

Vision Practice 1

Proclaim the Good News of Jesus to Every Hungering Soul

Opening Prayer

Living God, help us to put on our listening ears. May we listen with open hearts and minds to your word and to each other. Draw us closer to the light, to your Son, Jesus Christ. Equip us with the courage that we need to never be fearful of sharing the light of Christ, the good news, to all who need to hear. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Discussion Question(s) invite each person to respond to one of the following questions

1. On a scale of 1 to 10 how nervous do you get when asked to speak in front of a group? What helps you get through it?
2. Have you ever discovered something that had been hidden or forgotten that turned out to be valuable?
3. Have you ever been outside when it was dark without a light source? Why? What happened?

Focus Text

 Mark 4:21-23

[Jesus] said to them, "Is a lamp brought in to be put under the bushel basket, or under the bed, and not on the lampstand? For there is nothing hidden, except to be disclosed; nor is anything secret, except to come to light. Let anyone with ears to hear listen!"

Engaging the Text

In the gospel of Mark, the parables both reveal and conceal who Jesus is and what he is doing. For those who have ears to hear, it comes as good news of the kingdom of God. For those who refuse to hear, it only sounds like a jumbled jive from a man named Jesus. How will we discover our vision of working together as a people of God who are called to proclaim the good news of Jesus to every hungry soul?

There are many places in the Bible that the image of light is used. Read Psalm 119:105 ***Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.***

1. How does this verse help you understand Jesus' story about the lampstand?
2. Why would anyone try and hide a lamp?
3. How (or in what ways) do we hide the good news of Jesus?
4. How (or in what ways) do we let the good news of Jesus shine brightly in our lives?

To begin this Bible study, in the center of your table gather together one large candle (perhaps the Christ candle from your worship space) and enough tea lights for each participant. If there is any concern about open flame, all of the candles can be electrical. Only light the large candle.

Jesus is not only God's word, but God's light that reaches the dark places. The good news of Jesus is not something to be hidden away, but is to be shared and passed on to others to let it shine. The good news is that we are called to work together to tell and show others the light of Christ.

Applying the Text to the Vision Practice

It may not always be easy to share Christ's light with those around us. We become reluctant, nervous, or worried about what others will think of us or that we won't know what to say. The good news is that we share *Christ's* light (not our own) and it happens in our daily lives through both our words and our actions.

1. What are the dark places in your life and in your community that need the light of the good news of Jesus?
2. Who hungers for the light in your community? How can you reach them with God's word?

Don't think too hard! Sometimes, it takes the simplest idea to share the good news. It could be helping a neighbor with their yard work and simply telling them you are offering a hand out of God's love. It could be saying hello to someone in your community who feels friend-less. Maybe your congregation can create and distribute a prayer resource for people to use in the home or on vacation. Make a list of ways in which you and your congregation can reach out in your community to share the good news to those who hunger for the light. Then, put a star next to the 2 that you will work on in the next 6 months.

Respond and Celebrate

Light the large candle in the center of the table and say, "Christ's light is good news for us and for all people! We are thankful for the ways in which we reach one another in God's love. We ask for courage to not be afraid to share the good news in all that we do and say in our daily lives so that Christ's light is on display. Psalm 27:1 reminds us – **"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"** Now, give each participant a tea light and light it off of the large candle (or turn them on if they are electric) and say, "You carry Christ's light with you. Go and let it shine brightly!"



Closing Song This Little Light of Mine(ELW 677)

Closing Prayer

Almighty God, we thank you for the ways in which we share your light on a lampstand. We thank you for the ways in which we share Christ's light in our community. Help us to let your light shine in our daily lives. Encourage us to proclaim the good news to every hungering soul. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our light. Amen.