



**Mennonite
Church
Canada**

from Darkness to Light

Children's Story

Cycle C, Proper 29

Title: **From Darkness to Light**

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Text: Luke 23:33-43

Theme: Jesus' forgiving love can
bring light into the darkest
parts of our journeys, even
when we face death.

Needed:

Turn the lights off in the sanctuary for the telling of the children's story and have a soft, gentle light or lamp such as a small reading lamp, sparkly lava lamp or a flashlight ready to turn on. Tea lights for each child are optional.

Wondering Questions:

- I wonder why the darkness can be so scary.
- I wonder about Jesus being like a light.
- I wonder how I can stay close to Jesus' light and share it with others.

Gathering Activity:

As the children arrive engage them in a relaxed conversation about being in the dark. (e.g. Have they ever experienced complete darkness because of a power failure late at night when all the lights went off in the house, on the microwave and on the TV.) What did they do? Did someone light a candle or find a flashlight? Who likes the darkness? Who doesn't? Tell them about your feelings about darkness and that many people dislike the dark. When people go through really hard times they say they are going through dark times. Introduce the story as follows, "Today's Bible reading is about a very dark time for Jesus and another man, but even when Jesus was going through this very dark time, his love was like a light for the other man. (Turn on your soft light.) Think of Jesus' love as you look at this soft light and to prepare your hearts, minds, and bodies to listen to the story."

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Story:

If it was really dark and you were sad, and someone near you turned on a beautiful, warm and wonderful light it would make you feel better. If I was in that situation, I would want to move closer to them, wouldn't you?

The man in the Bible story was very sad, because he was being punished by hanging on a cross. It was beside the one Jesus was on. Even though Jesus was suffering too, the man felt better because Jesus was near. He asked him to remember him in heaven, and Jesus said they would be in heaven together that very same day. Jesus was a light in his darkness.

There can be times in our lives when we feel like everything is dark. Maybe we are sick, or someone we know is sick. Maybe we're having trouble with friends, or something else is making us feel sad or lonely, like we are hurting inside. Jesus knows when we are sad or hurting and understands how we feel. Jesus is a gently shining light in the middle of all the sadness and darkness and loneliness. One of the names for Jesus is Light of the World.

Sometimes it has to be dark for us to notice how good it is to have a gentle light. Sad and dark times help us remember how good it is to be near the light of Jesus. When it is all dark around us, and a soft light is shining, we are attracted to the light and we are attracted to God's gently shining love in his Son, Jesus. Staying close to him is the best thing to do when the world feels dark or frightening.

Jesus' light is different from this lamp. Jesus' love light never goes out, it keeps shining, even when it seems dark all around us. Jesus shared his love, even when he was going through a really dark and hard time. When we know the loving Light of the World, and that Light of the World knows us, we can share that light and love with others so that they can see, hear, and feel the love of Jesus.

(Each child could be given a little tea-light candle to take home, or to share with someone who is sick or sad. Remind them to light it only under adult supervision!)

Prayer:

Thank you, Jesus, for being such a loving light in our world. Thank you for sharing your light in dark times. Help us stay close to your light and share your light with others. Amen.