



WIVA!

1 JOHN

WEEK ONE: **LIGHT**

## HOW TO USE

We wrote this curriculum for those times when life is busy and you might be looking for a little help and inspiration as you plan for time with your students. Everything you need to know for each week's curriculum is laid out below. That being said, the best results will come from spending some time with the curriculum in advance—make sure, in particular, to read the “Teacher Prep” section.

Each of these lessons can be led in different ways. Please be sensitive to your group. You might have a group that really wants to dig into an idea, or you might have a group that just needs to hear the basic truth. You get to decide that as you meet.

Finally, please feel free to discard any of this content to stay in your group's context. The best curriculum for your group is you, caring for them as they get to know God.

Have ideas about this curriculum? Be part of the revolution and give us some feedback at <http://help.theyouthcartel.com/hc/communities/public/topics/200121073-Viva>

## WHO WROTE THIS

Brad Hauge is a Northwest boy through and through who can't shake his boyhood love of Pearl Jam or the Mariners. He really likes Jesus and really likes students. And he really likes helping students realize they can totally be a part of what Jesus is up to in our world. He gets to do that for a living in Spokane, WA, where he work as the Director of High School Ministries at First Presbyterian Church.

## THE REST

Sarah Hauge is a youth ministry veteran who works as a writer and editor in Spokane, WA.

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# OBJECTIVE

Light and darkness are concepts we are all familiar with. Each and every day we see them at work as day turns into night and back into day again. The apostle John uses these concepts to help us understand true fellowship with God and to recognize the ways we fail at that fellowship. This lesson will help us see that a life spent walking in the light is a life of confident living—because it's a life we know is full of the love God calls us toward.

# TEACHER PREP

- Gather enough blindfolds (handkerchiefs, neckties, blacked-out goggles, etc.) for half the people in your group.
- Create a simple obstacle course for a classic “blindfolded trust walk.” The course can be as simple as arranged chairs and movement up and down stairs, or as complicated and rad as you want to make it.
- Enough Bibles for everyone (or at least close). If you have time before your meeting, encourage the students to bring their Bible with them.
- Spend some time reading, and becoming familiar with, 1 John chapters 1 & 2.

# OPENING ACTIVITY

## "BLINDFOLDED TRUST WALK"

**Split your group** into pairs and provide each pair with a blindfold, instructing one of them to blindfold the other.

At this point, invite the non-blindfolded students to (carefully) lead their partner through the obstacle course you've prepared. You can add any twist you'd like—including timing them, requiring the partner with sight to remain mute, having them do the course backward, etc.

Once the partners have completed the course, have them trade positions and experience the activity in the alternate role.

**Bonus Option:** If your group is feeling feisty, you can allow some of the kids to try the course with both partners blindfolded, and one leading the other. Make sure to be present and have “spotters” near them at all times.

# DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Depending on the size of your group you may want to have them turn to a couple of neighbors to create small discussion groups, or just have the discussion as a large group.)

- What did it feel like to be led around by your partner? How easy was it for you to trust them while you were experiencing darkness?
- How confident did you feel while blindly following the course? Did that have more to do with trusting your partner or with trusting yourself?

## MAIN LESSON

### SAY SOMETHING LIKE:

For the next few weeks we are going to be living in the book of 1 John, which is a letter written by...you guessed it, John!

Here are a few things to know about this book of the Bible before we go any further. The author of this letter is, again, John: the apostle who hung out with Jesus and also wrote the gospel of, well...John. This letter clearly shows his deep love for Christ and for the church, as well as his experience witnessing that God's love is a love that transforms people in real and tangible ways.

This letter is written to a people (most likely a church, or churches, around Ephesus) whom John clearly loved deeply. He refers to them as "my dear children," and at other times as "dear friends." Unlike many books or letters found within the Bible, John's thoughts throughout 1 John don't necessarily follow a linear train of argument. He writes a series of thoughts and meditations that don't necessarily connect to the thoughts directly before or after. So over these next few weeks we may skip around a bit within the letter, but we won't be losing any of the meaning by doing so.

## BIBLE EXPLORATION

Have your students turn toward each other in groups of 4-5 and read aloud from **1 John 1:5-10**. One person can read the entire text or you may want to have them take turns with verses and sections.

*Once they have all had a chance to read and hear the text, give them a few minutes to discuss the first prompt within their groups **before inviting them to share their ideas with the larger group**. Then present the second prompt and so on. During the discussion, make sure to acknowledge all responses as worthy of consideration.*

### Prompts:

- In general, what about this section resonates with you? Is there anything you don't understand?
- In general, what effect does light have on darkness?
- Why do you think John chose to use imagery of light and darkness here?

After your large group has had a chance to hear and discuss with each other, ask them to re-form their smaller

groups and read aloud from 1 John 2:9-11. *Once again, allow them a chance to discuss the following prompts in their smaller groups before inviting them to share their ideas with the larger group.*

**Prompts:**

- In general, what about this section resonates with you? Is there anything you don't understand?
- Here we see John using the imagery of light and darkness again. Is he using it differently in this section, or is his main point still the same?
- How are the ideas of light and love connected here? In what ways does John associate hate with darkness?

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:**

Hang with me for a bit as we go down a moderately cheesy path. Earlier you had a chance to literally walk in darkness as you went blindfolded through our obstacle course. Now, I'm not going to stand here and say that by being in the dark during that silly activity that you were participating in hatred or sin of any sort.

However, I do want you to spend a few moments considering the idea that walking in light (whether literally or metaphorically) provides confidence. Earlier I asked how confident you felt being led by your partner. Again, I'm being Captain Obvious here, but how much more confident would you be if you were going through the obstacle course without the blindfold? How much simpler and easier would the course feel if you could simply see it?

Light is good, and John is trying to convey that here when he speaks of the difference between light and darkness. Whether he is talking about the idea of sin being darkness, or experiencing God being light, or hate leading to darkness, or God's light leading to love—I think what John is getting at is that if we are in true fellowship with God, we can be confident in the life we are leading. We are living in the light.

**ASK:**

What do you think the word fellowship means? (Allow time for answers and discussion)

When you have real, true, fellowship with someone, you truly know each other, and you like each other in spite of knowing each other! You are committed to each other, and you don't just quit when something tricky arises. When we have true fellowship with God we are not only working to learn who God is and follow him, but we are also working to allow God to know us and to trust that we are worthy of love, no matter what. To have true fellowship with God means there's not much room for darkness to creep up into our lives.

Now, this does not promise that you won't have to experience some hard, or even terrible, things in your life. What John is reminding those of us who know Jesus is that in him we find light. And if we allow our lives to be consumed more by that light than by the stuff that leads to darkness, or sin, we'll be that much closer to living the sort of life God intended for us. It's a life lived in confidence. It's a life where we choose to live in light and allow that light to come to earth through us, in love, service, truth, and joy.

# RESPONSE

Invite your students to re-form their smaller groups from their Bible Exploration time (or if you have small groups that regularly meet, use those!) and work through these prompts:

- Is there anyone in your life who you haven't kept at least one secret from?
- If you were to be honest—how much of your life do you feel is keep secret, or in the dark?
- Thinking back to verses 9-11 in chapter 2: how does our relationship with God affect the way we treat those around us?
- Do you agree or disagree with the idea that fellowship with God will result in more light, which will result in more confidence for how you lead your life?
- Is there a part of your life you could allow into the light? (Examples: choosing to move toward no longer hating a brother or sister, confessing a secret sin to a trusted friend or mentor, etc.) How could God use that to bring light to both yourself and to others?

**End your time together in prayer—whether prayer requests, prayer partners, or just a general prayer thanking God for the ways in which we can know truths about him and about ourselves.**

