

Send North America: Salt Lake City

Mission Lesson: Salt and Light

Kids learning to live “life on mission” in North America.

Items needed:

- Box of table salt
- 2 jars, one empty and one filled with sand or dirt
- Flashlight or other light source
- Bowl or basket large enough to cover the flashlight
- Bible
- Whiteboard or poster board (optional)
- Large map of the United States

Lesson Objective:

Children will learn what it means to be salt and light in an impure and dark world and how they can be salt and light in dark places like Salt Lake City.

Bible Verses:

Matthew 5:13-14

Lesson:

Leaders should prepare by becoming familiar with ministry in Salt Lake City by reading the articles at namb.net/saltlakecity. Watch the following videos as well: namb.net/namb1cb-2col.aspx?id=12884909214 and namb.net/saltlakecity. It may also be helpful to learn the basics of the Mormon faith. The following website has useful information: 4truth.net/new-religions/mormons.

Read and study Matthew 5:13-16, asking God for knowledge, wisdom and revelation.

Set up a table for display of the salt, jars, light and the bowl or basket. If desired, write the following on the whiteboard or poster board:

“You are the salt of the earth.”

“You are the light of the world.”

Display the map and place the Bible nearby with the passage marked.

Begin by telling the children that the day’s lesson will be about missions in Salt Lake City, Utah. Locate Salt Lake City on the map. Locate your city on the map as well, noting the distance from where you are to Salt Lake City. Share the following information about Salt Lake City:

- Salt Lake City is named for the Great Salt Lake, which is located nearby. This lake is so salty few fish can live in it. The Great Salt Lake is similar to the Dead Sea, which is located near Jerusalem.
- Only a little more than 2 percent of the millions of people living in Salt Lake City are friends of Jesus. That means that out of 100 people, only two people have a personal relationship with Him. Of the rest, more than half have a false view of Him (Mormon), and the others don’t want anything to do with anything religious.

Send North America: Salt Lake City

Mission Lesson: Salt and Light

Ask the children how we can help the people in Salt Lake City know and love Jesus. (Take some answers. Be prepared to relate any answers given to Christians being salt and light to the world as a transition to the Bible passage.)

Move to the table, and read the first sentence only of Matthew 5:13. Ask the children what Jesus might mean by calling us “the salt of the earth.” Point to the sentence on the board. Now pour some salt into the empty jar, and tell the children the following:

In Jesus’ day, salt was valuable and used for many things. In this verse, Jesus is referring to the purifying qualities of salt. What does that mean? When something is pure, there is nothing bad in it.

Do you think the salt in this jar and in this box is pure? (Yes) This is how Christians are to be. Jesus has set an example for us on how we should live. He wants us to live this way because it best glorifies Him and shows other people His love for them.

Let’s pretend this jar of dirt is sin. Name some things that are sinful. (Take answers) What happens when I mix some of the dirt (sin) with the pure salt? (Pour some of the dirt in with the salt.) Is the salt still pure? (No) Would you like to have some of this dirty salt put on your food? (No!)

What is dirty salt good for? Jesus tells us. (Read the rest of verse 13.) Jesus says it is good only to be thrown out and trampled. Do we want our lives to be good only for that? (No)

So what do you think Jesus is telling us? (To live our lives free of sin)

Then He tells us something else that might sound a bit strange. (Read the first sentence only of verse 14, pointing to it on the board.) How can Christians be the “light of the world”?

First let’s talk about the absence of light, which is darkness. Who in here has ever been afraid of the dark? (Wait for raised hands.) Why? (Take answers, which may include monsters and danger. Share a personal childhood experience of being afraid of the dark.)

In the dark, it’s easy to get lost, and we can’t see danger. We imagine all sorts of things that may not even really be there. We can’t see the truth of what is really there. We are left to trust only what we think could be the truth.

That is how people who are living without God are. We say they are living in darkness because they don’t have the truth of Jesus to light their path in life. They don’t see that Jesus is the only way to God. Many don’t even believe God exists.

Now back to our question, “How are Christians the ‘light of the world’”? We are light because we carry the truth of Jesus inside us. We can be a light to others that shows them the truth of Jesus. Just as this flashlight lights our way, so does the truth of Jesus. (Shine the flashlight on something in a dark place as a demonstration.) He shows us the safe places to go and what to do.

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Mission Lesson: Salt and Light

But what happens when we keep our light to ourselves or hide it? (Put the flashlight under the bowl or basket. Wait for answers.) It's no good to anyone this way, is it? We should never hide our light from others by doing things we know hurt God. What might some of those things be? (Going along with the crowd in doing wrong things, denying we are Christians, not telling others about Jesus, being unkind to others.)

What would happen if I left this light hidden under this bowl for a week? (The batteries would die, and the light would go out.) Our light could go out or dim, too, if we hide it. It is of no use to anyone.

(Read Matthew 5:15-16). How can we let our light shine before men? One way we shine is by doing good things for others. People can see Jesus in us through the good and loving things we do, especially when it is something hard to do, like being kind to someone who is mean to us.

So in putting these two verses together, Jesus wants us to be salt and light; He wants us to live sinless lives and to show others the truth of His love.

Transition to applying these verses to ministry in Salt Lake City.

We said before that only two people in 100 in Salt Lake City have Jesus as a friend. The rest are living in darkness (without the light of Jesus). Missionaries are planting churches in the city to be salt and light there. But they need help because unbelievers outnumber them there. The work in Salt Lake City is difficult. (Transition to the Action section below.)

Action

What actions can we take to love the people in Salt Lake City and light their way to Jesus? (Let the children offer some suggestions.) Here are some more things we can do:

1. Pray that the people in Salt Lake City will seek the truth about Jesus.
2. Pray that many people will go to Salt Lake City to plant evangelical churches so more people living there can have a church family.
3. Pray for the church planters and their families. (To learn the names of church planters in Salt Lake City, go to namb.net/saltlakecity.)
4. Support ministry in Salt Lake City through our generous offerings.
5. Prepare ourselves in case God wants us to one day serve Him in Salt Lake City.

Close in prayer, inviting a child to pray for the items mentioned above.

For articles, video and more information on Send North America: Salt Lake City, go to namb.net/saltlakecity.