



## Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A Background on the Gospel Reading

**Gospel Reading** Matthew 5:13-16  
Jesus teaches that his disciples are to be the  
**salt of the earth and the light of the world.**

### This Sunday's Readings

**First Reading:** *Isaiah 58:7-10* - In the work of justice, light shall break through darkness.  
**Responsorial Psalm:** *Psalms 112:4-9* - The just person will be a light in the darkness.  
**Second Reading:** *1 Corinthians 2:1-5* Paul shows that he came to Corinth preaching Christ crucified.  
**Gospel Reading: Matthew 5:13-16 - Jesus teaches that his disciples are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.**



### Background

Following upon the teaching of the **Beatitudes**, Jesus uses the now familiar **metaphors of salt and light to describe the life of discipleship.**

We take **salt and light for granted in our society**, but these commodities were **more precious in ancient cultures.** Just as now, salt was used in Jesus' time for flavouring, as a preservative, and as a healing agent.

Similarly, the widespread use of electricity in the modern world makes us less aware of the value and importance of light in our lives.

Still, our familiarity with this passage from Matthew's Gospel speaks well to the abiding power of the imagery that Jesus presented. **Jesus' call to be salt for the earth and light for the world** powerfully states our mission as Church and as Christians.

Our commitment to **social justice flows** from the exhortation that Jesus gives us in today's Gospel. Some of the activities that this commitment leads us to are given more concrete expression as the **Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.**

When we **feed the hungry, clothe the naked, console those who mourn**, and so on, we show ourselves to be the **salt of the earth and the light of the world.**

When we do these things with the community of faith, the Church, we are indeed acting as "a city set on a mountain" that cannot be hidden!

### Doctrinal Content:

<b>Profession of Faith</b>	<b>Sacraments / Liturgy</b>	<b>Christian Life</b>
God loves each of us (#356)	Eucharist: Prayer of the faithful	Making a difference / helping other

### Link to music

<https://youtu.be/QCN893hzue>

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

Light that shines is the light of love,  
Hides the darkness from above,  
Shines on me and it shines on you,  
Shows you what the power of love can do.  
Shine my light both bright and clear,  
Shine my light both far and near,

In every dark corner that I find,  
Let my little light shine.  
Monday gave me the gift of love,  
Tuesday peace came from above,  
Wednesday told me to have more faith,  
Thursday gave me a little more grace,  
Friday told me to watch and pray,  
Saturday told me just what to say,  
Sunday gave me the power divine  
To let my little light shine.  
(Chorus twice)  
Shine, shine, shine, shine, and shine.

## Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A Making the Connection (Grades 1, 2, and 3)

**Gospel Reading** Matthew 5:13-16  
Jesus teaches that his disciples are to be the  
**salt of the earth and the light of the world.**

Jesus said that we should improve life in the way that salt improves the flavor of food. We should be light for the world so that others will follow us in praising God.

### Materials Needed

- Unsalted crackers
- A spray bottle of water
- A salt shaker



### Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings

1. Bring unsalted crackers to class (one for each child), a spray bottle filled with water, and a saltshaker. Give each child a cracker and have them all take a small bite. (Make sure there are no wheat or other food allergies.) Ask whether they like the taste. Then spray their crackers with a small amount of water and sprinkle some salt on each cracker. Ask the children to take another bite and judge its taste now.
2. Say: ***Even in Jesus' time, people used salt to make things taste better.*** Show the saltshaker. Continue: ***But, if we have salt on our table and we never use it, will it do any good for the taste of our food?***
3. ***Listen to this week's Gospel and hear what Jesus said about salt.***

### Read Matthew 5:13-16.

4. ***How might we make life better for others just as salt makes food taste better?***  
Help the group identify at least three or four things that children might do.

***When we do these things, we show ourselves to be disciples of Jesus.***

5. Conclude in prayer together by singing "This Little Light of Mine."

### Link to music

<https://youtu.be/QCN893hzue>

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This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.  
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Light that shines is the light of love,  
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Sunday gave me the power divine  
To let my little light shine.  
(Chorus twice)  
Shine, shine, shine, shine, and shine.

## Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A Making the Connection (Grades 4, 5, and 6)

### Gospel Reading Matthew 5:13-16

Jesus teaches that his disciples are to be the  
**salt of the earth and the light of the world.**

Jesus said that we should improve life in the way that salt improves the flavor of food. We should be light for the world so that others will follow us in praising God.

Jesus' call to be salt for the earth and light for the world powerfully states our mission as Church and as Christians. Our commitment to and action for social justice flow from the exhortation that Jesus gives us in today's Gospel.

#### Materials Needed

- Copies of your parish bulletin from several weeks
- Self-stick notes
- Two large sheets of paper
- One slip of paper per child



#### Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings

1. Before the session, list the Corporal Works of Mercy on one of the large sheets of paper and the Spiritual Works of Mercy on the other sheet.
2. Distribute copies of your parish bulletin and self-stick notes to each member of your group. Ask the children to use these bulletins to identify parish activities that make a difference in your community. Direct the group to write down summaries of these activities, one activity per self-stick note. Save these for use later.
3. Invite one or more volunteers to read today's Gospel, Matthew 5:13-16.
4. ***How do the parish activities you identified show your community to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth?*** (Accept all reasonable answers.)
5. ***Another way that the Church talks about caring for the world is to talk about the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.***

Show the group two posters, one listing the ***Corporal Works of Mercy***, one listing the ***Spiritual Works of Mercy***.

Invite the children to place their self-stick notes on the poster that shows corresponding activities. A parish food drive, for example, would be posted on the Corporal Works of Mercy list. Bereavement counseling or a tutoring program would be posted on the Spiritual Works of Mercy list. Invite the children to note any activities that fall under both Works of Mercy.

6. Say: ***When individual Christians and entire communities engage in tasks such as feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, comforting those who mourn, etc., we show that we act as the light of the world and the salt of the earth as Jesus taught us.***
7. Give each child a slip of paper and say: ***Identify at least one Corporal or Spiritual Work of Mercy that you will do this week.*** Ask each child to write down this Work of Mercy as a sign of his or her commitment to be the salt of the earth, the light of the world.
8. To conclude, invite the children to place their slips of paper in a basket in the center of the prayer space. Pray together by singing ***"This Little Light of Mine"*** or pray today's psalm.

See words above: **[Link to music https://youtu.be/QCN893hzue](https://youtu.be/QCN893hzue)**

## Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A Making the Connection (Grades 7,8, & 9)

### Gospel Reading Matthew 5:13-16

Jesus teaches that his disciples are to be the **salt of the earth and the light of the world.**

Jesus said that we should improve life in the way that salt improves the flavor of food. We should be light for the world so that others will follow us in praising God.

Young people are always in need of affirmation. In this Sunday's Gospel, **Jesus affirms us by saying that we are salt and light.** However, we are called to live up to this affirmation through our deeds.

#### Materials Needed

- Slips of paper
- Posters of the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy



#### Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings

1. Ask volunteers to explain the following phrases: **“Talk is cheap,” “Walk the talk,”** and **“Actions speak louder than words.”**
2. Explain that each of these sayings refers to the importance **of backing up our words with actions.**
3. Write on the board the following saying: **“To know but not to do is not yet to know.”**
4. Explain that this is an ancient Chinese proverb that expresses the same message as the previously mentioned phrases.
5. Tell the young people that in this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus emphasizes the importance of our actions.
6. Invite a volunteer to read Matthew 5:13-16.
7. **Another way that the Church talks about being salt and light is to talk about the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.**
8. Show the group two posters, one listing the Corporal Works of Mercy and the other listing the Spiritual Works of Mercy.
9. ***When individual Christians and entire communities engage in tasks such as feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, and comforting those who mourn, we show that we act as the light of the world and the salt of the earth, as Jesus taught us.***
10. Give each young person a slip of paper and say: **Identify at least one Corporal or Spiritual Work of Mercy that you will do this week.**
11. Ask each young person to write down this work of mercy as a sign of his or her commitment to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.
12. **To conclude, invite the young people to place their slips of paper in a basket in the center of the prayer space. Pray together today's psalm.**

#### Psalm 112:4-9

- <sup>4</sup> They rise in the darkness as a light for the upright; they are gracious, merciful, and righteous.
- <sup>5</sup> It is well with those who deal generously and lend, who conduct their affairs with justice.
- <sup>6</sup> For the righteous will never be moved; they will be remembered forever.
- <sup>7</sup> They are not afraid of evil tidings; their hearts are firm, secure in the LORD.
- <sup>8</sup> Their hearts are steady, they will not be afraid; in the end they will look in triumph on their foes.
- <sup>9</sup> They have distributed freely, they have given to the poor; their righteousness endures forever; their horn is exalted in honour.

## Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A Family Connection

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### **Gospel Reading** Matthew 5:13-16

Jesus teaches that his disciples are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

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The widespread use of electricity in our society may make us less aware of the value and importance of light.

***To re-engage with the power of the metaphor that Jesus offers, gather your family in a darkened room. Bring only one flashlight.***

Sit together for a minute and consider what you are able to do and see in so little light. You might try opening the Bible to see whether you can read today's Gospel.

Turn on the flashlight and experiment to see how one might use it to achieve the greatest amount of light.

**Then read today's Gospel by the light of the flashlight.**

Ask everyone to consider what it means to say that Christians are to be the light of the world.

How might your family act in a way that is a light for others, a light that is worthy to put on a lamp stand?

Choose one thing that your family will do this week to show that you are the light of the world.

You might choose to participate in an activity that your parish sponsors, such as help with a food pantry.

Pray together by singing "**This Little Light of Mine.**"

**See words above: [Link to music](https://youtu.be/QCN893hzue) <https://youtu.be/QCN893hzue>**