

## Cycle ABC

### Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord

Lectionary # 16

#### Reading I: Isaiah 52: 7-10

The prophet Isaiah presents a hopeful **vision** to the nation of Israel that they will one day return to their beloved Jerusalem. He declares that the long and painful captivity will come to an end and that the city and its temple will rise in splendor. The vision is available because of a light that has shown in the midst of what has been a gloom. It is a light that goes beyond the physical element of light but is a spiritual illumination emanating from the glory of God.

#### Reading 2: Hebrews 1: 1-6

The writer to the Hebrews speaks of a hope and joy that has come to the people in a totally different manner than in the past. Now God's self revelation has come through in the person of Jesus Christ, who is the **light** of the world and the clearest **vision** of God given to humanity in history.

#### Gospel: John 1: 1- 18

John's gospel speaks of Jesus as the Word through which all of creation came in to being. Beyond this the predominant image for Jesus in this passage is that he is the **light**, that shines in the darkness and a **light** that no darkness can diminish or quell. The gospel writer then introduces John the Baptist as the one who came to testify to the **light**. This **light** that was coming into the world was to be for everyone, not just a select few. However, people would be given the freedom to choose to see the **light** which could lend them true **vision** or to reject the **light**. The unfortunate consequence of the freedom given to humanity is that human beings can easily enter into a spiritual blindness that will not allow true **vision**. Jesus Christ, the light enrobed in flesh and blood, made his dwelling among humanity so that we would have the most tangible evidence of God's love. The law was given through Moses in the Old Testament covenant and the fulfillment of the New covenant has come through Jesus Christ.



build. plant. grow.  
*the word this week*



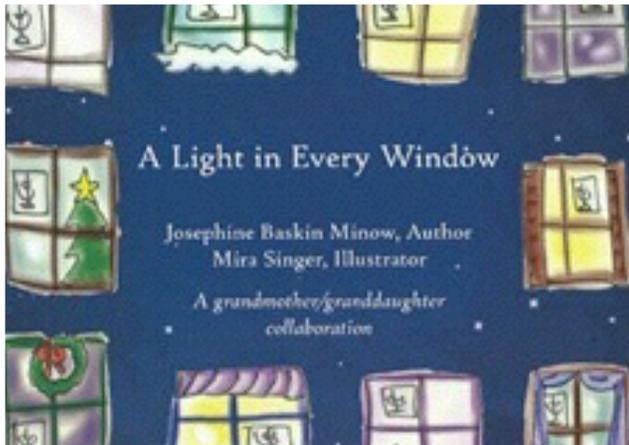
advent



lectionary  
reading



children's  
story



### **A Light in Every Window**

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character  
education  
activity

**Physical vision, the ability to see, is made possible by the presence of light. If we close our eyes we shut out the light and without the light we cannot see.**

## **A Light in Every Window**

This beautiful book and story was inspired by a real-life incident in Billings, Montana in the 1990's. The story is told in verse about a community of people from various ethnic and religious traditions that supports Jewish families after bigoted attacks of vandalism targeted families with Hanukkah menorahs in their windows. The windows that had menorahs displayed were smashed. Consequently the people gathered and purchased as many menorahs as possible and displayed them in their windows. Once there were no more menorahs to be found, the Billings Gazette printed a large picture of a menorah so that others, of all faiths, could display them in their windows to indicate the unity of being one family of God. This is an ideal time to teach the students about the beauty of diversity and that Jesus came to unify and not allow division. It is human weakness and arrogance that allows division to seep into a society.

Think about how it would feel if someone were to take the Christmas wreath off your door or destroyed your Christmas decorations and Christmas tree, all symbols of the joy that you are celebrating in your religious tradition. By doing so you can place yourself in the shoes of those who had their windows smashed because they were displaying a symbol of their religious tradition. The kindness and the solidarity is the light that combats the dark and brightens the lives of others.

**Light** is the element that allows us to see and the **light** spoken of in the scripture passages selected for Christmas is the **light** of God in Jesus Christ, that allows us to see in a totally different way.

### **Activity**

**Step One:** Provide the students with an image of both a menorah and a Christ Candle. Have them cut out and decorate images of a menorah and a Christ Candle that would be large enough to display in their windows at home.

**Step Two:** As they are making the menorahs, ask them if they can recall the story of *A Light in Every Window* well enough to tell it to their families. In addition, have them explain why Christ is referred to as the light of the world in the Christian tradition.

**We cannot see  
spiritually if we do not  
allow Jesus, “the light  
of the world” to open  
our eyes and our  
hearts.**



**case study**

**Look.  
Feel.  
Know.  
Act.**

## **What could you do today?**

**Light** is often a symbol, especially the flame of a candle, in many religious traditions to express hope and the ability to see and recognize goodness. Spend some time with persons of a different religious tradition and ask them if they have any traditions regarding the **lighting** of candles as part of their prayer life or religious rituals. Share your tradition with them regarding the person of Jesus as being the **light** that God sent into the world to help all people see in love.

## **Look Feel Know Act**

To be able to see, to have **vision**, there needs to be a source of **light** to facilitate **vision** and seeing. As an experiment, when you get into bed this evening and your room is dark, open your eyes and notice that even though you know you have the ability to see and that your eyes are open, you are not able to see anything because of the absence of light. You are indeed looking but you cannot see. How does that feel? If you turn on the light in your room you are now able to see. Think about this truth as you live your life as a follower of Jesus. Jesus is always there for us but sometimes we turn away from Him. Being our light, Jesus allows us to see clearly what we should do, speak, think, and live. We are called to live in the light of Jesus, who is love. Once we have decided to follow Jesus, He becomes the light by which we see. We then can ask ourselves in each situation: WWJD, What Would Jesus Do? or WWJS, What Would Jesus Say? These kinds of questions place before us a guide for living and loving as Jesus would. We will not always be successful, but we are less likely to stumble in life if we have our eyes on Jesus and make Him the light by which we see and walk.

In *A Light in Every Window* we see a community of people coming together to fight a kind of darkness, bigotry. Bigotry and other forms of hatred and prejudice are darkneses that exist in the world because there is an absence of light and truth. Jesus came into the world to be a light that would dispel all kinds of darkness, hatred and prejudice. In *A Light in Every Window* we are able to see how the light of goodness, the **light** of Jesus, shines through in the community dedicated to combating darkneses such as bigotry.



closing  
tool

**Pray that you will always allow Jesus to be the light that will guide you throughout your life and that others may come to see things differently through Him. You may wish to use a mantra prayer... “Jesus be the light through which I may see all things.”**



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