

## NEARER Sunday 30th October 2016

*Theme - The Storyteller - No. 2- The Lamp and the Bowl*

### 1600 - Welcome & Intro:

Coffee & Biscuits available

### 1610 - Exploration Time:

(Three activities)

Exploration Time 1 – Exploring the Parable

Exploration Time 2 –Lantern Carving

Exploration Time 3 – Different Lights for Different Purposes

### 1655 - Together Time:

Our lives are meant to be like lights

- How well do our lives bring the light of God into people' lives?
- What might be causing our light to dim?
- How courageous are we in letting our light shine?

As an act of commitment we light a candle. Let our individual lights gather strength from those around us that together we might be a real light of God in our community.

Have one minute reflection time (back ground music) 'What does God want you to take away from today?'

Distribute Takeaway sheet

FREE Bible - Read the parables for yourself.

NEARER publicity materials - INVITE people!

Date of next meeting - Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> November 'The Storyteller - 3'



## Exploration Time 1

### Exploring the parable-

Give out copies of the parable. Read it together x2.

"You are the light that gives light to the world.

A city that is built on a hill cannot be hidden. And people don't hide a light under a bowl. They put the light on a lampstand. Then the light shines for all the people in the house.

In the same way, you should be a light for other people. Live so that they will see the good things you do. Live so that they will praise your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16 ICB)

### Some questions to discuss-

What do you think this story means?

What purpose does light serve?

In what circumstances do we need a light to shine?

In what way does Jesus mean his followers are the 'light of the world'?

### The context of the parable-

This parable comes just after Jesus had been teaching a large crowd on a hill. His talk is now known as the Sermon on the Mount. Each phrase starts with the words 'Blessed are those...'

This teaching was radical in that it turned upside down the normal values and priorities of human living. Jesus was establishing a kingdom unlike any other the world had ever seen; a kingdom that would shine forth God's values, a kingdom in which the people who are the 'blessed' ones, are very different from what we might imagine.

Give out copies of the beatitudes. Read it together x2.

*Blessed are the humble, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Usually it is the proud and arrogant who imagine that God is on their side. But here we are told that it is the humble. Humility is the realization that all your gifts and blessings come from the grace of God. Humility brings an openness and an inner peace, allowing one to do the will of God.

*Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*

Normally it is the strong, the powerful, the ruthless that we expect to conquer the world. But in the upside-down kingdom of Jesus we are told it is the meek and gentle who will win over the world in the end.

*Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.*

In Jesus' Kingdom the ones who show mercy to others are the ones who receive mercy from God. This is at the heart of the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us".

The teaching of Jesus about the nature of the new kingdom he was establishing on earth - and for eternity - is the 'light' that has been received.

Those that have received it - that is to say those who have heard it, understood it, and decided to live in the light of it - are now to share that 'light' with the world. How do you think Jesus meant them to do this?

Jesus' new way of living was not based upon **laws to keep** but a **lifestyle to live**.

Candle in a jar illustration.

Living as lights in a dark world is difficult. Our light is only kept shining as we receive new 'oxygen' from God. How do you think we do this? - Bible, Prayer, Fellowship, Sacraments.

What is the lampstand meant to represent? What makes the light of Jesus' followers more visible? – The Church

### **Exploration Time 2– Lantern Carving**

Carve out an orange and create a face, or a design.

Put a tea light inside it.

How is this a picture of what happens when we open our lives to God?

### **Exploration Time 3 – Different Lights for Different Purposes**

Have a selection of different lights. Get people to draw one out of a bag and explain where that light would be most useful.

How is this a picture of us as 'lights' in the world? We are all different, we can all shine 'light' in different ways.

What are the ways in which we can be light?

*Do everything without complaining or arguing. Then you will be innocent and without anything wrong in you. You will be God's children without fault. But you are living with crooked and mean people all around you. Among them you shine like stars in the dark world. (Philippians 2:14-15)*

*Someone says, "I am in the light." But if he hates his brother, he is still in the darkness. Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him that will cause him to do wrong. But whoever hates his brother is in darkness. (1 John 2:9-11)*

### **Together Time-**

- We have explored this story of Jesus in a few different ways.
- We have looked at the purpose that light serves, the benefit it brings to us in our lives.
- We have thought about what Jesus meant when he told his followers that they were to be the light of the world.
- We have seen that of our light is to be sustained we need to keep receiving God's help and energy.

But what does it look like when someone responds to Jesus? I think that there is something that can help us.

## Show Jesus pumpkin lantern



- It was dirty and had to be cleaned.
- It needed to have Jesus clearly marked on it.
- Before I could put the light inside I had to take out all of the rubbish (show rubbish).

When we decide to respond to Jesus, to believe his message and to follow him.

- We have to be cleaned up from the mess our lives are in. We've all done things that we know are wrong and we feel bad about them. Jesus brings us forgiveness and cleans us up.
- We need to have Jesus character, his imprint placed on our lives – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control.
- We need to have the rubbish inside us taken out so that Jesus can put his light inside us – selfishness, anger, pride etc.
- Then we can receive the light of the Holy Spirit to shine through us, to make us light for Jesus in the world.

What does God want you take away from today? (Moment of silent reflection)

As a response we are each going to take a candle and pass the light from one to another as a mark of our desire to be a light for Jesus in this world, and also as a recognition that as a community our light is stronger than when we are on our own.