to review the story with them. If you did not participate in a large group session, either use the drama or another interesting way to present the story to the group (see sessions for suggestions).

The *Grow* step will help children understand what the story means for their lives, and the *Show* step will guide them to respond to what they learned in the session.

Each small group session includes options for activities and crafts. You'll want to carefully consider these well ahead of time. Once you've decided which crafts and activities to use, you may want to appoint two or more volunteers (possibly parents of children in the group) to gather materials, cut out patterns, and assemble the items you'll need. You'll also appreciate having a helper in the classroom when doing crafts and other activities with young children.

We pray that God will use you and your volunteers as you teach children the good news that Jesus brings light to this world—and to us as we follow him. May you experience the warmth of Jesus' love in new and surprising ways as you share that love with his children!



Small group leaders may want to send a short letter to the families of the kids in their group at the beginning of this unit. Explain what these five sessions will be like, and invite families to share in the experience by praying for you, talking about the stories with their kids, helping out in your sessions, and/or attending the final celebration program (if you plan to have one).

Tips for VBS and Other Summer Ministries

Much of this material was originally written for vacation Bible school at Westview Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan, by Rev. Roger Groenboom, Alison Groenboom, and Susan Thornell. You can use the five sessions for a five-day vacation Bible school, as the authors did, or for a once-a-week program that lasts five weeks. Here's a suggested schedule and format for using the large group and small group approach for vacation Bible school.

Opening Large Group Session (30 minutes)

- Opening prayer and singing time (Check each session for song suggestions; all are included on the CD that accompanies this course.)
- Drama time (See pp. 115-134 for dramas for each of the sessions and tips on how to present them. Purchasers of this book may photocopy all drama scripts.)

Small Group Sessions (45-90 minutes)

Small groups may spend 45 minutes or more enjoying the four steps of the session plans. Remember that you'll need to make some choices about what to use and what to ignore, especially in the Show part of each session.

- The Hello step (10 minutes) gets you started with a fun activity that introduces the theme of the session.
- The Know step (10-15 minutes) gives you some great ways to review the Bible story that was presented in the large group session.
- The Grow step (10-15 minutes) helps nurture faith as kids think about how the Bible story affects their lives.
- The Show step (15-30 minutes or more) helps kids respond to the Bible story through a variety of crafts and activities. You'll find unit-long suggestions for learning the Memory Fun/Memory Challenge, publishing a newspaper, and retelling the story to others. You'll also find single-session ideas for crafts, fun projects, and other activities.

Closing Large Group Session (15 minutes)

You may want to get the entire VBS group back together for a time of singing and sharing. If you're planning a summer celebration program, you can use this time to review the songs that are a part of the program. Kids can recite their memory work and show their crafts or other projects to the entire group. End your time together by inviting everyone to join hands for prayer.

Forming Ministry Teams

"Living in the Light" provides a great opportunity for many people from your congregation to become involved in summer outreach ministry. Here are a few suggestions for setting up teams of people from your congregation:

- *Planning team:* Decides the dates of the program. Assists and guides the various teams so that the main theme and vision of the VBS or other outreach program is apparent.
- *Music team:* Chooses music, finds the music leader and musicians, selects music for the final program. This material suggests a number of songs and includes them on a CD.
- *Publicity team:* Creates small fliers and distributes them throughout the neighborhood. Gets the word out about the location, dates, and theme.
- *Program team:* Organizes the program and possibly an "after-program" event like an ice-cream social or picnic.

- *Small group session team:* Selects the ideas that will be used for the small group sessions, especially the craft and activity time.
- *Drama team:* Recruits actors, obtains the necessary items for each drama, and presents the drama to the entire VBS. See session 1 for additional comments.
- *Decoration team:* Decorates the large group session area as desired, perhaps with large drawings of the characters in the stories (use an overhead projector to trace onto heavy paper), enlarged Memory Fun/Memory Challenge verses and “Living in the Light” logo, and so on.

We encourage you to draw on the diverse gifts of members when you compose your teams. Involve as many people from the congregation as you can! Share with others your enthusiasm about these stories and how the children respond to them.

Terrific Tees



Westview Church makes the summer program extra-special for the kids each year by ordering T-shirts for all participants. (See reproducible page 149 for a “Living in the Light” logo that can be screenprinted onto shirts or printed on a program.) When ordered in large quantities, printed T-shirts are quite inexpensive. Look for a printer in your area. At Westview the staff receive their shirts on the Sunday prior to VBS and are asked to wear them all week. The kids who attend VBS receive their shirts on the last day of the program and are encouraged to wear them to the church picnic/final VBS celebration program.

Tailoring Your Sessions to the Ways Children Learn

How do children and young teens learn? The answer to that question can be almost as varied as the kids in your group. Some learn best through words. Others through music. Still others through nature or through movement.

Sessions in the *Walk With Me* curriculum try to respect the many ways kids learn. *Walk With Me* sessions include a wide range of activities that speak to kids with the following types of intelligence (based on Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences). Within each session, the icons below highlight the learning styles represented by each activity. As you teach, you'll begin to get a sense for how the kids in your group learn best. Kids who are



Word Smart

learn best through verbal activities (listening, reading, or speaking), including discussions, worksheets, writing, reading, storytelling, and word games.



Number Smart

learn best by exploring patterns and relationships through activities such as problem solving, logical puzzles or games, making charts and graphs, or putting things in sequence.



Picture Smart

learn best by visualizing concepts. These kids enjoy viewing maps, slides, pictures, videos, and diagrams; making jigsaw puzzles; and expressing their ideas with shape, color, and design.



Body Smart

learn best by using their bodies, acting things out, using puppets, moving—anything hands-on.



Music Smart

learn best through sound, music, and rhythm—playing musical instruments, writing their own songs and raps, listening to recordings, singing, and so on.



People Smart

learn best through doing things with others, cooperating and working in small or large groups, role playing, conversations, brainstorming, and other interactive exercises.



Self Smart

learn best by working independently through such things as writing in a journal, meditating, reading, and reflecting.



Earth Smart

learn best through activities connected to living things and natural phenomena, through nature walks, examining plants and animals, nature experiments, and activities that focus on ecology.

—The ideas on this page are based on material from the following resources: *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom* by Thomas Armstrong, © 2000, and a chart prepared by Donald L. Griggs, Livermore, California.

A Summer Celebration Program

Living in the Light!

Processional: “Walk, Walk, Walk” (traditional)

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Song: “He Came Down” (Cameroon traditional, arr. John Bell)

Memory Poster Presentation: Matthew 5:16

Song: “Shine, Jesus, Shine” (Graham Kendrick)

Drama: “It’s No Joke, Bartimaeus” (based on Mark 10:46-52)

Congregational Song: “Open Our Eyes, Lord” (Robert Cull, arr. David Allen)

Drama: “What’s Up, Zack?” (based on Luke 19:1-10)

Congregational Song: “I Am the Light of the World” (June Fischer Armstrong)

Drama: “Mary in Jeopardy” (based on John 20:1-18)

Songs: “Alive, Alive” (Group Publishing), “Walk Like Jesus” (Mary Rice Hopkins)

Meditation

Closing Prayer

Program Notes

Having a summer celebration program is a great way to help focus your church's attention on sharing the good news about Jesus. This program can be used during a Sunday service or for a special weeknight "bring-a-neighbor" service. Read through the sample program (previous page), and use it as a guide for creating your own unique program. You may want to use the logo on page 149 for a program cover.

Here are a few additional program ideas:

Scripture Readings

- You'll note that we've included three of the unit dramas in the program. If you wish to present all five Scripture stories, you could have children who are good readers present the other two from the Bible. Consider using simplified English versions such as the New International Reader's Version or the New Living Bible. *The Message* could also be used for one or both readings.
- If you didn't use the Memory Poster idea for a unit project, have the children recite Matthew 5:16 in unison for the audience instead.

Songs

- We've suggested some songs for the children to sing during the program. Even if the group knows all the songs by the last session, you may still want to plan an extra practice session, perhaps on a Saturday or an evening. Singing a closing song during your weekly or daily sessions will also give kids time to practice the songs.
- You may want to divide the songs. For example, kids in K-3 could learn a few of the songs while kids in the other grades learn the rest. For the program, have each group sing the songs they've learned, instead of having all the kids sing together. Or have boys learn some songs and girls learn others.
- The audience sings songs between the dramas ("Open Our Eyes, Lord" and "I Am the Light of the World.") If your kids made castanets in session 4, consider using them as an accompaniment to the singing of one or both of these songs.

Drama

- Your audience is sure to be delighted by the dramas from this course. We've included these three for the summer celebration program: "It's No Joke, Bartimaeus," "What's Up, Zack?" and "Mary in Jeopardy." Of course, if you think one or both of the other dramas would be more effective, feel free to substitute.
- The dramas can be presented by your drama team or by other adults, young adults, and middle-schoolers. Props, costumes, and sets can be as simple or elaborate as you like. Read through the suggestions at the beginning of each drama.

Stage Direction Ideas for the Program

- **Pre-processional:** Have the children line up at the back of the church.
- **Processional:** All of the children process down the aisle from the back of the church, singing "Walk, Walk, Walk" and doing the accompanying actions. (You may want to encourage the kids to interact with folks seated on the aisles, shaking hands, giving hugs and high fives, and so forth.)
- **Formation in front:** Line kids up in front. They can be spread across the front of the worship space in a single row or several rows. (During rehearsal, assign each child an area where they will stand during the singing time of the program.)
- **Singing:** If you plan to have all the children sing all the songs, you might want to keep the whole group in front of church. (If there are steps at the front of the church, use these as risers.) If smaller groups are singing certain songs, have children stay seated (on the steps or in front rows) until it's their turn to sing.
- **Opening Prayer:** Have one of the older kids open with prayer. He or she can thank God for the Bible stories they've learned in this unit and ask God's blessing on the program.

- **Transition to drama:** After kids sing “Shine, Jesus, Shine,” have them sit down on the steps or in the front rows. Have the accompanist play music during this transition time.
- **Dramas:** The drama team will need to set up and take down quickly. They may need some extra stagehands to help them. Sets and props do not have to be elaborate; perhaps they can be partially set up ahead of time. Have the accompanist play music during transition times before and after the dramas. (Note that the congregation sings between the first and second dramas and again between the second and third.)
- **Transition to meditation:** Sing the song “Walk Like Jesus” through two times, inviting the congregation to join you the second time. The children should be seated following this song.

Optional Songs

Feel free to substitute songs from this unit for songs we’ve suggested in the program. Or, if your church has songbooks in the pews, you might want to substitute songs related to the unit theme, “Living in the Light.”



John the Baptist

Scripture

Mark 1:1-11

Focus

God sent John to tell people about Jesus, the Light of the World.

WORDSearch

Think About It

John the Baptist preached to prepare people for the coming of Jesus, the Light of the World. He preached repentance: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near!” (Matt. 3:2) He preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 1:4). Have you ever thought about why John made such a big deal about repentance?

Well, John knew who was on the way. John knew that Someone huge was coming to his tiny corner of the world. How huge? As a desert wanderer preaching to a bunch of other people with dirty, dusty, stinky feet, John hit the nail on the head and drove the message home. The conversation might have gone something like this . . .

John starts off, “The best way to explain who’s coming is to talk about sandals. You know, our footwear? Those sandals that no one but a slave would ever be asked to stoop down and untie? Taking off someone’s sandals is the lowliest of the low, menial tasks. I’m telling you, the One who is coming is so huge that you or I couldn’t even stoop down and untie his sandals.”

And the people might respond: “Well, of course not, John. No one—except maybe a slave—would ever think of untying someone else’s sandals. Like you said, the job’s just too dirty. We would never stoop that low.”

And John would patiently explain. “No, friends, you misunderstand me. I’m not saying you *wouldn’t* stoop down and untie his sandals. I’m saying you *couldn’t*. I’m not saying that task is beneath you, I’m saying we’re beneath that task. Compared to him, that’s how low we are, that’s how dirty we are, that’s how unworthy we are. So if Someone with feet and sandals like that is coming, it’s high time we got cleaned up. Repent! Be baptized with water.”

John was saying that when Someone huge is coming over, you get washed up. You comb your hair. You brush your teeth. John wanted people to prepare the way for the Lord; prepare their hearts for the Lord; ask forgiveness, turn *from* sin, and turn *to* the honored Guest. John preached repentance because the greatest honored Guest of all was about to arrive.

Pray About It

Pray that the children in your class will understand how important it is for us to see how big God is and how small we are, how worthy God is and how unworthy we are. Pray that the children will see the need for preparing their hearts for Jesus, that they will see the need for us to ask forgiveness and to repent—to turn *from* sin and turn *to* God.

Tell About It

Tell your students how important it is for us to confess our sins, ask forgiveness, turn from sin, and turn to God every day. Tell them about *your* experience with daily confession and repentance. Is it hard sometimes? Does it help you grow closer to God? Does it relieve you of the daily burden of sin? Does it prepare you to meet Jesus again each day?

Planning the Session

You are in charge of presenting the story of John the Baptist and his mission to the whole group of children—kindergarteners through eighth graders—in your church school or VBS program. What a wonderful challenge!

The little ones in your gathering will be amazed by the clothing and menu of the man God chose to prepare the way for Jesus, but they'll also begin to sense the truth of Christ's coming to light our way in this world. Your older learners will be able to sense this truth on a deeper level. They'll be more likely to grasp the analogy between light and the redeeming work of Jesus—the Savior whom John introduced to the people of that day—and our day.

Regardless of the level at which the children in your group comprehend the meaning of this story of John the Baptist, you'll want to concentrate on presenting a lively and interesting story for all to live into and enjoy. The small group sessions that follow the story presentation will help the kids dig a little deeper, probing the story's meaning at a level appropriate for each age group (K-3; 4-8).

Depending on the time you have available, you'll probably want to reserve five or ten minutes for singing and another ten or fifteen minutes for the drama.

If you plan to present a summer celebration program to cap off this unit, you may want to use part of each large group session to help the children prepare. You'll find suggestions for program planning on pages 9-11.

The suggestions we've given here for the large group session assume that you'll be dramatizing the story of John the Baptist for the entire group and preparing them to respond to its message in the small group sessions that follow.

Singing

You may want to ask someone with musical gifts to lead the singing and teach new songs to the children during each of the five sessions. Be sure to share the tips in the box "Introducing a New Song" with your music leader.

You'll find the songs on pages 135-148 of this book and on the accompanying CD. A great warm-up song that captures the theme of this unit and will get everyone involved is "Shine, Jesus, Shine" (track 1). Check out song tracks 2 and 3 on the CD for songs that echo today's Scripture story: "Prepare the Way of the Lord" and "He Came Down."

You may want to let your group know that for the next five sessions you'll be talking about light, singing about light, and learning more about Jesus, who brings light to our world. Invite the children to suggest songs that tell about the light Jesus brings into our lives—and how we, too, can bring that light to others around us.

If you do plan to present a summer celebration program for parents and neighbors, you'll want to dedicate time to preparing the music. You might want to divide up the music that will be part of the program, assigning the simpler songs to younger children and the more challenging music to the older group for learning in the small group sessions.

Introducing a New Song

Many kids learn songs best by rote and repetition. Listen to the CD or play the tune and encourage the kids to join in on a line or phrase at a time. You may want to start by teaching them a phrase that repeats often.

Make up motions that interpret simple words in the song and will serve as aids to memory (there are no "right" or "wrong" motions!).

Be enthusiastic! Model your love of singing—and don't be overly concerned about your performance.



Drama

Rehearsing and presenting a drama can be a fun and rewarding experience—both for the actors and the audience. For this week’s drama, “John and the Flea Market Folks,” (pp. 115-117) you’ll need seven reading parts plus as many nonspeaking parts as you want to assign.

According to Rev. Roger Groenboom, author of the dramas in this course and pastor of the church where this material was taught in a VBS setting, the kids enjoyed watching the pastor and other teens and adults acting in the skits. “They especially enjoyed it when I goofed up the lines,” says Roger. He said the team managed to “loosely” memorize their lines, giving them freedom to improvise a bit as they went along. On the weekend before VBS began, the team rehearsed the first two dramas. Once VBS was underway, they rehearsed and learned lines in the evening.

To cut down on the time required from drama team members, consider forming more than one team. If your drama teams don’t have time for memorization, reading the lines from scripts you provide is fine too. Drama teams can still rehearse together even if they don’t memorize their lines.

It’s a good idea to recruit actors and begin working on the dramas well before your first session. This could be a wonderful gift for your middle school group to offer the younger children in your program. Check out teens and adults as potential team members too. Kids of all ages can take nonspeaking roles. In today’s drama, for example, they can play the parts of curious onlookers in the marketplace, shaking or nodding their heads as they listen to John’s dialogue with the speaking characters.

No time? No actors? Don’t give up! To present the dramas without rehearsals, simply choose your actors on the spot, distribute scripts and optional simple costumes, and quickly walk your improv team through the story. It won’t be smooth, but it’s certainly doable. An unrehearsed drama takes a little more time to present, but you can compensate by having at least one adult “stage manager” who can assign parts, distribute scripts and props, and act as a prompter to keep the action moving. Having at least one adult actor helps too; for example, in today’s drama, have an adult play the role of John the Baptist.

You’ll also want to begin thinking about costumes and props. Ask members of the congregation (especially the people who love to sew!) to help you out. Simple costumes are suggested at the beginning of today’s drama; but feel free to use whatever supplies you have available to make costumes and/or props that suggest something descriptive about each actor and his or her role in the story.

After presenting “John and the Flea Market Folks,” ask someone—preferably a good reader—to read the more complete story of John the Baptist from Mark 1 using an easy-reading version such as the N1rV.

Small Groups

After enjoying the story drama, children will meet in small groups. We've included two session plans—one for children in kindergarten through grade three, and another for kids in grades four through eight. If your regular church school teachers are present, you may prefer to have the children meet in their own grade level classes with their own leaders—that will work just fine. However, if your classes are smaller during the summer, consider combining a number of classes into one small group. Give each small group leader lots of encouragement to adapt these sessions to the age range, abilities, and learning styles of the children in his or her small group.