

A 5-part course exploring what it means to be a Light for Christ and how we might develop a personal Rule of Life.

Shining as Lights

Session 1

DRAWN to the Light



Study Group
80 mins



Individual
45-60 mins



**THE DIOCESE
OF SHEFFIELD**
Renewed | Released | Rejuvenated

Lights for Christ

“I am the light of the world”

”You are the light of the world”

– JOHN 8:12 AND MATTHEW 5:14



SHARE: what is your story?

What do you enjoy about your daily routine? And what frustrates you about it? Can you think of a time when you changed your normal routine? How did that feel?

Do you have routines in your spiritual life – things you do regularly to support it? If so, what do you value about those patterns and practices in your life?



If you are studying this course in a group. Think aloud about this in pairs, or all together.



HEAR: what does the Bible say?

It's just an ordinary day at work; the hours filled with physical labour, familiar routine and occasional problem solving. Then something catches his eye: a light on the hillside. He looks up and sees a bush on fire – nothing very unusual in this dry desert landscape; he gets back to work. But later, when he looks around again, a puzzle confronts him: the fire is still there – instead of burning out, the flame in the bush remains strong and bright. Here is something mysterious, provoking his curiosity; so he moves closer, drawn towards the intriguing light.



Read Exodus 3:1-12

Moses does not seem to be looking for God; but God is calling out, seeking the attention of Moses. The invisible God chooses to reveal through fire: a mysterious and dazzling expression of God's purity and power. (If you want to explore that further, you might look at Exodus 13:21 and Exodus 19:19). Then God is also revealed through a voice, calling Moses by name: showing that God is a person, who knows us personally and chooses to speak.

Try some of these questions, to help you dig deeper into these verses.

- What do you notice in this Bible passage? Look out for one verse which catches your attention; ask what it is saying.
- How do you think Moses may be feeling as these events unfold?
- What is God like? What do we learn from these verses about God's nature, character and concerns?

This life-changing moment will prove transformative for Moses. God's call changes his routine. As the story continues in the rest of this book of Exodus, Moses will often feel out of his depth in the new patterns of life that God is calling him to lead. He will learn to listen to God's voice and to do what God says. He will be called to express God's voice to all kinds of people, challenging Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, to release Moses' own people from slavery. But as Moses follows God's leading and learns to obey, time and again he will discover that God cares, God is close and God can be trusted.

Moses' experience recorded here would have helped shape the thinking of Jesus, as he grew up hearing these scriptures read in the synagogue. Our 'Old Testament' was Jesus' Bible, enlightening his thinking and speaking.



If you are studying this course in a group. Think aloud about this in pairs, or all together.



INVOLVE: what does this passage say to you?

Have you ever sensed God's presence: perhaps through something which at first seemed quite ordinary?

- Do you sometimes hear God speaking? When has that voice been clearest to you?
- Do you want to draw closer to God? Does anything prevent you from doing that?
- As you learn more about God's character and priorities, does that make you want to adjust any of your regular routines?



NOURISH: something further to chew on...



Watch the video from Bishop Pete – either online or download.

Transcript...

Friends I'm so pleased that you're taking part in the Shining as Lights course. That phrase Shining as Lights, of course, picks up some words that are spoken at every service of baptism, every service of confirmation. So if you've been baptised, these words have been spoken over you and if you've been confirmed then they've been spoken over you twice. At the end of the service of baptism and again at the end of the service of confirmation, as a sort of commissioning, the minister, or in the service of confirmation, the bishop, says to the candidates, as they're presented with a lit candle, "you have received the light of Christ, shine as a light in the world to the glory of God the Father".

I suppose there's a question that I would like to put to you as you take part in this course Shining as Lights and it's 'how's it going? – how are you shining for Christ as a light in the world? – how brightly are you shining? – do you feel that that light you receive from Christ is indeed burning for the sake of God's glory in the world among those with whom you live and work? – and then specifically how, how might Jesus be calling you to shine for him given your circumstances, given your life, given the circle of friends and family that you have, given your passions, given your gifts? – how might you be called to shine as a light for Christ, shining in the world to the glory of God the Father?'

I hope this course is going to help you to think about that and to invest in burning brightly for the Lord.



EXPERIMENT: how will you live this out?

A personal Rule of Life should help us develop our routines. It can give us a framework for our spiritual life, within which we find freedom to grow as Christians. You may want to look at the ‘Introduction to a Rule of Life’ leaflet at this point, to help think this through further.

Can you think of something you would like to try doing differently in the coming week, arising from what you have been thinking about in this session?

Here is one suggestion you might like to try.

Later in the biblical story, Moses gives this prayer to his people:

“The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;
the LORD turn his face towards you and give you peace.” (Numbers 6:24-26, NIV)



If you are studying this course in a group. Use these words as you pray together for each other.

Try memorising the prayer. Then use it regularly over the next few days. If you are in a worship service, you might pray it for people as they come forward to receive bread and wine. If you are travelling in your home area, pray it for the people in the houses, shops and schools which you are passing. Pray that they will experience God’s grace – the light of God’s face shining on them; and pray that you may, in some small way, help bring God’s blessing to them.

Next Session

Session 2: RECEIVE the Light

“Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.”