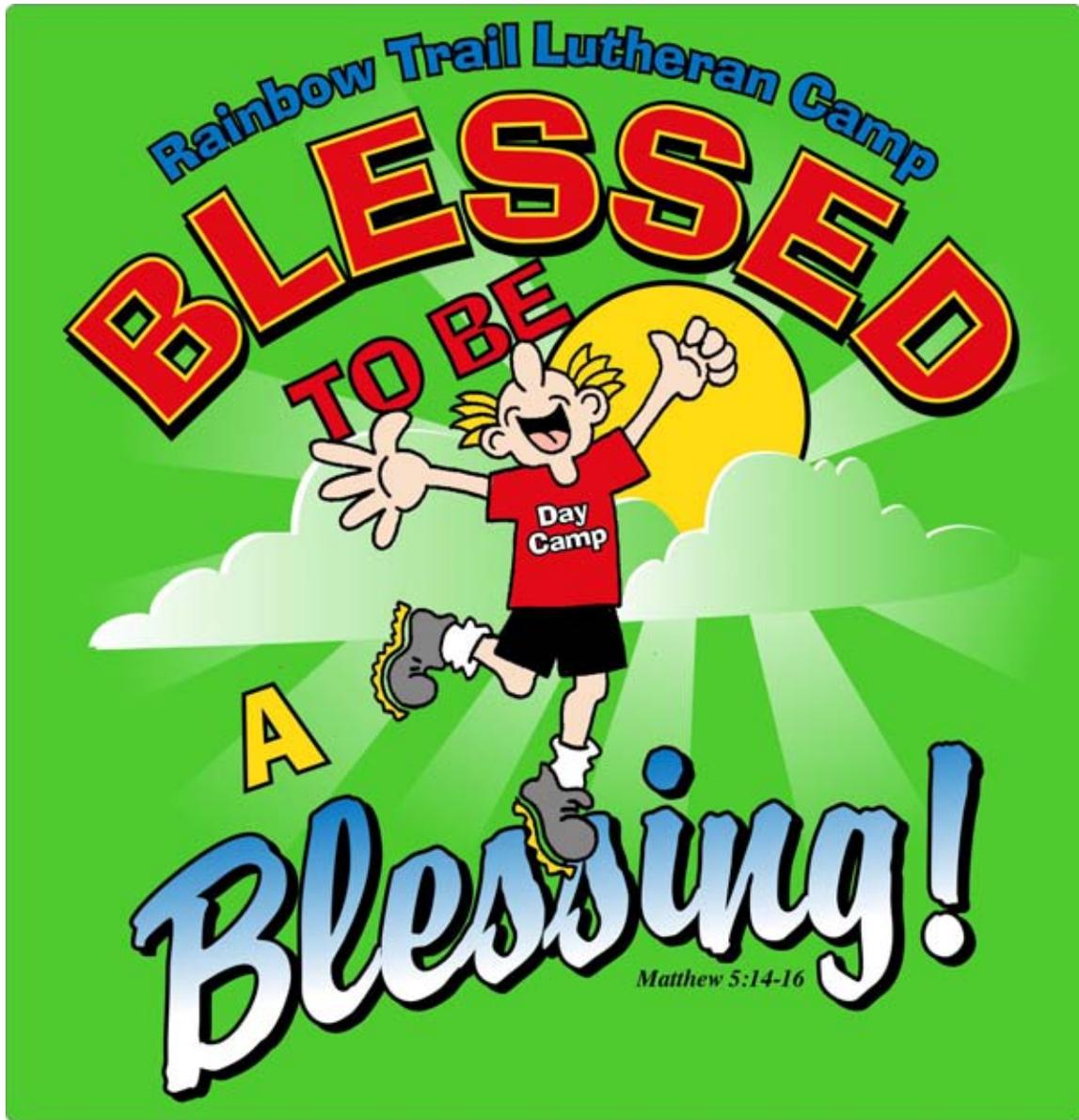


Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp
2013 Day Camp Bible Study



Written By Nellie Jarvis
Adapted From the 2013 RTLCLC Onsite Bible Study

Blessed to Be a Blessing – RTLK Day Camp Study

Day One: Blessings, blessings, everywhere!

1. Come on in and get settled and get to know one another! Let's start with a name game to get the ball rolling. First off, seat the kids in a circle and ask them to say their name and one blessing they think they have received that begins with the same letter as their first name. If they can't think of one, be prepared to help out and offer suggestions. (You might want to begin by asking what blessings are, and what it means to be blessed. They will probably say things like "it's things you can do" or "it's stuff you have," or "it's ways you are lucky." Good enough definitions for now.) Begin now: ***My name is Nellie, and I am blessed with a nose that can smell flowers.*** Or, ***My name is Lisa, and I am blessed by having a loving family.*** The next kid will tell his or her name, followed by a blessing, and repeat the previous kid's name and blessing. By the end, the last kid will be repeating all the names, and all the blessings. See if any of the other kids want to try naming everyone and all their blessings. Once you have gone around the circle and everyone has had a chance to tell their name and a blessing, (you'll probably have to help them out with this one... that's OK!) you will be ready for your opening prayer.
2. Opening Prayer. Staying in your circle, you might begin with this prayer, or just go for it on your own. The idea is to teach kids the importance of asking God's presence during this time, and of inviting the Holy Spirit to be part of your study of God's word. You might pray: ***Creator God, you made us, and you love us. You have blessed us in so many ways. Help us to discover our many blessings, and help us to be a blessing to others. Be with us now, and send your Spirit to guide us as we learn about you. We love you. Thank you for loving us first. Amen.***
3. Time to run around a little. (If you are doing your Bible study indoors, you'll need to go outside briefly for this... either that or find a room with lots of running space.) Using the definition of "blessing" that you established above, play a game of "Blessing Tag." The person who is "it" will run and try to tag others. The others can remain "safe" if they put their arms up and holler out one of their blessings before they are tagged. For example, if Joe is "it," and is trying to tag Kadin, Kadin can throw his arms up in a sign of grateful appreciation to God as he yells out, "I can run fast!" or "I'm a good speller!" or "I have great friends!" or "My mom is a great cook!" If someone can't think of a blessing and he or she is tagged,

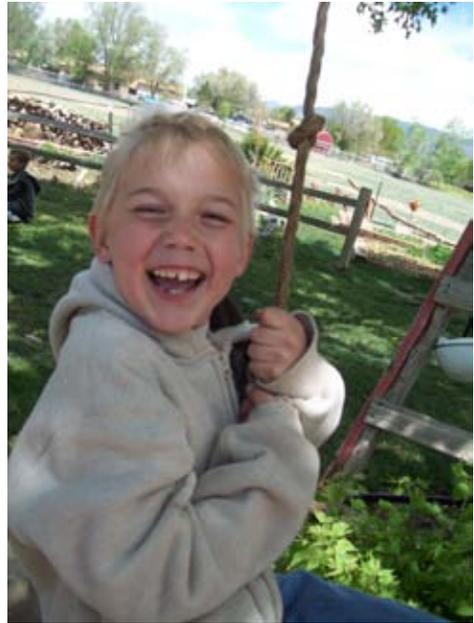
he or she becomes “it.” You might want to brainstorm a few ideas before you begin the game. Play for 3-5 minutes, making sure that several kids have a chance to be “it.” (3-5 minutes of play time)

4. Time to sit down together. (You’ll need butcher paper and markers or crayons.) At the conclusion of the game, gather everyone around a big piece of butcher paper and, using colorful markers, begin to jot down some of the blessings they heard people call out during the game. Add any other blessings they want to, until the whole page is covered with colorful blessings... things, skills, abilities, and people for which the kids are grateful. Go over these together.

5. Let’s re-define blessings. Find a place to display the butcher paper. As you look at the paper, say: ***We often think of blessings as gifts... stuff... abilities... good fortunes... and that’s fine for starters. But for this week, let’s shift that understanding a little bit. Let’s add to it. Let’s say that there’s more to “blessings” than just good stuff and things we can do well and ways that we are lucky. To understand what a blessing is, let’s start by looking at the difference between happiness and joy. Is there a difference? Between happiness and joy?*** Get feedback from the kids. After they have had a chance to discuss what the differences are, discuss the definitions of happiness and joy below. Then show them the pictures on the next pages (Day Camp Teams will bring sets of larger photos with them to Day Camp). As a group, examine all eleven pictures, and sort them as to whether the picture shows someone who is experiencing happiness or joy. There are no right or wrong answers, and the group might not agree. Let’s use these definitions:

Happiness: Happiness comes from outside yourself. It is feeling that lasts as long as the outside cause of happiness is present. It can end quickly when the entertainment ends.

Joy: Joy comes from within. It is long-lasting, because it involves a feeling of safety and well-being, not just entertainment.





6. After all pictures are discussed and sorted, say: ***OK, let's get back to what blessings are. What do we mean when we say "God bless you?" Do we wish for God to supply someone with happiness? Or with joy? Do we wish for God to supply someone with entertainment or with well-being? Do we wish for God to supply them with money? Do we wish for God to supply someone with safety and security or with special abilities and talents? What are we really saying when we say "God bless you?"*** Discuss their ideas.
7. Ask the kids: ***Who in your life makes you feel blessed? Who in your life gives you that "joy" feeling, simply by being with you?*** Have the kids write down the name of someone who makes them feel blessed on a small piece of paper. Then ask them to think specifically about what that person DOES to make them feel that way. Share answers.
8. Read each of the following statements to the kids, one at a time. Open discussion up, encouraging the kids to tell about someone who has blessed them in these ways. Write each of these sentences on a piece of copy paper, and as you read each aloud, have the kids write a name or two of people who make them feel what the sentence describes.

I feel listened to.

I feel encouraged.

I feel cherished and loved.

I feel accepted.

I feel cared for.

I feel valued.

I feel important.

I feel safe.

I feel like I'm a better person when I am with this person.

I feel like this person likes being with me.

I feel good about myself.

9. Tie it together with scripture. God blesses us by putting people in our lives, people who make us feel valued and important, safe and secure. God also blesses us with God's own presence. Read the verses, and think about how God's presence is a blessing. (Often it is a good idea to read the verses 2-3 or even 4 times, so that the kids really hear it. Otherwise, scripture often goes in one ear and out the other, since it is sometimes difficult to understand the first time around. Read it, re-word it, read it again, ask the kids what it says, then read it again.)

Read Psalm 67:1-3 and John 10:10

Psalm 67:1-3

- ¹ May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us,
- ² that your way may be known upon earth, your saving power among all nations.
- ³ Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

John 10:10

Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."
(Abundantly means full of blessings... so what does that mean for us? Think about what we have discovered about a joy-filled, blessing-filled life.
What does an abundant life look like?)

Discuss how God's presence is a blessing in your life. Ask the kids: ***In what ways are you safe and secure in God's presence? In what ways are you accepted and welcome in God's presence? In what ways are you important in God's presence? In what ways are you valued, listened to, and loved in God's presence?***

These are all blessings from God... blessings that bring about joy.

10. Closing Prayer. You might choose to offer up a prayer of your own, or see if one of the kids wants to do it. You might choose to do a "repeat after me" prayer. Here's one you might want to say: ***Dear God, Thank you for all the blessings you have given me. Thank you for putting people in my life that make me feel valued and important. Thank you for putting people in my life that make me feel safe and secure. Thank you for putting people in my life who will listen to me and care for me. Thank you that YOU do all those things for me, too! You have blessed me, and I am thankful. Amen.***

Blessed to Be a Blessing – RTLK Day Camp Study

Day Two: You are the Salt of the Earth!

1. Have some popcorn. I know, it's probably a little early in the day for popcorn, but give it a go. Provide the kids with two bowls of popcorn... one with salt, the other without salt. Don't tell them what the difference is between the bowls, just offer it to them, and ask which one they prefer. Ask them why they prefer one over the other. Most likely, they will be able to tell you that one tastes better because it has salt on it.

As you finish up the popcorn, ask the kids: ***Do you like salt? What do you like about it?*** Maybe they've never thought about it before, but salt isn't usually good for its own sake... salt makes OTHER things taste better.

2. Opening prayer. Use this one, or your own. ***Dear God, Thank you for popcorn, and thank you for salt that makes it taste better. Open our eyes and our ears to what you want us to learn today. Be with us as we talk about you, and send your Holy Spirit to guide us. Amen.***
3. About salt. Say to the kids: ***In the Bible, salt is mentioned a lot. Back in those days, it was used for many things. They used it to season or flavor their food, but they also used it to preserve their food... like to make jerky and stuff like that. They also used it as a disinfectant, to clean wounds. They used it in special ceremonies, and they used it as a unit of exchange... like money. Who knew, right? But now, in 2013, what is salt's job? For us, I mean. (Hopefully they'll say, "To make other food taste better.") Does anyone ever say, "My, that was really good salt!" No, usually, we don't notice the salt unless it is missing, or unless there is too much of it. If salt does its job, it only serves to make other stuff taste better.***
4. Open your Bibles! Turn to Matthew 5:13. Read it aloud to the kids, using the Good News translation. It says,

"You are like salt for the whole human race. But if salt loses its saltiness, there is no way to make it salty again. It has become worthless, so it is thrown out and people trample on it."

Have them repeat what they heard and tell what they think it might mean. Read it again, and see if they gain anything more. Then read it from a different translation, from the Message. It says:

“Let me tell you why you are here. You’re here to be the salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You’ve lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage.”

Ask them, ***According to this Bible passage, what is our job?*** Hopefully they will understand that their job is to help others understand God more fully... the way that salt makes us appreciate food more completely. Ask: ***Why would Jesus call us to be salt? In what ways can we be “salt” for the world?*** Take a salt shaker and look at how the salt is all inside, and how it is not doing its job when it keeps inside. Now point out that when you shake it, all the grains of salt spill and scatter. When salt touches other foods, it makes the other food better. In the same way, when we share God’s love and become a blessing for others, it helps others in their journey. Salt does not draw attention to itself, and we should not be blessings in the lives of others so that *we’ll* look good. We should be blessings in the lives of others to glorify *GOD*.

5. We can be salt in our words as well as in our actions. Read the following passage from Colossians 4:6. (Translation, The Message)

Be gracious in your speech. The goal is to bring out the best in others in a conversation, not put them down, and not to cut them out.

Salt builds others up. It does not break others down. Read the following Salt or Fault statements. Have the kids identify if the statements are “salt” or if they find “fault....” Ask them to identify whether the statements build up or break down. To get the kids moving around a little, you might want to enlarge and print these statements ahead of time, then cut them apart and have kids draw them out of a basket, one statement at a time. They can read it aloud, then glue it to a poster marked Salt or Fault, gluing the statement under the appropriate word. End the activity by again reading the Colossians scripture, maybe from a couple different translations if you want.

Is your attitude 'Salt' or 'Fault'?

Can Do "Igniter" Phrases	Can't Do "Killer" Phrases
We can always depend on you.	How was I supposed to know?
Let's pull together!	We've tried that before.
One more time!	We'll never catch up now.
I didn't know you could do that!	Ask someone ELSE for a change!
Glad to have you on our team!	What's the use?
Can you give me your opinion?	Looks like another losing season.
That's a winner!	It's not my fault!
Is there any way I can help?	Who do you think you are, anyhow?
I'll do my best!	We might as well forget it.
I'm glad you brought that up.	He started it!
I never thought of that before!	There's not enough time!
I'm proud to be playing here!	We'll never get it right!
We're almost there!	You don't understand.
Let's write that one down!	Oh no! Not that again!
We're on the right track now!	Not ready yet.
We can do a lot with that idea.	We did that yesterday and it didn't work.
There must be a way.	I knew you'd blow it.
I appreciate what you did.	I wish it was over.
Congratulations!	You can't expect miracles.
I agree!	You've had your chance.

(** Trying to find the source for this chart, which I had as a handout from years previous, I found some info suggesting that Virginia Reeves may have compiled this list. Also a Peter Mayes in England had a site referencing some of these. Then www.whatagoodidea.com had a rendering of it as well. Russ Britton)

6. Read one more scripture: Romans 12:14-16. (Translation here is from the Message)

Bless your enemies; no cursing under your breath. Laugh with your happy friends when they're happy; share tears when they're down. Get along with each other; don't be stuck-up. Make friends with "nobodies;" don't try to be the great "somebody."

And another translation from the Good News Bible:

Ask God to bless those who persecute you—yes, ask Him to bless, not to curse. Be happy with those who are happy, weep with those who weep. Have the same concern for everyone. Do not be proud, but accept humble duties. Don't think of yourselves as wise.

Ask the kids how this is like being salt for the world.

7. Time for some role play! For each situation described here, have the kids role play a way that they could be salt... be a blessing... in the lives of others... how can they say or do something that will make a difference.
 - A kid at school is being bullied because he is fat.
 - A kid on your soccer team is crying because he missed the game-winning goal.
 - Your mom is stressed and yelling at everyone.
 - Your teacher is having a rough time controlling the class.
 - Your brother is texting at the dinner table.
 - Your neighbor has three kids and her husband is in Iraq.
 - Your best friend stopped speaking to you, and you don't know why.Can you think of others?

8. Watch the referenced video clip. Discuss what you see. Who is salt? Whose lives are being blessed?
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2T_oBOzz_U4 or google Mitchell Marcus Coronado High School. You will see an amazing act of sportsmanship... several, in fact. Lots of salt everywhere, and well worth watching for the kids.

9. Closing prayer. Use this one if you like. ***Dear God, Please help us to see times when we can be salt for you. Help us to lift others up instead of putting them down. Help us to find joy in serving you. Thank you for loving us so much. Amen***

Blessed to Be a Blessing – RTLCL Day Camp Study
Day Three: You are the Light of the World!

1. Ask: *Who here has ever been afraid of the dark? What about the dark is scary? Does anyone here sleep with a light on? How about a nightlight? How about the door open with the hall light on? Has anyone ever been afraid to walk into a dark room? Tell about how you feel in the dark.* If your group is not too squirrely, you could do a blind trust walk, where the kids put on blindfolds and carefully lead one another around the church in the “dark.”
2. Opening prayer. You might use this one: *Dear God, Sometimes the dark is a scary place to be. Help me to trust you to be my light. Help me to be the light to other people when they are lost or afraid. We love you, God. Please be with us as we learn about you today. Amen.*
3. Let’s start with scripture. Open up to Genesis 1:1-5. Read about darkness and light. (Good News translation)

In the beginning, when God created the universe, the earth was formless and desolate. The raging ocean that covered everything was engulfed in total darkness, and the Spirit of God was moving over the water. Then God commanded, “Let there be light!” And light appeared! God was pleased with what He saw. Then He separated the light from the darkness, and he named the light “day” and the darkness “night.” Evening passed and morning came—that was the first day.

Ask the kids: *According to this story of the Bible, what was the very first thing that God created? Do you think this was a good way to start the world? Why or why not? What do you think it was like before light was created? Is light important? Why or why not?*

4. Ok, we’ll move on to another scripture, John 1:1-5. (Good News translation)

In the beginning, the Word already existed; the Word was with God, and the Word was God. From the very beginning, the Word was with God. Through him, God made all things; not one thing in all creation was made without him. The Word was the source of life, and this life brought light to all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never put it out.

After reading this passage to the kids, explain that whenever it says “the Word,” it is talking about Jesus. So read it again, substituting “Jesus” whenever you see “the Word.” (Keep in mind that you may have some unchurched kids in your group, and some will not know who Jesus is. You’ll need to take some time to explain Jesus to them.) So after reading it a second time, ask the kids, *What does this part of the Bible have to do with the first part that we read?* (light) *Think*

about light and dark. If it is dark, light can appear, right? But if it is light, can darkness cover it up? Light can always shine through the darkness, but darkness cannot shine through the light. Think about that. Darkness cannot overcome the light. It just can't. In fact, the darker it gets, the brighter the light appears.

5. Let's play with dark and light a little bit. Time for a little Art Project! **(You'll need: a piece of black paper for everyone, several bowls, Q-tips or paint brushes for everyone, a cup or so of Clorox bleach, plenty of newspaper to cover the table, and paint shirts—old t-shirts—for the kids to wear to protect their clothing.)** Cover your workspace with newspaper. Put paint shirts on the kids to protect their clothing. Take out a piece of black paper. Show the kids the dark paper and talk about how it is like the world at the beginning of creation. But God sent light into the world... the light of the sun, and the light of Jesus. Both kinds of light help us to see. The sun helps us to see creation and the world around us. Jesus helps us to see what kind of lives we should be living.

So let's dip the paintbrush or Q-tip into a bowl with a small amount of Clorox in it, and first draw a sun on the paper. The Clorox will immediately bleach the paper, making it light. Explain that the sun stands for the first thing God created in our world. It helps us to see his wonderful creation so that we can be safe and we can find our way around the world. Then bleach the shape of a cross. Explain to the kids that the cross stands for Jesus. Jesus brings light into the world. Jesus' light shows us the way to God. Finally, write your name in bleach. That stands for the fact that YOU can bring light to the world by sharing God's love and being a blessing in the lives of others.

Once you have demonstrated this project, give each of the kids a piece of paper, a Q-tip or paintbrush, and a tiny bit of bleach. Do this in a well-ventilated area. (Try it first *without* the kids so that your demonstration will be successful.) You will need to be sure the kids are very careful with the bleach, as it will damage their clothes. Remember that paint shirts are not foolproof! Bleach can still soak through! If it gets on their skin, rinse well with water. Have each child first draw a sun, followed by a cross, followed by their own names. Talk about how the light overcomes the darkness.

6. While papers are drying, look to the scriptures once again. Remind the kids that we have already discovered that God created light for us to see with. Then He sent light to us by sending us Jesus, to show us the way to live and to show us the pathway to God. Now in this passage of the Bible, it will tell us that WE are light, too! Read from Matthew 5: 14-16.

You are like a light for the whole world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and hides it under a bowl, but instead, he puts it on a lampstand where it can give light for everyone in the house. In the same way, let YOUR light shine before

people so that they will see the good things you do, and give praise to your Father in Heaven.

Say to the kids, ***Why would the Bible want YOU to be a light? How can you be a light when you are just a kid? But here's the deal. You are not really the light. God is the light. Jesus is the light. You are like a mirror, though, that can REFLECT the light. You can shine God's light into the lives of others. When you are helping others, you are shining God's light. When you are kind to people, you are shining God's light. When you make choices that you know are pleasing to God, you are shining God's light. When you seek out ways to love other people, you are shining God's light. The Bible tells us that we shouldn't do these things so people will see how nice we are, but instead, we should do these things so that people will see how GREAT GOD is! What other ways can we shine God's light?*** Field the answers and discuss as necessary.

7. Get the kids comfy and read them this story about a guy trying to be God's light in a hospital ward.

About 40 years ago, a guy named Doug Nicols was doing missions work in India when he became ill with tuberculosis and was put in a hospital for several months. While there, he was lonely, confused, and troubled. He did not know the language of the other patients, but he wanted to share the Good News of Jesus with them. All Doug had in the hospital were a few gospel brochures in their language. He tried to pass them out, but nobody wanted them.

Then one night, Doug woke up at 2:00 AM, coughing so violently that he could not catch his breath. During this coughing fit, Doug noticed a little old starving man across the hospital aisle trying to get out of bed. The man was so weak he could not stand up. He began to whimper. He tried again, but he just couldn't get out of bed.

In the morning Doug realized that the man had been trying to get up to use the bathroom, but he wasn't able to make it. The smell in the ward was terrible. The other patients were angry at the old man for not being able to control himself. The nurse cleaned up the mess and then slapped the man.

The next night, again Doug saw the old man trying to get out of bed, but this time Doug got out of bed, picked up the old man, and

carried him to the toilet (which was just a hole in the floor) and then brought him back to his bed. The old man kissed Doug on the cheek and promptly went to sleep.

Early the next morning, Doug awoke to a steaming cup of tea beside his bed. Another patient had kindly made it for him. The patient motioned that he wanted one of those gospel brochures. The next two days, one after another patient asked, "Could I have one of those brochures too?"

Adapted from Wayne Cordeiro, *Jesus: Pure and Simple* (Bethany House, 2012), pp. 59-60

Ask: ***In what way was Jesus' light shining in that hospital room? Is it possible to share God's love without using words? Give some examples from the story.***

8. Closing prayer. You could say, ***God, you gave us light so that we can see the way to walk, and you gave us Jesus so that we can see the way to live. Help us to be light in the lives of people who live in a dark and scary world. Shine in us, God. Amen.***

(Another idea: you might want to borrow the church's Christmas Eve candlelight service candles and do the closing prayer as a group where you pass the light from one child to the next in a circle, giving each child the chance to pray aloud when the light comes to him or her.)

DON'T FORGET THIS!!!! You'll need a camera!

Sometime before the kids leave today, be sure to take a photo of each kid... full body, standing up, arms outstretched. You could do just from the waist up... but arms outstretched, big smile! We'll use these photos for tomorrow's study... so get them printed... either on photo paper or just on copier paper with colored ink.

Blessed to Be a Blessing – RTLK Day Camp Study

Day Four: *You are a City on a Hill!*

1. Have the kids sit down and close their eyes. Say to the kids: ***Picture it. A city on a hill. In the daylight, you can see it from a long way off... its buildings, its towers. It is beautiful... like the emerald city in the Wizard of Oz. And at night, you can see it for miles... its glittering lights twinkle high up in the distance, sparkling in a million colors. And if you live there, you run toward it for all you're worth... it is a wonderful, beautiful place, and it calls you to come home. When you are there, you are safe. You are welcome. You are protected. You are loved. And you can rest.***
2. Opening prayer. ***Dear God, There are places in the world where we feel safe. Where we feel loved. Where we feel welcome. Where we feel at home. Thank you for those places. Thank you for the people who make us feel that way. Help us to be welcoming like that for others. Let us be a Safe Place for someone else. Be with us today, God, and guide our study. Amen.***
3. Give each child a piece of paper and some crayons or markers. Tell them to draw a city on a hill like the one described above. It should be beautiful, welcoming, and safe. Give them 5-8 minutes... more if they need it. Discuss the pictures with them as they draw. If some of the kids want to work together, that's fine... *it's really the conversation around the pictures that is what is important here, not the art itself.* Talk to the kids about how in ancient times, cities were often built on hills for protection... enemies couldn't attack going up a hill. Many of the cities had walls built around them for protection as well. So the people who lived there were safe. When they travelled, they could always see their city from miles away, whether at day or night, and it was a sight that welcomed them home. A city on a hill is visible to everyone. It cannot be hidden, yet it is safe. Share the pictures the kids have drawn, and allow each child to tell a little about what he or she drew. Post the pictures. Use glitter if you want... make them beautiful!!! You might want to trim the pictures and combine them to make one huge city up high on a hill!
4. Ask the kids, ***Is there a place that you love more than anywhere else? I'm not talking about Waterworld or a really cool arcade... but I'm talking about a safe place, a place where you feel welcome and comfortable, and where you know you are loved?*** Field the answers. ***What is it about that place that makes you love it? Is it the people? Is it the colors? The furniture? Who makes that place what it is?*** Allow kids to share about their "safe place." If they can't think of one, be sure to have one ready from your own life to share about. ***Is there one person who makes you feel that way? Would you like to tell us about that person?***

5. Say to the kids: ***Now imagine that God has made Himself into that city on a hill... that beautiful city where you are safe, loved, wanted, secure, protected... where you are home. As you climb up the hill, closer and closer to God, God wraps His arms around you. Sort of a cool idea, isn't it... to be at home and protected in God's strong arms. Then you see others climbing the hill, and you reach out your arms along with God's to welcome them into the city as well... where they can be safe and loved, too.***

Have you ever played King of the Hill? You know, where all the kids try to knock the "king" off the hill, and the "king" tries to knock all the kids off? Well this is just the opposite. The KING welcomes you, and wants you to welcome others as well. What do you guys think about that? Allow for any discussion that might follow. How can we make that happen in real life?

6. Time to turn to the scriptures. Read Matthew 5:14-16.

You are like light for the whole world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and puts it under a bowl, but instead he puts it on a lampstand where it gives light for everyone in the house. In the same way, let YOUR light shine before people so that will see the good things you do, and then they will praise your Father in heaven.

Ooh! Sounds familiar, no? We're starting to sense a theme, right? About appreciating the blessings we have received from God... the *real blessings*... the blessings of peace and security and hope and promise of life. And about wanting to share those blessings with others in whatever way we can. So *ask* the kids, ***What do you think this Bible study is trying to teach us?*** Read the scripture from a couple of different translations.

Read one more passage, this time from the Message, I Peter 3:8-9. You might have to define these words for the kids.

Summing up: Be agreeable, be sympathetic, be loving, be compassionate, be humble. This goes for all of you, no exceptions. No retaliation. No sharp-tongued sarcasm. Instead, bless. That's your job. To bless. You'll BE a blessing, and you'll GET a blessing.

7. One last art activity for this day's study. (You'll need a piece of drawing paper for each kid, an individual photo of each kid, scissors, glue, and crayons or markers. You might want to use glitter, too!) So when we talk about being a city on a hill, we are saying that we need to be visible, we need to be in a place where others can see us. We need to be welcoming, we need to be a safe place for others to go when they know they will be treated with love. We

need to shine, even in the dark. Maybe especially in the dark. Our last activity today is to take the photos of ourselves from yesterday and cut around the picture of the person. On a separate piece of paper, draw a simple picture of a hill... just a green bump is fine! Glue the picture of the person to the top of the hill, and draw lines around the person, sort of like sun rays, indicating that the person is shining like a city on a hill. Use lots of color, and write at the top, "You are a city on a hill! So shine!" Post the pictures!

8. Closing prayer. ***Dear God, Help us to be a welcoming, safe place for others to be. Help us to see our blessings, and to share them with our friends and with strangers. Help us to shine for you, God. Amen.***

Blessed to Be a Blessing – RTLK Day Camp Study

Day Five: Blessed to be a Blessing!

1. Pay it forward. Play a little game where you do something nice for one of the kids. Then their job is to do something nice for another kid. Then that kid does something to bless the NEXT kid. So in addition to thanking the one who did something nice, each child then returns the favor by doing something for someone else. Continue until everyone has had a chance to “bless” someone else. Ideas for this role play are below. You might want to cut these out and have kids pick a blessing out of a basket, read it secretly, and use that idea in the game. Or they can think of their own way to bless someone else.

Say to someone, “Here, I brought you some soup. I know you’ve been sick, and I thought you could use a little supper!”	Say to someone, “It’s cold outside. You shouldn’t be out here shoveling your sidewalk. You go inside, I’ll finish it for you!”	Say to someone, “That looks heavy. Let me help you carry that!”
Say to someone, “I prayed for you today.”	Say to someone, “I saw that you looked sad today. Are you OK? Is there anything I can do for you?”	Say to someone, “Your smile brightens up my day!”
Say to someone, “I drew a picture for you. I hope you like it!”	Say to someone, “I like the way you sing!”	Say to someone, “Here! Let me get the door for you!”
Say to someone, “Excuse me, but I think you dropped this \$20 bill!”	Say to someone, “Here, you can have the last piece of cake. I’ll just have an oreo.”	Say to someone, “I saw that you are eating lunch alone. May I sit with you?”

2. Opening Prayer. ***Dear God, You have blessed us, and continue to bless us, with your love. Help us to share that love with other people so that when they are with us, they can feel your love through us. Let us be your hands and feet to the world. Be with us today, our last day together. Amen.***
3. Open the scriptures. Read the paraphrased stories of the Unforgiving Servant and of Zacchaeus. Both men were given a blessing. Both men received forgiveness for their sins. But only one of these two paid it forward... or passed

the blessing on to others. We are all blessed by God. We can respond to that blessing by being thankful and reflecting that love—passing it on. Or we can be selfish and keep that love to ourselves. Which way do you think God wants us to respond? What would God rather that we do?

Matthew 18:23-35 (paraphrased)

^{18:23} “Once there was a king who called all his slaves to him. Some of the slaves owed him money, and he wanted them to pay. ²⁴ When he began to figure out who owed him what, a slave who owed him a million dollars was brought to him; ²⁵ and, as he could not pay. The king ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and he had to pay the million dollars, too. ²⁶ So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷ And the king felt sorry for him, and he let the slave go. He told him he didn’t have to pay anything, and that he could go free. ²⁸ But that same slave, as he went out, came upon another slave who owed him a couple dollars. The first slave grabbed him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰ But the first man refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay. ³¹ When all the other slaves saw what had happened, they were really upset, and they went and reported to the king all that had happened. ³² Then the king called for the first man and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! You owed me a million dollars, and I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me and I felt sorry for you. ³³ Don’t you think you should have shown the same kindness to the man who owed you just a couple dollars?’ ³⁴ And in anger the king handed him over to the guards to be punished until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵ So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

St. Luke 19:1-10 (paraphrased)

^{19:1} [Jesus] entered Jericho and was passing through town. Many people were on the streets that day... it was very crowded. ² A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. He was rich because he often cheated people and stole their money. ³ He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because Jesus was going to pass that way. ⁵ When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.” ⁶ So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him into his house. ⁷ All who saw it began to grumble and said, “Look at that. Jesus has gone to Zacchaeus’ house, and Zacchaeus is a bad man. Jesus shouldn’t hang out with bad people.” ⁸ Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Jesus, “Look, you have been so very kind to me, even though I’m a sinner and have done many bad things. Since you have been so good to me, I promise I will give away half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have cheated anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much. This is to show that I am sorry for things that I’ve done, and to show that I am thankful for your love and kindness.” ⁹ Then Jesus said to him, “Today I can promise you that you will go to heaven someday. ¹⁰ I came to earth to love people who are sinners like you. I came here to show you the right way to live, and you have learned that lesson.”

(If you have time, it is fun to act out these Bible stories! You can help the story along by narrating it as the kids act it out.)

3. Sit the kids in a circle. Discuss the following questions. Ask: ***How was the Unforgiving Servant blessed? How did he respond to his blessing? How was Zacchaeus blessed? How did HE respond? Which pleased God more?***

How have you been blessed? How do you respond to that blessing? That means, what are you going to do about it?

After this week at day camp, can you think of ways to share your blessings?

Can you think of ways to pay it forward?

Do you HAVE to pay it forward? Will God love you any less if you don't? Will God love you any MORE if you do pay it forward?

God loves you, no matter what. Because God loves us so much, we are called to live our lives in a way that will show God that we are thankful for God's many blessings in our lives.

4. The Mirror. Read the following story to the kids. (Story adapted from Robert Fulgrum's The Mirror.) At the end of the story, give each child a small round mirror to take home. These mirrors are available for a minimal cost at craft stores.

A teacher was standing at the front of the class. He was an old man, and a very wise man. One of the students asked the teacher, "Teacher, what shall we do with our lives?" The old teacher reached into his wallet and took out a small round mirror, about the size of a quarter. He said, "When I was your age, I found a broken mirror on the side of the road where a motorcycle had crashed. I tried to find all the pieces and put it together like a puzzle, but I couldn't. So I kept the biggest piece. This one. And I made it round by scratching it against a stone. I used to have a lot of fun with it... I would catch the rays of the sunlight, and reflect the light into dark closets and deep cracks in the sidewalk, and into deep holes. I tried to flash the sunlight into the farthest places I could find. I had so much fun flashing light all around. As I got older I figured something out. I figured out that I am not the light. And I am not where the light comes from. But even though the sunlight is very bright, it will not shine everywhere, and it will ONLY shine in some places if I use my mirror to reflect it. I figured out that the sunlight is like God's love. It shines all around us. But sometimes people don't see God's love. They just don't notice it. They will only see God's love if someone shows it to them. So I am like the little mirror. I will show people God's love. I will shine it on them. I will flash them with it until they notice! You asked me what

you should do with your life? You should be like this little mirror... and reflect God's love all around you.

Give each child a mirror, and take them outside to the sunlight to practice flashing!

5. Closing Prayer. ***Dear God, Thank you that you have blessed us in so many ways. Help us to see your blessings in our lives, and to be thankful. Help us to be a blessing in the lives of others so that they can know you and know your love. Let us always flash your love on others. We love you. Amen.***