

Facilitator:

1. Open with Prayer
2. Welcome any newcomers
3. Give a five-minute review of the sermon using Peppy's sermon notes.

Facilitator:

Please don't feel you have to cover every question. They become increasingly deeper and more thoughtful toward the end. It may help to highlight questions you want to be sure to cover, depending on the dynamics of your group and the time available. Try to keep your discussion to an hour and a half at the most.

CONNECT Group study questions, John 8:12-20

Title: Follow the Light

We learned how bold Jesus' statement was when before the huge candelabras were extinguished at the end of the Feast of Tabernacles he declared, "I am the light of the world...."

A familiar hymn, "Be Thou My Vision," is said to be rooted in a similar boldness. Legend has it, when St. Patrick was a missionary in Ireland in the 5th century, King Logaire of Tara decreed that no one was allowed to light any fires until a pagan festival was begun by the lighting of a fire on Slane Hill. In a move of defiance against this pagan ritual, St. Patrick lit candles on Easter, and, rather than execute him, the king was so impressed by his devotion that he let Patrick continue his missionary work. Three centuries later, a monk named Dallan Forgaill wrote the Irish poem, "Rop tú mo Baile" ("Be Thou my Vision), to remember and honor the faith of St. Patrick. In the early 20th century, Mary Elizabeth Byrne translated the poem into English, and in 1912, Eleanor Hull versified the text into what is now a well-loved hymn and prayer that at every moment of our lives, God would be our vision above all else, "Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light."

Facilitator: If you can, play a recorded version of *Be Thou My Vision*, or read the lyrics below:

Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;

Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art.
Thou my best Thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my true Word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father, I Thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.

Be Thou my battle Shield, Sword for the fight;
Be Thou my Dignity, Thou my Delight;
Thou my soul's Shelter, Thou my high Tower:
Raise Thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
Thou mine Inheritance, now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
High King of Heaven, my Treasure Thou art.

High King of Heaven, my victory won,
May I reach Heaven's joys, O bright Heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.

Question: Describe to the group how Jesus Christ, the light of the world, brought you out of darkness into his light. What can you see now that you didn't see before?

Question: Read Verse 12 of our text: *Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."* What must we do to "not walk in darkness?" **Facilitator:** Ask the group to explain what is meant by "follows me," "not walk in darkness," and "have the light of life."

Question: Read Psalm 27:1 — *"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"* This psalm asks two questions, what are your answers and why? How do your answers to these questions affect your behavior?

Question: Light warns of danger, eliminates darkness, opens understanding and is necessary for life and growth. How does our “Light of the world”—Jesus Christ—warn of danger, eliminate darkness, open understanding and give us life and growth?

Question: In verses 14-18 Jesus uses reasoning that the pharisees called a lie when they said, *“You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true.”* How does Jesus’ reply validate his claim to be the promised and long-awaited “Light of the world”—the Messiah? Why were the pharisees not convinced? Why are so many in the world today still not convinced Jesus is who he says he is? **Facilitator:** The answer is in the text. Also read John 3:19-21 — *“And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”*