

The Salt of the Earth



- Theme:** Jesus called us to be the salt of the earth. Epiphany 5-A
- Object:** Several samples of food, one salted and another unsalted. (crackers and popcorn, for example)
- Scripture:** "You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless."
Matthew 5:13 (NLT)

Have you ever been in a grocery store when, as you did your shopping, they offered samples of different food items to try? They do this to entice you to buy those items. If the samples didn't taste good, you probably wouldn't buy any, would you? This morning we are going to do a taste test. You will taste two different samples of a food item, and you will tell which one you liked the best.

The first taste test is crackers. We have two saucers with one cracker on each saucer. One saucer is labeled "A" and the other "B". Johnny, taste a cracker from each saucer and tell me which one you liked best. (Hopefully, Johnny will pick the salted cracker!) The cracker that Johnny liked best is actually called a saltine. Why do you think it is called a saltine? You are right, it is because it has salt sprinkled on top. The other cracker doesn't have salt. Do you know what else it doesn't have? Taste! The cracker really needs the salt to give it a good flavor.

The second taste test we are going to do is popcorn. We have two small bowls of popcorn. The popcorn in one bowl has been salted and the other has not. Mary, come and taste the popcorn from each bowl and tell me which one you like best. (After she tastes it, ask Mary which one she liked best.) As you might guess, Mary liked the salted popcorn better than the unsalted. I agree with Mary. In my opinion, popcorn without salt is about as tasty as those Styrofoam peanuts they use to pack items when they ship them in a box.

I'm sure you all knew that many foods taste much better with a little salt. It doesn't take much. In fact, when you are cooking, a recipe often calls for "a pinch of salt." Not much, just a pinch, but that little pinch of salt makes a big difference in the flavor.

In our Bible lesson today, Jesus said to his disciples, "You are the salt of the earth." What do you think that means? I think Jesus means that he wants us to improve the quality of life of those we meet each day. How can we do that? We can do that by introducing them to Jesus and by showing them that having Jesus in our life is like having salt on our food. Everything is better when we have Jesus in our life.

There is a lot of hatred and bitterness in our world today. If you and I will show the love of Jesus in all that we do, we can be the salt of the earth like Jesus called us to be. Just a pinch of salt can do much to reduce bitterness and bring peace to our world.

Heavenly Father, our prayer is that we may be the salt of the earth by showing the love of Jesus in all that we do. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

SALT RELAY: Divide the children into two teams. Have each team form a line and at the sound of GO, the person at the front of the line will balance a salt shaker (Unbreakable!) on his head and walk to a line on the other side of the room, turn around, and walk back to the next person in line. He/She will then place the salt shaker on the head of the next person in line and say, "You are the salt of the earth." The game will continue until all of the children have had a turn.

SALTY SCRIPTURE SCRAMBLE: The teacher will write today's memory verse on a poster board "You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless." Matthew 5:13 (NLT) Leave a blank space for the following key words which will be written on separate pieces of paper and placed in a basket. (salt, earth, lost, flavor, salty, thrown, underfoot, worthless) Call children to come up and draw a word from the basket and tape it into the space in the Bible verse where it belongs.

SALT SHAKER VERSE: Give each child an inexpensive plastic salt shaker from the Dollar Store and provide the Bible verse ("You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor?") written on a slip of paper that they can lightly color and tape around the salt shaker. Encourage the children to put their salt shaker on their kitchen tables at home to remind them that Jesus called them to be the salt of the earth.

PAPER BAG PUPPET: Give each child a paper bag to color and decorate to look like themselves. Next they will add a thin layer of glue and sprinkle salt on the top of their bags. Finally, the children will write their name on the bag and write, "I AM CALLED TO BE THE SALT OF THE EARTH."

SALTY WORLD: Give each child a picture of a world globe. Let the children color their world picture and add special places if desired. Then let them spread a thin layer of glue on their globe and sprinkle salt on the world. Hang the "salted worlds" by yarn around the classroom!

Plugged In and Turned On for Jesus



Theme: Letting Your Light Shine 5th Sunday after the Epiphany, Yr. A

Object: A lamp and an extension cord

Scripture: Let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:16

I am sure that you all know the song, "This Little Light of Mine." I want you to help me sing that song this morning. While we sing it, I'm going to hold this light up and let it shine all around. (Sing the song, but the light doesn't shine) I wonder what is wrong my light isn't shining. (Someone will probably notice that it isn't plugged in.) Oh, here is the problem, my light wasn't plugged in.

Let's try it again. (Sing the song, but the light still doesn't shine.) Well, I wonder what the problem is now? (Someone may suggest that the light wasn't turned on.) Oh, here is the problem, my light wasn't turned on. Let's try it one more time. (Sing the song again and this time the light will shine.)

The Bible tells us that we should let our light shine. Before our light will shine, we must be plugged in and

turned on. We must be plugged in to God's power supply and we must be turned on for Jesus. When we invite Jesus into our heart, we have the power. When we come to Church to worship and praise Him and study His Word, we get turned on for Jesus. When we are plugged in and turned on, our light will shine.

Dear Lord, we want our light to shine. We ask you to help us to remember that we need to be plugged in to your power and we need to be turned on for Jesus. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

ON AND OFF RELAY: Divide the children into two teams for this easy relay. Have one lamp for each team. Each child will run to the lamp and turn it on if it is off. The next player will run to turn it off, if it is on. Continue until all children have had an opportunity to run to turn on or turn off the lamp.

FLASHLIGHT RACING: Divide the children into as many groups as there are flashlights. Each team gets a flashlight that has no batteries in it. The batteries will be placed around the room. When the teacher says GO, the children will hunt for the batteries for their group's flashlight and will see which team can get the batteries into the flashlight and get it turned on the quickest!! When they get their batteries into the flashlight and it turns on, tell the children to flash their light to the BIBLE VERSE POSTER BOARD!!

FLASHLIGHT HUNTING: Find a dark spot in the designated area for children to use their flashlights to find pieces of paper or objects that have today's Bible Verse on them. When found, bring the Bible verse words back to the table and place in the correct order on a long table banner. Use flashlights to light up the Bible verse and read together several times.

PAPER BAG LIGHTS: Give each child a paper bag to decorate with words and verses from today's lesson. Cut out a few small holes in each paper bag as eyes, nose and mouth and ears, etc. Children can color the bag and make it look like themselves if desired. When the bags are completed, let children shine a flashlight into the bag to see the light showing through. If inexpensive mini flashlights can be afforded, each child could be given a flashlight to remember today's lesson.

JESUS POWER DRAWING: Give the children bright colored markers and paper to draw a decorated J-E-S-U-S on one side of the paper. Then give the children a string to glue from the word JESUS to a drawing of themselves, or small pieces of construction paper put together to look like themselves. Various shapes and sizes of paper will make a fun way for the children to glue together a drawing of themselves, if desired.

POWER SUPPLY PLATE: Give each child a paper plate to write words around the edges for the POWER SUPPLY in our lives, such as, WORSHIP, PRAISE, STUDY GOD'S WORD, and ACCEPT JESUS AS SAVIOR. Draw a light socket, etc in the middle of the plate. Tape a stick or dowel, etc to the back of the plate and march around the room or a designated area saying today's Bible Verse together and singing THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE together.

LIGHT TURNED ON DISPLAY: Give the children bright yellow construction paper to cut out a large light bulb. Children will glue the light bulb onto another piece of paper and write today's Bible verse on the light bulb, or "This Little Light of Mine - I'm going to let it shine". Hang the light bulbs on the classroom wall.

PAPER ROLL BRACELET: Take a toilet paper roll or paper towel roll and cut it into sections the right size to make a bracelet for the children. Let children paint the outside of the roll or color and decorate with markers, stickers and words from today's lesson --- drawing light bulbs and write, GONNA LET MY LIGHT SHINE, etc. Cut the "bracelet" lengthwise so that it can be spread apart to wrap around the wrist like a bracelet and children will be able to wear it home to tell others about JESUS' LIGHT!