



WEEK 3: Overwhelming Light

SCRIPTURE

Read Luke 2:2-14

REFLECTION

Have you ever stepped out of a dark place, like a movie theater, into the sunshine? Were you overwhelmed by the light? In the darkness, our eyes adjust, so sudden bright light can momentarily hurt. Between our phones, tablets, night lights, and city lights, we don't spend much time in darkness. Sometimes we spend so much time looking at lit-up screens it can harm us.

In Jesus' time, there were no screens or even electricity. The night was very dark and not always safe. But the shepherds who watched over their sheep at night learned to see and be comfortable in the dark. Imagine how overwhelming it was for them when a very bright heavenly light suddenly appeared! At first, the shepherds are terrified. But like many other divine encounters, the angel says, "Don't be afraid." They bring news of great joy - a Savior has been born!

Jesus' message of love and hope is sometimes very different from the messages of our world. Choosing to act boldly with kindness and grace can be uncomfortable, even as we know Jesus calls us to love. It can also feel hard and take some adjusting, just like suddenly seeing in bright light. But this is what brings true joy.

DISCUSSION

As you color and cut out the shadow box character page of the shepherds, sheep, and angels, ponder these questions:

- Do you think you would be overwhelmed and afraid if you were suddenly encountered with a heavenly light like these shepherds? Why or why not?

- What does it feel like when you're suddenly faced with a very intense, bright light? How do you respond?
- Tell of a time when you chose to act with kindness and grace, even though it felt uncomfortable or even a little bit scary.

ACTIVITY

"Do not be afraid!"

Angels like to say that. But it isn't very easy to be brave, is it? Sometimes it helps to think about your fears in a silly way.

Take some playdough and mold it into the shape of something of which you are afraid. Is it a shark? A monster? A worm?

Now, let's get a little bit silly.

Place your playdough fear in front of you and talk to it. That's right. Talk to it. Tell your fear what you think of it. You might say, "Shark, you are a very important sea creature, and I am glad you exist. I know you probably won't hurt me. Especially when I'm on land."

How does that feel? What might your fear say back? Maybe a shark would say, "I don't want to hurt you! I am more interested in yummy fish."

Look around at the other creations your family made. What else is your family afraid of? Are your grown-ups fearful of anything? How do you talk together about your fears? How does it feel to talk to and listen to your fear? Do you think differently about your fear now? How so?

PRAYER

God,

You are with us when we are afraid.

And you are with us when we feel brave.

Thank you for giving us strength and courage to face new challenges and fears together.

And thank you for giving us each other.

Help us to love and protect one another when we feel afraid.

Amen.