

**HE IS**

**alive**

**A LIGHT GUIDE FOR FAMILIES**

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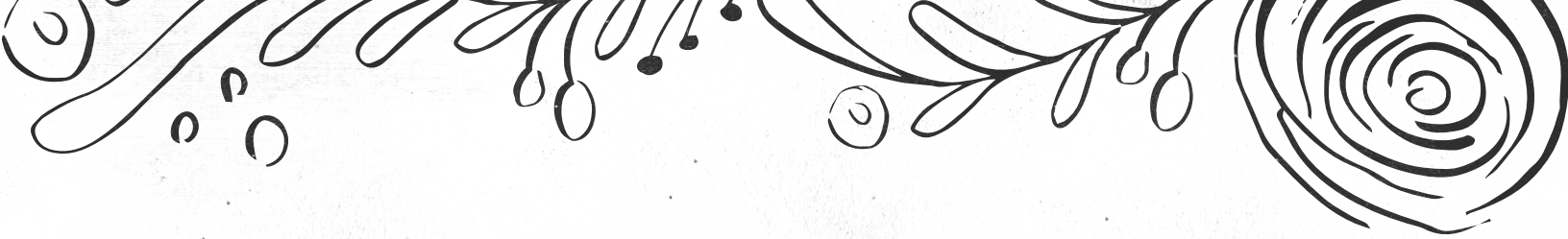
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# HELLO!

I'm so glad you've opened up this light guide for families.

This study is a light guide because it's short—8 days' worth of content. It's also a light guide because every one of these 8 lessons will help your family understand the symbol of light and darkness. It will lead you in conversation to discuss how Jesus came to rescue us from sin, out of darkness into light.

We've intentionally made this study simple because we know this season can be a tricky one for families.

The conflict between sacred and secular Easter causes families to make some hard choices. Some parents will provide the baskets of candy, and depend on their churches to explain the Jesus stuff. We know this doesn't work. If the story of Jesus is true, it should shape every part of our lives. Kids have trouble believing things that don't influence their family. Others might take an opposite approach. The Easter Bunny becomes the enemy and Jesus turns into a tool for judgement. We know this doesn't make sense either. Jesus, the light of the world, fills His children with love, joy, peace...I could go on, but I think you get the idea!

So what *do* we do?

*Let us **look only to Jesus**. He is the one who began our faith, and he makes our faith perfect. Jesus suffered death on the cross. But he accepted the shame of the cross as if it were nothing. He did this because of the joy that God put before him. And now he is sitting at the right side of God's throne.*

**Think about Jesus.** *He held on patiently while sinful men were doing evil things against him.*

**Look at Jesus' example** so that you will not get tired and stop trying. (Hebrews 12:2-3)

There's no reason to be threatened by the things of this world because our God sits on the throne. There's nothing that could steal His glory. Waging war on secular things is not our job. Instead, God commands us to fight a good fight.

*You've been raised on the Message of the faith and have followed sound teaching. Now pass on this counsel to the followers of Jesus there, and you'll be a good servant of Jesus. Stay clear of silly stories that get dressed up as religion. (1 Timothy 4:6-7 MSG)*

The best way to guard our kids from lies, is to fill them with what is true! We are called to share God's truths with our families.

*Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and walk along the road. Talk about them when you lie down and when you get up. (Deuteronomy 6:7-9)*

Family discipleship takes work, but it is so worth it.

*For this is why we work and struggle: We hope in the living God. He is the Savior of all people. And in a very special way, he is the Savior of all who believe in him. (1 Timothy 4:9-10)*

The best news is that we aren't alone. God is with us and He works in the hearts of His children.

HE IS ALIVE!

I hope this resource is a blessing to your family as you seek Jesus together.

In Joy,

**Katie**

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

### **Make Your Own Schedule**

This guide provides you with one light lesson for each week of Lent. You may decide to do this at the beginning of the week on Sunday. But there may be another day that works better for you and your family! Or, possibly...most probably, you might decide to gather on a different day each week—and that's totally ok! Aim to open up this guide and gather together once a week. But don't quit if it doesn't happen!

### **Use the Symbol of Light**

Traditionally, the symbol of light is observed through candles during Lent. Along with candle instructions, each day's lesson will also provide a unique representation of light and darkness through games and/or object lessons.

If you choose to use candles with your family, it doesn't have to be complicated! Gather seven candles (they don't have to be special...or require real fire) and follow my prompts each week. During Advent, we light candles each week to celebrate the coming of Christ. During Lent, we blow out a candle each week to symbolize that we are getting closer to His death. We see that without Him, our world is dark and hopeless. On Good Friday, we blow out the final candle and experience the darkness of Christ's death. Then on Easter Sunday we light all seven candles to celebrate the Light of the Word, who has defeated darkness forever!

### **Have Honest Fun**

Participate with your kids. There's a good chance your kids will engage if you engage. Answer the questions and play the games. Tell honest stories about yourself when you are prompted to share. Kids are captivated by true stories...especially your true stories. Feel free to make each lesson your own. You don't have to stick to the script!

## 10 THINGS TO REMEMBER

- 1. Surrender perfection.** Set realistic expectations for your kids and for yourself. You and your kids will have bad days. Give your family grace.
- 2. Feed yourself.** Be in God's word and ask Him to fill you until you're full. Naturally, God's truths will overflow, out of you, onto your family.
- 3. Make sacrifices.** Your kids will notice what you give up in order to make God a priority in your home. How you spend your time reveals what you value most.
- 4. Disciple as you go.** Be ready to talk about God's truths anytime, anywhere. Talk together in the car. Make connections in shows you watch. Share what you are learning at meal time. Invite Him into your routine.
- 5. Teach grace, not goodness.** Avoid moral lessons. Think less about behavior change, and more about heart change. Offer your kids the grace Christ offers you.
- 6. Journey together.** Walk alongside your kids as you follow Jesus. Be honest about the hard parts and share the joys of a life with Christ. Admit when you're unsure about something, and share when you learn something new!
- 7. Rely on your actions more than your words.** What you do will either validate or weaken what you say. Let your life speak what is true.
- 8. Connect with others.** Don't go at it alone. Share your struggles and your joys. Seek help and counsel from other believers. The Sacred Holidays Tribe on Facebook is a great place to find support.
- 9. Don't Quit.** No matter how many lessons you've skipped, how terrible your family is behaving, or how defeated you feel, jump back in. God's mercies are new every morning.
- 10. Pray.** Constantly communicate with the living God. He is alive and at work in your home!

## WEEK 1

Gather together and turn off all your lights. Do what you need to get your gathering space as dark as possible. Then stand by a light switch. You may need a small flashlight to help you continue!

Once your family is in the dark and quiet, read Genesis 1:2-3 aloud:

*In the beginning God created the sky and the earth. The earth was empty and had no form. Darkness covered the ocean, and God's Spirit was moving over the water. Then God said, "Let there be light!" And there was light.*

### **\*TURN ON YOUR LIGHTS\***

*All things were made through him. Nothing was made without him. In him there was life. That life was light for the people of the world. (John 1:3-4)*

God loved His creation. He especially loved His people. His world was perfect until His people believed they could live without Him.

### **\*TURN OFF YOUR LIGHTS\***

Darkness covered the earth again, but Jesus had a plan to rescue His people. The Creator would enter His creation to bring light back to the world. He would fill up what was empty and hopeless without His presence. He would rescue them from sin.

### **\*TURN ON YOUR LIGHTS\***

*The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. The Word was in the world. And the world was made through him. (John 1:9-10a)*

### **\*TURN OFF YOUR LIGHTS\***

*But the world did not recognize him. He came to what was his own. But his own people did not accept him. (John 1:10b-11)*

But...



## **\*TURN ON YOUR LIGHTS\***

In Him there was life. That life was light for the people of the world. The Light shines in the darkness. And the darkness has not overpowered[a] the Light. (John 1:4-5)

## **LIGHT ALL SEVEN CANDLES, THEN TURN OFF YOUR LIGHTS**

During Lent, we remember we are in the dark without Jesus. Each week, we will blow out one candle and things will get darker. We will remember that Jesus died, taking the punishment for our sin. But, things won't stay dark because Jesus conquered sin and death! He is the light that overcomes our dark!

## WEEK 2

### Have you ever been lost?

*Allow each member of your family to share a story.*

### Have you ever had to navigate in total darkness?

*Allow each member of your family to share a story.*

Being lost and in the dark can be a really scary thing! We weren't created to live alone or in the dark.

### BLOW OUT ONE CANDLE (SIX SHOULD BE LIT)

Living away from God is like living in the dark. Only He can provide the light we need to live the way we were created to live. We can follow Him because He knows best. He made us! We can be confident that His directions for us are good. He loves us!

God says,

*I will lead the blind along a way they never knew.  
I will guide them along paths they have not known.  
I will make the darkness become light for them.  
And I will make the rough ground smooth.  
These are the things I will do.  
I will not leave my people.  
-Isaiah 42:16*

### Play a game together:

- Create a minefield by scattering an assortment of objects in a fairly open area of your home. Blind-fold a member of your family and have them attempt to walk through the minefield without touching any of the objects.
- During the next round, have another person call out directions to the blindfolded person using only their voice.
- Next, allow the director to touch and talk to the blindfolded person, helping them dodge all obstacles.
- Finally, take off the blindfold, allowing each person to easily navigate around the objects.

**Say:** It was a lot easier to make it through with some help, wasn't it! In life, we have to make decisions as we face many obstacles. We need to know what to do, and what not to do; where to go and where not to go. We need direction and God promises to be our helper. The closer He is, the better we are!

Read Isaiah 42:16 again together. Let your kids make the connection.

**Ask:** What lesson could we learn from the game we just played?

## WEEK 3

Jesus healed the sick and gave sight to the blind. He loved people who were left out and mistreated. He fed the hungry and cared for the poor. But Jesus hadn't come to Earth just to give people a better life. He came to right what went wrong. He came to defeat sin and death and offer life that would last forever.

*He came to the world that was his own. But his own people did not accept him.*

John 1:11.

### **BLOW OUT YOUR NEXT CANDLE. (FIVE SHOULD BE LIT.)**

Many people rejected Jesus. They didn't like when He claimed to forgive people from their sin. They thought He was a too crazy. But they were too prideful to admit they were sinners and too blind to believe that Jesus was God. However, some people did accept Him and did believe in His name. He gave them the right to become children of God. (John 1:12)

When you believe you have a sin problem and when you believe Jesus is the only one who can fix it, you are welcomed into God's family. *You are chosen people. You are the King's priests. You are a holy nation. You are a nation that belongs to God alone. God chose you to tell about the wonderful things he has done. He called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.* (1 Peter 2:9)

We are called to tell others about the truth, but it isn't our job to fix them or change them. That's Jesus' job! But we can reflect His light in our world.

#### **Demonstrate:**

With a small mirror in hand, have someone shine a flashlight on you. Hold up your mirror to reflect the light on to someone else.

**Say:** I am not the light, I am just letting my mirror reflect the light to shine on you.

**Ask:** What happens when I turn away from the light? (You cannot reflect the light.)

**Say:** Jesus is the true light. We can reflect His light to the entire world if we keep our eyes on Him, trusting and obeying His commands.

**Ask:** What kinds of things would our friends and family see if we are reflecting Jesus' light? What might they hear if we tell of the wonderful things He has done in our lives? Take time to share.

## WEEK 4

**Have you ever wished Jesus could verbally talk to you or physically wrap you up in His arms?**

**What would you do if you could hang out with Jesus for a day? Take time to share some ideas.**

We can believe that God is with, but some days it's easy to feel like we're on our own. When we feel far from God, we can become confused, scared, and even ashamed.

### **BLOW OUT YOUR NEXT CANDLE. (FOUR SHOULD BE LIT.)**

The good news is that God knows what we need and He hasn't left us in the dark. The Holy Spirit is our helper who comforts and corrects us. Most clearly, the Holy Spirit speaks to us through God's Word, the Bible.

Psalm 119:105-106

*Your word is like a lamp that shows me the way.*

*It is like a light that guides me.*

*I have made a promise*

*to follow your laws, because they are right.*

God's Word is like a flashlight that shines right in front of our feet. We may not be able to see our entire course mapped out, but we know each of our steps are secure. We may not be able to see or hear or understand God's entire plan, but we can rely on His Word to guide us, step by step.

Psalm 119:130 (MSG)

*Every word you give me is a miracle word—*

*how could I help but obey?*

*Break open your words, let the light shine out,*

*let ordinary people see the meaning.*

**How can you rely on God's Word to guide you in each step you take?** As a family, brainstorm ways you can read and memorize scripture together.

**Play a reverse game of Pictionary:**

- On slips of paper, write a variety fairly easy things to draw (tree, house, cat, stick-person, apple)
- Pick one drawer and one instructor. (Take turns filling each role)
- Have the instructor pull a slip of paper (or whisper a drawing prompt in his/her ear)
- Have the instructor describe how to draw the object, one step at a time.
- The drawer should follow the instructor's directions to the best of their ability

**Ask:** Would it be possible to draw the right thing without any directions? What was important for the drawer to keep doing?

**Say:** It is important that we seek God's direction in every step we take. Unlike us, He is the perfect helper who gives us perfect directions to follow. He will lead us if we will listen.

## WEEK 5

1 John 1:5

*Here is the message we have heard from him and announce to you. God is light. There is no darkness in him at all.*

God is perfect. He is pure. He is without any hint of sin. His ways are always good. But we are not perfect. We sin when we do things our way and reject His perfect plan.

### **BLOW OUT YOUR NEXT CANDLE. (THREE SHOULD BE LIT.)**

When we choose what we want instead of what God wants, we sin against Him.

Sin is anything we think, say, do, or don't do that is unpleasing to God.

Sin can be a tiny bit of a bad thing or too much of a good thing.

Sin can look different in each of our lives, but all sin (no matter how big or small) separates us from God...for good. There's nothing we can do or stop doing to make things right again.

We were in the dark, but when we couldn't go to God, He came to us.

John 8:12

*Jesus spoke to the people again. He said, "I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in darkness. They will have that light. They will have life."*

When Jesus called each disciple, He said to them, "Follow me" and they went . . . immediately.

**Pray Together.** Lead your family, allowing each member to respond to God quietly in their hearts

*God, you are perfect. There is no ounce of sin or darkness in you. You are great and mighty to save. You are also good and compassionate towards us. Thank you for (allow your family to pray silently). Right now we confess our sins to you (allow your family to pray silently). Thank you Jesus for paying the price for our sin on the cross. You died the death we deserved. Thank you for making a way out of the dark and into the light so that we may have life with you today and forever. I am struggle to trust and obey you by (allow your family to pray silently). Lord help us follow you, wherever you lead. Amen.*

**Demonstrate how light and dark cannot mix:**

- Pour out half of a clear water bottle
- Dye the remaining water a dark color with the ink of an old black marker or with a mixture of food coloring.
- Pour a non-toxic oil into the bottle.
- Screw the cap back on and heavily tape the bottle closed
- Have kids shake the bottle and watch the dark and light layers separate.

**Say:** No matter how hard you try to shake it up, the dark and light layers will not mix. It is impossible for God (the light) to be with sin (the dark). When we are walking in sin, we are disconnected from God because He is light. Similarly, we cannot be in the light and be walking in darkness at the same time.



## WEEK 6

God's people were slaves in Egypt for 400 years. God used a man named Moses to tell the Egyptian king to let His people go. And after much convincing, the king finally agreed. God's people were no longer slaves. They were free!

*It so happened that after Pharaoh released the people, God didn't lead them by the road...which was the shortest route, for God thought, "If the people encounter war, they'll change their minds and go back to Egypt. (Exodus 13:17 MSG)*

**Why do you think God's people would rather be slaves than go to battle?**

**When have you sinned (or wanted to sin) in order to avoid a difficult situation?**

God doesn't want us to live in sin. He wants us to live in freedom! He wanted the same thing for His people thousands of years ago. He wanted to keep them from running back to their old life as slaves.

*So God led the people on the wilderness road, looping around to the Red Sea .... God went ahead of them in a Pillar of Cloud during the day to guide them on the way, and at night in a Pillar of Fire to give them light; thus they could travel both day and night. The Pillar of Cloud by day and the Pillar of Fire by night never left the people. (Exodus 13:18-21 MSG)*

God protected His people from war, but He also lead them straight to a major obstacle—the Red Sea. But this is how God would show off His power. God split the sea and the Israelites walked through on dry ground.

Year after year, the Israelites remembered God's mighty rescue. They celebrated with a festival called Passover. Even Jesus celebrated Passover with his family and friends!

But when Jesus said He came to rescue His people out of sin, many did not believe Him.

**BLOW OUT YOUR NEXT CANDLE. (TWO SHOULD BE LIT.)**

But Jesus was telling the truth. He had the power to rescue them from slavery and He was would make a way to rescue them from sin

*Later, Jesus talked to the people again. He said, "I am the light of the world. The person who follows me will never live in darkness. He will have the light that gives life." But the Pharisees said to Jesus, "When you talk about yourself, you are the only one to say these things are true. We cannot accept these things you say." Jesus answered, "Yes, I am saying these things about myself, but they are true...(John 8:12-14)*

**Do you believe that Jesus' words are true?**

**Have you trusted Him to rescue you from your sin?**

- Cut strips of paper to form a paper chain.
- On each slip, write out sin in your life. (With younger kids, do this as a family, providing plenty of examples to help everyone brainstorm. With older kids, consider making this a time of confession, allowing them to write out their own sins and temptations.)
- Loop the slips together by taping or stapling them to form a chain.
- Attach the ends of the chain around your wrists.
- Read John 8:36 before cutting each chain apart.

## WEEK 7

*Note: This week you will blow out your sixth candle (This is traditionally done on Sunday).  
Prepare to blow out your final candle on Good Friday.*

This week, we will remember what it took for sin and death to be defeated. This is a dark story, but we do not have to be afraid because God wins in the end.

Psalm 27:1 says:

*The Lord is my light and the one who saves me.*

*So why should I fear anyone?*

*The Lord protects my life.*

*So why should I be afraid?*

We have this hope because Jesus didn't fear the dark. He went into the darkest place and carried the burden of our sin. He died so that we could live. We blow out our candles to remember that without Jesus, we are in darkness. Only He can give us life.

### **BLOW OUT YOUR NEXT CANDLE. (ONE SHOULD BE LIT.)**

Take a moment and pray that the Lord would help your family experience the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus with fresh eyes and open hearts this week.

#### **Prepare for Good Friday:**

This week, talk about the cross. Don't skip the dark part of the story. Your kids can handle it. Give them opportunities to understand that Jesus suffered and died for them because He loved them that much.

If you have younger kids, read the Easter story from your favorite storybook Bible. Explain that Jesus wasn't surprised or tricked by what happened to Him. He could have escaped death if He wanted to, but He willingly died because He loved them that much. He knew death on a cross was the only way we could live with Him forever.

If you have older kids, consider watching a film that tells the story of Jesus' crucifixion. Take time to answer their questions (whether they are big or small, spiritual or silly). Do your best avoid Christian-ese. If you get stumped, let them know! Use those opportunities to research and learn more together.

## GOOD FRIDAY

On Good Friday, Christians remember the day Jesus died on the cross.

Jesus was executed by people that didn't know Him at all...and He was rejected by people that knew Him best. He was spit on and made fun of. He was whipped, and hung on pieces of wood with nails that went through His hands and His feet.

After living a perfect life, Jesus was given a criminal's punishment—death on a cross.

### **BLOW OUT YOUR LAST CANDLE**

Why do you think we call this day Good Friday even though it was a very dark day in history?

God showed us how much He loved us when Jesus died on the cross. Jesus physically died with His arms outstretched wide. On the cross, Jesus answered the question, "How much does God love and forgive us?"

Stretch your arms out wide. "This much."

Jesus wasn't killed by people. He willingly died for them. In a matter of days, people planned to hang Jesus on a cross. But from the very beginning of time, Jesus planned to die.

Philippians 2:6-8

*In his very nature he was God.*

*Jesus was equal with God. But Jesus didn't take advantage of that fact.*

*Instead, he made himself nothing.*

*He did this by taking on the nature of a servant.*

*He was made just like human beings.*

*He appeared as a man.*

*He was humble and obeyed God completely.*

*He did this even though it led to his death.*

*Even worse, he died on a cross!*

But the story doesn't end on there! Jesus didn't stay dead. We will celebrate the best part of the story on Sunday.

John 1:5 (MSG)

*The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness;  
the darkness couldn't put it out.*

## WEEK 8

## EASTER

Today we celebrate!

When Jesus died, He paid the price for our sin. He died the death we deserved. But history wouldn't have changed if that were the end of our story. We celebrate because Jesus didn't stay dead. Three days later, He was alive again. He defeated sin and death. JESUS IS ALIVE!

### LIGHT ALL SEVEN CANDLES

*Here is the message we have heard from God and now tell to you: God is light,[a] and in him there is no darkness at all ... God is in the light. We should live in the light, too ... And when we live in the light, the blood of the death of Jesus, God's Son, is making us clean from every sin.*

(1 John 1:5,7)

Jesus made a way out of the dark and into the light! He made a way out of sin, back to God.

*But if we confess our sins, he will forgive our sins. We can trust God. He does what is right. He will make us clean from all the wrongs we have done. (1 John 1:9)*

When you acknowledge that you have a sin problem and when you trust that Jesus is the only one who can fix it, you are welcomed into God's family.

Ephesians 5:8-9

*In the past you were full of darkness, but now you are full of light in the Lord. So live like children who belong to the light. Light brings every kind of goodness, right living, and truth.*

## **Go on a treasure hunt!**

- Pick a room of your home that you can make fairly dark. Scatter small items around the floor. These could be Easter eggs, coins, buttons, wrapped candy, wads of aluminum foil, whatever you can find!
- Show your kids what they will be looking for so they can identify it as treasure.
- Turn out the lights and/or blindfold your kids and guide them into the room to search for treasure. Give them several minutes to try their best in the dark.
- Say: Looking for treasure in the darkness is frustrating, isn't it? It would be silly to search alone in the dark without the help up the light.
- Turn on the lights and tell your kids to take off their blindfolds. Allow them to gather as much treasure as they can.

**Say:** God lights up our life and helps us see rightly. Without Jesus, we stumble around, helplessly in the dark. But when we live in the light, He gives us gifts such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.