RWS-PS #208
LET IT SHINE
Introduction
By Barbara Hanna

Several months ago I asked Lisa Smith if she would be interested in creating some of the activities for this lesson book on parables. She sent me many excellent activities, and I added a few as I taught the lessons. We are both very excited about the topic *Let it Shine.*

Bulletin Board

This series of lessons is easy to illustrate using the "light" theme. Document 03VA is a candle, which could be duplicated on various colors of cover stock, or you could use white or ivory and color each candle a different color with markers. Print each child's name on one of the candleholders. For the flame, you can use markers, paint markers, or even tiny cuts of various colors of paper. I used more yellow with a little orange, red, and blue. If you are using paint markers, you will want to do one color at a time so the first one will be dry by the time you start on the next color. Cut them out.

I used two poster boards, and attached them in the middle with tape on the back. Print the documents found in 04VA. If you are using the CD and have a color printer, you may choose which type of lettering you want to use. The darker lettering works best if you are printing with black and white on either a copy machine or printer. The three could be the same color, or you could use three different colors of cover stock. "LET IT SHINE" will need to be printed twice, so it will go with the song, saying: LET IT SHINE – ALL THE TIME – LET IT SHINE. I put the posters up first, then attached the first "LET IT SHINE" in the center at the top. "ALL THE TIME" was placed in the bottom left corner and the other "LET IT SHINE" was glued to the bottom right corner. I spaced the candles all over the two posters, and with the different colors it made a very eye-catching bulletin board.

When you are introducing the topic at the beginning of the first class, show the children the candles. Talk about the theme LET IT SHINE, and show each child his or her candle. You may also complete the attendance charts and have them placed where the children can reach them to add a sticker each week.

Attendance Charts

Purchase stickers of children to use for the attendance charts. Use as many different colors of cover stock as you have available. You can buy a package of bright colors at a discount store or office supply. Most have four or five different colors, with a total of 100 sheets. Unless you have tried it before, don't get card stock, because it may not work on some copy machines and printers. Allow each child to place one sticker on his or her Attendance Chart

every week. The beginning of class is a good time. Regardless of when you choose to apply the stickers, it is best to do it at the same time for every class.

Memory Verses

The memory verses are generally portions of a verse. If you are teaching older preschoolers, you may want to have them learn all of each verse. Only the short portion will be used on the PRC (Parent Review with Child) cards. Although I am using the KJV, I have chosen to replace words in some of the verses. These will be found in brackets. The first week, you will begin teaching the memory verse, and let the children work on it at home. For two-year-olds, I recommend having them say the verse together in class each week. If you feel they can say it alone by the third week, ask them to do so. Older students may be able to say it without help after a couple of practices. Memory verses are:

Lessons 2-4: "Let your light … shine before men" (Matt. 5:16).
Lessons 5-7: "[You] are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14).
Lessons 8-10: "Walk in the light, as he is in the light" (1John 1:7) ("He" is Jesus.)
Lessons 11-13: "Be ready to [do] every good work" (Titus 3:1).

Parent Review With Child Cards

The PRC cards assist parents by helping them know what was taught in class, and also what they can ask their children to review the lesson for that class. One mother told me she saved all of the cards and while her older children were doing homework from school, she would ask her preschool daughter the questions on the PRC cards. If time permits, go over the questions at the end of your class. Mention that their parents may be asking them the questions when they get home, and it is good to be able to answer correctly! If you have access to cover stock, use it for the PRC cards. Cut the page in fourths with a paper cutter or scissors.

Special Visual Aid

For this series of 13 lessons, a very special Visual Aid is suggested. Since it would not be safe to bring candles to class to show the children how they light the room, flashlights will work just as well. Have more than enough for each student. (I found some with batteries for less than a dollar each at Wal-Mart.) The teacher(s) should have one, too, to use while singing, "This Little Light of Mine." The children will **not** get tired of using their flashlights and singing this song. You can explain that in Bible times they had candles or lamps, but they did not have flashlights or the electrical lights like we have. Tell them to push the buttons and turn on their flashlights.

Then **you** or another adult should turn off the light. Do not allow the children to turn off the light because it could turn into a mad dash (and crash) racing to see who can get to the light switch first. Sing at least three or four verses, as the children will want to have the flashlights as long as possible. In my class (BH) I had the children do their activity papers first. Using

the flashlights gave them an incentive to get their work done so they could "Let It Shine!" For children age four and older, it would be good to spend a little time after the song asking, "Is it letting your light shine if you…." They could raise their hands, say "yes" and "no," or do thumbs up for lights shining, and thumbs down for lights not shining. I tried this in my class, but I had mostly two-year-olds, and they did not understand what they were supposed to do, and were getting restless by then. With younger ones it is advisable to provide a snack at the beginning or closing of class, and allow them to play with toys for a few minutes when they have listened to the lesson and completed all of their work.

Is YOUR Light Shining?

Before you begin teaching this series, do a personal check-up. Is your light shining? Do your students see a teacher who is faithful to all of the services? Do you study the Bible, and take time to read the lesson text before class? If your students ever ask you a question, and you don't know the answer, be honest! Tell them you will find the answer and tell them the next week. Then do it!

How often do you pray about your class? Do you pray for your students? Do you ask God to help them become Christians when they are grown? Do you pray that you will be the right kind of example for your students? Do you ask God to be with you as you try to teach only His Truth? Do you ask Him to help you find the Truth in His Word?

How do you treat the members of your family? Are you loving, kind and patient – or harsh, mean and impatient? When you are in the public, do you treat others as you would like to be treated? Even if it is not one of your own students observing your behavior, remember that we are all examples wherever we go. Either we glorify God or we bring shame upon Him and the church.

When a new family visits, do you go up to them and introduce yourself? It is always helpful to mention that you teach the Sunday or Wednesday preschool class, and would love to a new child in your class if the age is appropriate. If not, try to show the parents the individual who teaches the class, where the class is located, etc.

Let me share a personal experience with you. I did not grow up in the church of Christ. I was baptized for the remission of sins in 1972 (see Acts 2:38). The Lord added me to the church (Acts 2:42). My parents lived in another state. When I went to visit, they agreed to go with me to the church of Christ closest to where they lived. Most of the people were not friendly. I could have cried. They weren't even friendly to me! (And of course they did not know whether or not any of us were saved.)

Later the elders went to visit my parents. Rather than being friendly and inviting them back to services, they spoke derogatorily of the denomination where my parents were worshiping. Of course we can never know for sure, but I felt that my parents were not satisfied where they had been worshiping, and might have gone back to visit the church of Christ again if the people would have been loving and kind. They never returned.

What happens when people visit the congregation where YOU worship? Are YOU warm and friendly? Do YOU ask them to come back? Do YOU check up on those who have students in your Bible class and offer a ride if the parents are ill? When a child is absent from your class, do you ever send a card, call to say you missed the child or follow up in any way? Please carefully examine your own life and work hard to let your own light shine brightly!

Shopping List

If you don't have a long-armed stapler, so that you can staple in the middle of a page, consider buying one or ask if the church will buy one for you. A paper cutter would come in handy to cut the PRC cards in fourths quickly. In addition to the traditional classroom supplies, you will need:

Various colors of cover stock to print some of the activities
(You can buy a packet at a discount store with four or five different colors.)
One inexpensive flashlight per child to use when you sing "This Little Light of Mine"
Foam hearts for Lesson 2 (optional)
Ingredients to make bread with the simple recipe after the TI page for Lesson 5
A pan that will make eight small loaves of bread
Quart sized baggies and 4 X 5 labels to place on the baggies
Several shiny pennies for Lesson 9
Star stickers for Lesson 10 (optional)