

Chapter 8

The Church Continues Her Mission

[Apse of Sant Climent de Taüll, twelfth-century fresco, unknown artist]

This prayer experience draws on the words featured in the book Christ is holding in his left hand, "I am the light of the world." For this prayer experience you will need tapers, slips of paper, and something to write with. Gather the students in an open space. If possible, have the students sit in a circle in a large prayer space. Give each person an unlit taper candle. Follow these directions.

1. Remind the students that Jesus calls himself "the light of the world" (Jn 8:12).
2. Have the students write on small slips of paper specific elements of darkness in their own lives (e.g., jealousy, hatred, prejudice, fear, loneliness) and on other slips of paper specific ways Jesus has brought light to their lives (e.g., a special friendship, a caring teacher, a favorite spot in nature, peace through participation in the sacraments, prayer).
3. Make the room as dark as possible.
4. Call on one student to begin by sharing an occasion of darkness from his or her life. Repeat the process around the rest of the circle with each student sharing about darkness.
5. Then, repeat the sharing, this time with the students telling about how Jesus brings light to their lives (e.g., family relationships, friendships, achievements, nature, compassion, love). Light the first person's candle.
6. Repeat the process. After each new person has shared, they should light their candle from the person who spoke before them.
7. Conclude with a song that fits the theme of "I Am the Light of the World."