

Series: Light of the World

Session Title: Jesus' Claim (cf. John 12:35-36)

Date and Time: _____

Number of Students: _____

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Scrap paper
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Stop watch
- ☐ 1-2 deck of cards (two if you have more than 52 people in your group)
- ☐ Four or more concordances or Bibles with decent concordances
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Board/chart
- ☐ Markers

Lesson Objectives:

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to...

- Define Jesus as the Light of the world.
- Define Jesus as the Son of God.
- Define Jesus as the only Way.
- Define Jesus as the Messiah/Christ.
- Decide whether they accept Jesus' claims about himself.

Pastoral Objectives:

Lead In (approximately 10 minutes):

This lead in is like the game Boggle—the students will list words and score points for the most accurate words on their list. The difference is that they will be describing each other rather than finding words on the Boggle board.

Give every student a small piece of scrap paper big enough to write his or her name on it. Give each student a pen. Have larger scrap paper ready for the competition.

Have every student write his or her name on a small piece of paper and put it in a hat. Tell the students that they are going to compete to see who can list more words to describe somebody else. Make sure that every student has a pen and a new piece of scrap paper big enough to make a list on. Tell the students that they are going to draw a name and make a list of words that describe the person whose name they draw. For example, if I drew the name of my imaginary friend Alison, I could say, “daughter, friend, red-head, athlete, swimmer, tall, fifteen, funny, Canadian, etc.” All descriptives are admissible as long as they are not put-downs. They will lose mega points for put downs, which is so not cool. They only have one minute to write. The person with the most accurate words wins.

Have students draw a name and wait for your cue to begin writing. Be strict with the stop watch—one minute only. Go!

Stop! Find the two to four students with the most words on their sheet. Let’s say Marcel had the most with twenty words. Have Marcel read the words about another student. The other students should listen and be ready to contest his answers. This should be fun, not military in precision. He gets one point for every reasonable answer. He gets no points for wrong answers. He loses ten points for any put down. Tally up the points and declare a winner.

Students will want to see what other people wrote about them, so you may want to swap papers or save that for afterwards.

Transition by saying something like:

There are a lot of ways we can describe ourselves, whether it’s as a son or daughter, a student, a worker (based on our job), and so the list goes. When you get to know someone, you find out who they are. Jesus uses some specific titles to describe himself. Tonight/today, we are going to explore those titles and claims.

Part One (approximately 20 minutes):

Tell the students that you are going to divide them up into groups. In their groups they are going to do some detective work to uncover the titles and claims of Jesus as recorded in Scripture.

Give every student one playing card and have them group together based on suit. All the diamonds together, all the hearts, and so on. Once they find their groups, give them the following instructions.

I am going to assign each group one title of Jesus. Your job is to hunt down this title in Scripture. I have provided concordances for you to use. The hearts group will look up “The Way” or “The Narrow Passage”. The diamonds group will look up “Light”. The clubs group will look up “Messiah”. The spades group will look up “Son of God.” Find at least one passage where Jesus describes himself in this way and then describe this title of Jesus in your own words using any relevant information that you found in Scripture.

Release groups to do the work and end the task when the time is out or the groups are done.

Part Two (approximately 25 minutes):

Now tell the students that you are going to shuffle the deck. Have them arrange themselves into new groups according to the number of their card. All the aces are together, all the twos, and so on.

Have students share their findings with their new group. This will allow every student to interact with every title. Tell the students to be prepared with enough information for another shuffle (this will get them listening to one another more intently).

As they discuss, wander around the room with a piece of paper and record their thoughts. This is called monitoring. Record two thoughts per title of Jesus. These could be right or wrong; have a mixture of both. For example, for The Gate, you could write down, “Jesus worked as a shepherd” and “Jesus permits certain people to get to God”. Get these fairly quickly and then write them up on a board or chart paper. Do not make any link between who gave what answer and also make sure that there are some questionable answers and some downright wrong answers (you can make them up if they don’t provide them). When the conversation begins to expire or when you need to move on, draw everyone’s attention to the board. Tell the class this:

As you discussed with your new group, I walked around and recorded some statements that I overheard. I have written them up on the board to summarize your thoughts. Have a look at the statements and decide if you agree with them or not.

Give students a chance to read the statements and to object to the wrong ones. Let them argue about it; don’t be too eager to help them. Hold back with a blank expression and be ready to give them markers/chalk so that they can change the answers. If they want to change the answers, give them the markers. At the end of this task, the list of answers must be accurate to your satisfaction. When enough discussion has passed, jump in and make sure that the list is reasonably correct and transition to the next part.

Part Three (approximately 5 minutes):

Have students go back to their number groups. Have them share whether or not they believe Jesus is who he claims to be and/or what parts of Jesus' claims they find easiest or hardest to believe. Give them five minutes. You might also give them the chance to close their discussion with a brief prayer.

Close by saying something like this:

Some people have a hard time believing Jesus is who he says he is. Before anyone can follow Christ, they need to know who Jesus is. For the next few weeks, we'll be looking deeper into the life and teachings of Jesus, to know who this "Light of the World" is and how his challenge to follow him impacts us.