Candle/Light Lesson

Starting Line
The symbol of the candle is a simple way to denote the presence of light. While there are several directions and scriptures we could refer to regarding “light,” we are going to focus on Jesus being the “Light of the world” for us (John 8:12). Many children deal with fears related to darkness and find comfort in using small lights in their rooms to make them feel safe at night. The same is true for all Christians. We find safety and comfort in knowing Jesus is the Light of our lives, and we have no need to be fearful. Unfortunately, too many Christians still walk around in fear as if the darkness holds something Jesus cannot handle.

Finish Line
Our main objective in this lesson is to help students understand Jesus as the Light of the world. Not only did He come to save us but also to give us the ability to live in the Light without fear of darkness. This is two-fold: First, we must learn to live in the Light. We cannot be people who hide from even our own mistakes. We want children to know that Jesus loves them no matter what, and that being honest with Him brings about great freedom. Second, each of us must learn to trust the Light of Jesus to keep us from walking in fear. All across the globe, millions of Christians are faking it every Sunday morning when they walk through the doors of our sanctuaries. They are hiding their sin, living in fear and shame just as Adam and Eve did in the garden after sinning. The truth is Jesus came to rescue us from the darkness, the fear, and the shame by taking on every dark thing in our souls. Hiding in the dark from the freedom that awaits us in the Light is a cycle we must break with our children by teaching them that Jesus is the Light of the world, and only in this Light are they truly free. This is a difficult concept, but it is one of the most important ones we will teach in this lesson series. Please take a second to pray for supernatural revelation for your students and for us.

Whistle Stops – Vocabulary
creak
prized possession
spiritual
dishonest
repentance

The Right Track – Developing the Lesson through Scripture
Let’s look again at the aforementioned text from John 8:12. I have presented the passage in two ways in the hope that children who are in various stages of learning and spiritual development will understand it.

1. Then Jesus again spoke to them saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.” (NAS Bible)
2. Jesus said that He is the light for the whole world, and if we follow close to Him, we will never have to fear anything because there will be no darkness. (paraphrase)

All Aboard! – Main Lesson
When I was a child, I lived in a small trailer house for a while. That little house would creak, and when the wind blew, I thought for sure it would turn over. I would lie in my bed at night with my
mind running crazy, thinking of all the bad stuff that could be out there; however, I had a secret weapon—one of my most prized possessions—a Dallas Cowboys nightlight. Oh yeah! You read this correctly! That nightlight was just enough to make me feel safe and sound. If the light went out . . . oh, no! Darkness can be a scary thing sometimes, simply because without light it is hard to see what is out there. Can you imagine living in a world with no light at all? The Bible tells us Jesus came to be the Light of the world for us. Not a light bulb, but a spiritual light so that we would never again have to be afraid. Jesus promised to lead and guide us, to forgive us of everything, and to stay with us no matter what. He promised that if we follow Him, we will not walk in darkness. His Light is our secret weapon.

**Discussion Depot – Developing the Lesson through Questions**

Our discussion questions are going to focus on John 8:12, but we are going to look back at one of the illustrations from *The Little Engine That Could Not* for an example, so please have the book at hand.

1. On p. 25 of *The Little Engine That Could Not*, Joshua (Jesus) comes to rescue Peter from a horrible, dark storm. What is Joshua carrying in his hand as he approaches Peter? What does the verse in John 8:12 say that Jesus is? (Light of the world)

2. Now be honest, has anyone ever slept with a nightlight in his or her room? Why? What is it about darkness that sometime makes us afraid? Are there areas in your life where you are still afraid? Is it true that Jesus is the Light we need and in Him we do not have to walk in darkness?

3. Does anyone remember the first thing Adam and Eve did when they heard God looking for them in the Garden of Eden after they sinned? (See Genesis 3 for the story.) They hid from Him, right? Did they also cover themselves? Why? (They were afraid.) If Jesus has forgiven us of our sin and is our light and comfort, is there any reason to hide or to be fearful? Do we sometimes hide our sin from our parents or from God? Why? If darkness is the wrong place to be, why would we go there by hiding our sin? If Jesus has forgiven us and we have nothing to fear, should we come to Him and let Him comfort us instead of hiding?

**Cross Ties – Developing the Lesson through Activities**

For all age levels:
Click below to download a printable coloring page that features the candle symbol, and display it so students will know what to look for. Allow students to search for the candle symbol on pp. 10–11 of *The Little Engine That Could Not*. (Hint: There are actually two candles; one right above Peter in the eave of the train station, and another in the green areas above the train station. Have students find both.) After students have found the symbols, give each student a copy of the candle to color.

Climbing Higher Activity
This game will require two flashlights and a room that can be made somewhat dark. In advance, designate an area of the room as “home base.” You will carry both flashlights. Have students spread out throughout the room. Tell them that you are going to turn off the light but that you do not want them to move. Tell them to be still and wait to be rescued by the light you have. Reassure students that there is nothing to be afraid of because you are going to find them with the light. Walk around the classroom with the light, locating each student individually and saying aloud to each one that you know the way. Remind each one not to be afraid. As you identify each student, be sure to say his or her name aloud. This will help make the point that you know each student by name and have come to rescue him or her personally.
One by one, take each student by the hand and lead him or her to home base. Once you have taken the first student to home base, leave one flashlight at home base so students will know that the Light of the world is with them. After all the students have been rescued, turn the room light back on and encourage students to discuss how they felt during the activity. Ask students if any of them were afraid while waiting to be rescued. Did they feel any differently once you found them and guided them to home base?

**Keep on Rolling – Developing the Lesson through Daily Application**

This home activity is going to be a little different and will require some follow-up to help you determine if students took the time to do it. Ask students to go to their quiet place and be still. Tell them to take out their prayer journal and ask God to show them anything in their lives they have been dishonest with Him about. Maybe they told a small lie, or it could be something more serious. Tell them to write about the things that come to mind. Remind them that God already knows what they have done, and because Jesus has forgiven them, they do not have to live in the dark but can be honest and bring those things to light. They may even need to come into the light with their parents by telling them something God shows them. This practice is simple: without recognizing sin, there is no brokenness; without brokenness, there is no honesty or repentance; and without repentance, there is no renewal and light in our lives. Encourage students to write a short prayer, thanking God for His forgiveness and His strength to keep them in His Light.