

YWJ Teen Devo: Let There Be Light and Life

By Barry Shafer

The Backdrop:

Each gospel writer began his account of Jesus' life in his own way. Perhaps when John sat down to put his memoirs to papyrus and ink, he decided to go for something unique. Maybe he thought the people had had enough of long genealogies (Matthew) and orderly accounts (Luke). It was time to put it all together—theology, philosophy and history—in an expressive way that explained the Good News, telling us *who* Jesus is and *why* belief in Him is so important. The same is true today: Many philosophies at the time of John's writing were swirling around, all attempting to explain Jesus and in some cases explain Him away. John, in writing his account of Jesus' life, wanted people to know there's no gray area when it comes to believing in Jesus. It's all black and white—or as John put it, it's all darkness and light.

The Word:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only [Son], who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The What:

Do This: Either print out the passage below or read from your Bible John 1:1-14. To help you see this passage in vivid detail, mark every mention of Jesus with a cross. John referred to Jesus as light and Word, so be sure to mark those words, along with words such as *he*, *him* and *life*.

Then Do This: Can you see what John is stressing about Jesus? Now jot down everything you learn from this passage about Jesus as “the Word” and Jesus as “the light.”

Jesus as the Word

Jesus as the Light

The So What:

Jesus' birth changed everything. The fact that the Word became flesh and dwelled among us means we don't have to live in darkness anymore, separated from God. Take a minute to park on that truth. In fact, grab a drink and a snack and read the passages below from your Bible. As you read, jot down what you learn about Jesus. Then list what you learn about you *before* and *after* Jesus comes into your life.

Colossians 1:13-18

1 Peter 1:17-25

1 John 1:1-7

What you learn about Jesus:

What you learn about you, pre-Jesus:

What you learn about you, post-Jesus:

What do you sense that God is emphasizing to you personally about His Son through these passages? Do you have any dark spots in your life (hurt, guilt, temptations) that need the light of Jesus? Close your time with this devotional by praying for your dark spots. You may want to write out a prayer to God that reflects what you know Jesus can do with any dark spots in your life.