

Unit 4 "Our Church" Lesson 19

We Light Candles

Objective: The students will be able to state that when we light a candle, we say a prayer and that candles remind us that Jesus is the Light of the world.

For the Catechist

A favorite activity of children is to light a candle upon entering the church. Candles are burnt offerings to God for particular intentions. The students are being taught that candles are reminders of Jesus, the Light of the world, and that a prayer is offered when a candle is lit. The theme of Jesus as the Light of the world is developed more in subsequent years of the series.

Jesus the Light. Jesus used many comparisons to help us understand His role and mission. His mission was to lead us to union with the Father. One of the comparisons He used was light.

"I have come into the world as its light, to keep anyone who believes in Me from remaining in the dark. If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I am not the one to condemn him, for I did not come to condemn the world but to save it. Whoever rejects Me and does not accept my words already has his judge, namely, the word I have spoken" (Jn 12:46-48).

Background Reading

(Direct quotations from the sources noted)

Candles Radiate Light

"Candles are lighted before the holy icons in our Tradition, both in church and in the home. They serve more than a utilitarian purpose. A candle burning before a well-painted icon causes the paint and the gold leaf on it to radiate light, just as the persons depicted radiate the divine light within them. A number of candles burning in a church makes the entire assembly glow with that light as well" (DC 45).

Lesson Plan Overview

Opening: "Our Father"

Introduction: Lighting a candle and discussion
Need: Candle and matches (or use candle from your icon corner)

Read Text Aloud: Hold text up for students to see as you read each page aloud. After each page, use the questions in the shaded box at the bottom of that page to discuss the lesson with the students.

Activity Tracks:

Choose a basic, group, or craft activity to reinforce the lesson (detailed on the pages that follow).

- **Basic:** "Jesus Is Our Light"
- **Group:** Candle Prayer Service
- **Craft:** Candle Cut and Paste

Closing: "Thank You . . . Amen."

Come Bless the Lord Icon:

- Packet I:
- Packet II:

Candles as offerings

“It is customary among Byzantine Christians to offer candles at the beginning of prayer, both in church and in the home. That is why most churches have candles available at the door of the church. As we enter the church we generally choose one or more candles, make the appropriate offering and come before the icons placed for veneration. We reverence the icon, light the candle and place it in the stand provided nearby before going to our place to pray. In some churches these stands are found at the door of the church while in others they are placed before the icon screen” (*DC 45*).

The Lesson Plan

Opening

Let's gather around the icon and say the Lord's Prayer. Let's put our hands in prayer position and repeat after me: "Our Father [Let them echo the phrase after you say it.] Who art in heaven—hallowed by Thy name.—Thy kingdom come.—Thy will be done—on earth as it is in heaven.—Give us this day our daily bread—and forgive us our trespasses—as we forgive those—who trespass against us.—Lead us not into temptation—but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom. . . [Check the "Liturgical Text" pages in the introductory notes for the words used in your jurisdiction.]

Introduction

Our lessons now are about our church—what we see and do in church. Let's review what we've learned. Why do we come to church? (To worship God) Why do we worship God? (To say "thank you") What are we thankful for? (Families, food, our world, Jesus) When we come to church, sometimes we light a candle. We say a prayer for someone. This is how I light a candle. [Say aloud as you light a candle:] "Dear God, please bless my Aunt Susan and help her to feel better. Thank You." [Wave hand to make candle flicker.] Look at how my candle moves. I know God sees it, and I know God hears my prayers. When I see this candle, it reminds me of my aunt, for whom I am praying. Does your family light a candle in your icon corner when you are praying for someone? [Allow responses.] Candles also remind us of Jesus. Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world." Because a candle is light, it reminds us of Jesus' words.

Reading of Text

Hold text so that children can see the page as you read it to them. Read slowly and draw their attention to the illustrations. After reading each page, use the questions below (given also on the bottom of the student text) to review what you have read.

Page 1

- Let's talk about where we see candles in church. [Help them to recognize the use of candles—at the candle stands, at the holy table, and around the Gospel when it is read. Also, the bishop holds candles at a hierarchical service—refer to photo on the third page of this lesson.]
- What is one reason we have candles? (Candles remind us Jesus is the Light of the world.)

Page 2

- What do we do when we light a candle in church? (We offer a prayer for someone.) [Share about whom you pray for when you light a candle.]
- Have you ever lit a candle in church? [Allow responses.] For whom did you pray? [Allow responses.]

- *Jesus told us that He is the Light of the world. Have you heard that before? Jesus lights our way to God by teaching us God's ways. Candles remind us that Jesus is the Light of the world.*

Page 3

- *Of whom do candles remind us? (Jesus and the people for whom we are praying.)*
- *Do you like seeing candles in church? [Allow responses.]*

Activity Tracks

Basic: Jesus Is Our Light

The basic activity is the fourth page of each student text. It is a dot-to-dot activity of a candle. Say the following:

- *Jesus is our Light because He leads us to the Father. Do you recognize the icon drawing? (Jesus) There is a dot-to-dot for you to complete.*
- *Candles remind us of Jesus, the Light of the world.*

Group: Candle Prayer Service

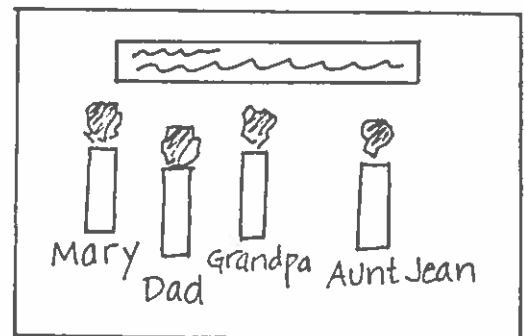
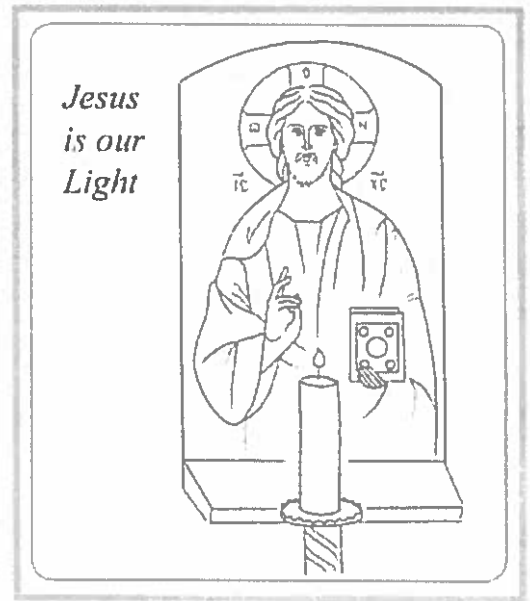
Materials: Candle

Today we learned that candles represent prayers. For our activity, we'll do a prayer service with a candle. I want you to think for a minute about someone who needs prayers. Then we'll gather at our icon corner. I will light the candle [or use icon corner candle] and come to each of you. You may hold the candle with me as you ask God to help the person you are praying for. We will all say, "Lord, have mercy." [Demonstrate with your own prayer.] Let's begin with the sign of the cross. . . "Dear God, please hear the prayers we offer and have mercy on us." [After going to each child, conclude with] "Thank You, Father, that You always hear our prayers. We trust in You." Let's make the sign of the cross to conclude.

Craft: Candle Cut and Paste

Materials: Construction paper, glue, yellow tissue paper, Candle Title Strip worksheet, parent to help.

[Ahead of time, cut out title strips from worksheet and tissue paper pieces.] *Today we learned that candles remind us of Jesus, the Light of the world. We also say a prayer when we light a candle. Today we can make candles out of paper. You can make as many candles as you want, but for each one you'll need to think of someone to pray for. [Show sample.] First you can paste the title strip onto your paper. Then cut some white construction paper into strips and paste them to your paper. Finally, you can crumple a piece of yellow tissue paper for each candle. I'll write the name underneath. Pretend that you're lighting the candle for the person when you paste down the flame.*



Closing

Today we learned that candles remind us about Jesus. They remind us that He is the Light of the world. It is wonderful that He came to be with us and to guide us to the Father. For our closing prayer, I'll say a prayer of thanks to God for sending us Jesus. At the end we'll all say "Amen." Amen is our way of thanking God for sending us His son. Let's get in prayer position and stand quietly for a moment. [Say the following prayer:] "God, You sent us Jesus to be our light. He is the Light of the world. He leads us to You. Thank You, Jesus. [Have the students say] Amen."

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