Be a Spark in the Dark

Prepare
Find a light source to use—a small flashlight or candle and matches. Also, mark Ephesians 5:8 in your Bible so you can easily find to and read it to the children.

Introduction
What is the darkest place you have ever gone? Has anyone ever been camping away from city/town lights on a moonless night? Has anyone ever visited a cave deep inside the earth when your guide turned out the lights? What other very dark places have you experienced? (Let volunteers describe the dark places they have visited.)

Was that dark place exciting? Scary? Or . . .? (Again, let volunteers comment, this time about their feelings.)

Dark places can sometimes be exciting or fun—for a short while. But soon the fun and excitement go away. We want someone to turn on a light. Even a little light will work! (Light the candle or turn on the flashlight you brought along.)

If we were in the dark at midnight, far, far out in the wilderness, far away from any town or city lights, from how far away do you think we could see this candle/flashlight? (Let volunteers speculate.)

Our eyes would pick out the light from this candle/flashlight for about three miles. After that, the curvature of the earth would block the light. However, if we were standing on a high hill or small mountain—somewhere that the earth’s curvature didn’t interfere, we would be able to see the flashlight/flame flickering from nearly 30 miles! That’s a long distance! But it’s true. We can see a spark in the dark from a long distance!

Getting to the Heart
The Bible talks a lot about darkness, but it’s usually describing a different kind of darkness. The Bible uses the word darkness to describe what it’s like before we know and love Jesus. Listen: “At one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8).

Once we were in the dark, like that. We didn’t know Jesus loved us. We didn’t believe he died for us. We didn’t know he wanted to be our Best Friend. We didn’t know all our sins could be forgiven. We had no hope that we would live with him and his forever family in heaven someday. It was lonely and scary—a lot like being caught in the wilderness at midnight without a flashlight!

But then the Holy Spirit came and gave us the gift of faith. Our parents, pastors, and teachers told us about Jesus’ love. They told us that Jesus died to forgive our sins. They told us that he rose from the dead, and that he is getting a place in heaven ready—just for us! Now, we are “light”! Listen again: “At one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8).

Because of Jesus, we are light, and we get to “walk as children of light.” We get to be “sparks in the dark.” There’s a lot of darkness all around us. People everywhere need to know and believe the things we know and believe
Today we talked about how easy it is to see even a dim light in the darkness. Experts say that if you are looking down from a high hill, you can see the light of a single candle for 30 miles!

The Bible says, “At one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8, ESV). The light of Jesus shines out from the words and actions of his people. Just like a candle shining out in the darkness, our witness makes a difference! Talk with your child about simple ways to make a difference in the lives of others.

For instance:

- Who in our family needs a reminder of Jesus’ love today?
  How can we be that reminder?
- What does it mean to be a Christian? Do we know someone who is not a Christian? How can we pray for them?
- What kindness can we show to someone who doesn’t know Jesus? Why would we want to talk with them about Jesus? How will we know the right time for talking?

The Holy Spirit will use what we say and what we do to help others come to faith and continue in faith. People will see Jesus’ love shining in us. And some of them will come to believe and shine with that love themselves. Wouldn’t that be wonderful?

Taking It Home

As you leave today, you will each receive (name the item you intend to distribute.) Let it remind you that you are a “spark in the dark,” that your words and actions can shine out with Jesus’ love and peace not just across the miles, but from your heart and life deep into another person’s heart and life.

Let’s pray: Dear Jesus, thank you for giving us faith in you. Thank you for your gifts of forgiveness, love, help, and hope. Help us to remember that we are “sparks in the dark,” sharing your love in what we say and in what we do. In your name we pray, dear Jesus. Amen.

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