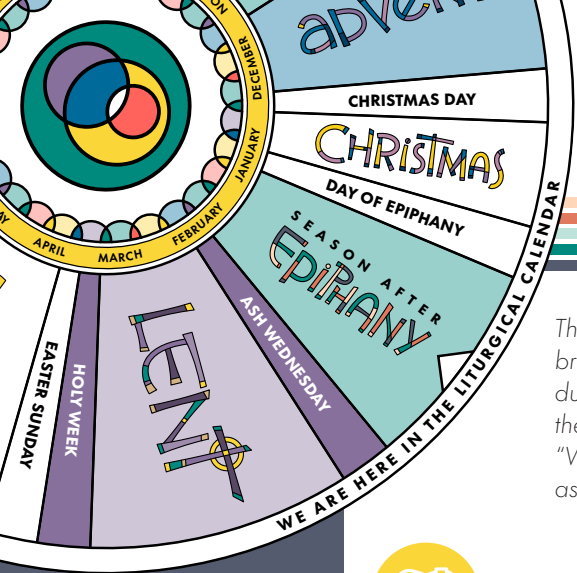


Matthew 5:13-20

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany, Sunday between February 4 and February 10



The Season after Epiphany began with the three wise ones following the star and ends with the bright lights of Jesus' Transfiguration on the mountain. Epiphany means "showing forth," and it is during this season when we are called to look for how God makes Godself known throughout the world. In his poem, *Epiphany*, Biblical scholar Walter Brueggemann wrote the following: "We are—we could be—people of your light. So we pray for the light of your glorious presence as we wait for your appearing."

YEAR A



Scripture

"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. People do not light a lamp and put it under the bushel basket; rather, they put it on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Abba God in heaven.

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."



Questions

- It's the season after Epiphany when we learn how Jesus shows what God is like. What does Jesus say in this passage about God? How does God want us to live?
- This passage is part of a sermon Jesus taught to a large crowd filled with his closest disciples and many people, including some who were poor, sick, and without access to things they needed. What do you imagine they heard in Jesus' message?
- Jesus said he didn't come to tell the people to ignore the rules they had been living by but rather to show them how to follow them well. How might following God's rules help us live faithfully and well?
- Jesus says we should be like salt and light. What qualities do salt and light have? What can they do?
- Share a story of a time someone was like salt or light for you. How can we be like salt and light for others?

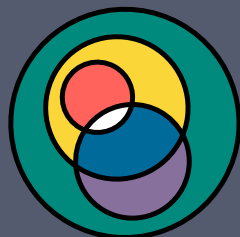
Look it Up!

In the ancient world, salt was very valuable.

Look up why salt was so important then, and learn about the many ways it was used. Then, look up ways salt is used today.



mini
REVOLUTIONS





Activity

Materials:

Scarves	Bowls
Salted and unsalted foods	Salt
Ice cubes	Flashlight(s)

We are in the season after Epiphany, when we look for ways Jesus is revealed in the world. Jesus says we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Why would Jesus compare us to salt and light? Today, we will do experiments with both salt and light to help us answer that question.

It's time for a quick taste test! To begin, have half the group place scarves or blindfolds over their eyes. Mindful of food allergies/intolerances, place a salty food, such as a pretzel or potato chip, and an unsalted food, like a dry cracker, in front of each blindfolded person. Have them taste both, and point to the saltier food. Then, ask each blindfolded person which item they prefer to eat. Switch groups, and repeat. Discuss how salt adds so much flavor to our food.

Next, use bowls to distribute ice cubes to small groups or individuals. Pour some salt onto different parts of the ice cubes, and observe what happens. What effect is the salt having? How have you observed salt change things in any other ways?

Last, we're going to play with light! Distribute flashlights, or have the group leader use one flashlight to demonstrate. Turn off all the lights in your space. Check-in with your bodies and minds. How does it feel to be in a dark space? Turn on the flashlight(s). How do you feel now? Then, take turns making shadow puppets on the wall. Move objects closer to the light and then farther away. What happens to the shadows? Once you're finished, discuss some other uses of light and why you think Jesus compared us to salt and light.

Alternate Activity

Materials:

Large and small pieces of paper	Epsom salt
Writing utensils	Liquid watercolor paint
	Paintbrushes

Human beings have been finding uses for salt and light for thousands of years. Today, we'll brainstorm or look up how those uses have changed from Jesus' time to our own. Divide into two groups, and give each group a large piece of paper and writing utensils. Assign one group to Jesus' time period; assign the other group to our time period.

Have each group draw a line down the middle of the paper. On one side, list all the uses for salt you can think of from your assigned time period. On the other side, list uses of light for the same time period. When both groups finish, compare papers. Do you see any uses in common? Circle them! What has changed about how we use salt and light over time?

Now, let's make salt paintings! Mix Epsom salt with different colors of watercolor paint to make a paste. Then, paint something you learned in today's lesson on the small pieces of paper. What's the texture of your painting? Does the salt paint react with light? Decorate your space with your paintings, or take them home.



Micropractice

Salt, herbs, and seasonings flavor cooking all over the world. When you taste your food, pay attention to the flavors. Be mindful of the ways that seasoning enriches your experience. Breathe a prayer of gratitude for seasoning.



Download a graphic to share with your community and on social media. You can download it here: illstrtdm.in/minirevAAE5



Prayer

Dear God, thank you for giving us flavorful lives full of your joy and light. Help us look for ways to bring brightness and cheer into the lives of others. Amen.

YOU ARE

THE SALT of the

EARTH

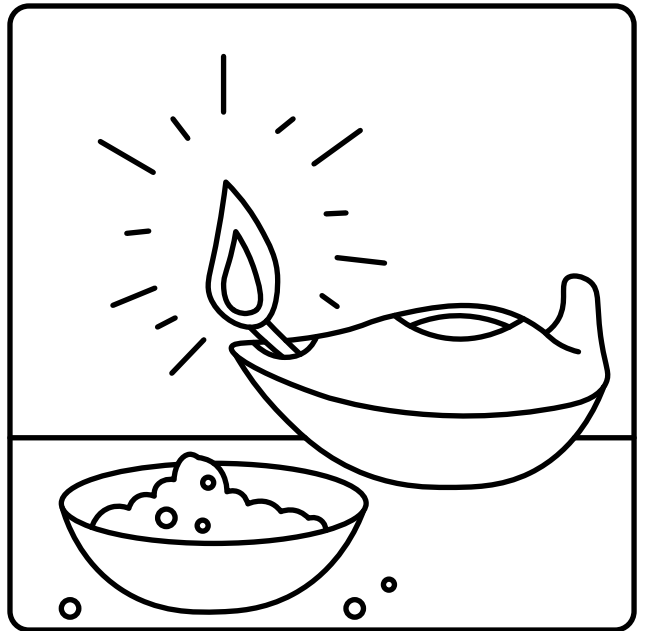


YOU ARE

THE LIGHT of the

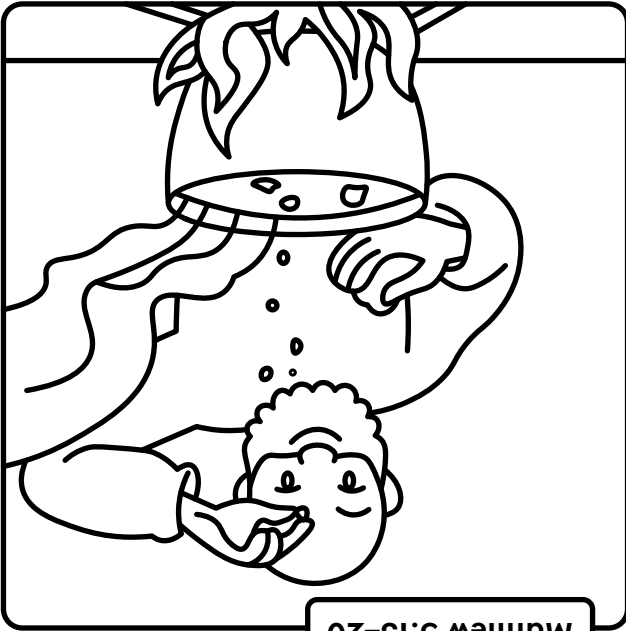
WORLD.

4. Finally he said, "Whoever lives faithfully, follows these rules, and teaches others to follow them will be celebrated in God's kingdom, but whoever breaks these rules and teaches others to break them will not be celebrated."

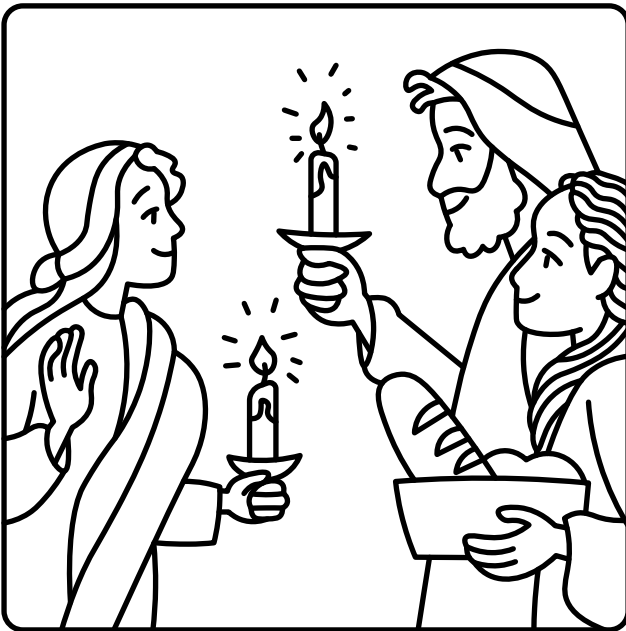


3. Then, Jesus said, "I didn't come to earth to say the rules your ancestors taught you to live by are wrong. I came to show you how they help us live faithfully and how to follow them well, acting like salt and light."

1. Jesus was teaching people how God wanted them to live. He said, "Just like salt adds flavor and makes things taste better, you can add goodness to the world. If salt doesn't improve taste, it's not doing its job."



Matthew 5:13-20



2. He added, "You are also like a bright light. When you live like God asks us to—being kind and helping others—your goodness shines in a way that brings joy, shares God's love, and lights up the whole world."