

Small Group Guide: Stay Salty, Stay Lit

Based on Matthew 5:13-16 | Sermon on the Mount Series

Opening Prayer (2-3 minutes)

Begin by thanking God for the time together and asking the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and application of His Word.

Icebreaker (5-10 minutes)

Question: Share about a teacher, coach, or mentor who invested in you during your formative years. What impact did they have on your life?

Sermon Overview

This message focuses on Jesus' teaching that Christians are called to be "salt of the earth" and "light of the world." Through the Beatitudes, we see the character traits God develops in us so we can be a blessing to others. The hardest part of love is letting go and letting someone else enjoy what we've worked so hard to create—whether as parents, friends, or as the church.

Key Scripture

Matthew 5:13-16 (Read aloud together)

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Discussion Questions

Part 1: Understanding the Beatitudes (15-20 minutes)

1. **Review the character traits from Matthew 5:3-10.** Which of these attributes resonates most with where you are in your spiritual journey right now? Why?
 - Poor in spirit (humble & teachable)
 - Those who mourn (tenderhearted)
 - Meek (grounded/gentle strength)
 - Hunger and thirst for righteousness (hungry for God)
 - Merciful (compassionate)
 - Pure in heart (focused/genuine)

- Peacemakers (peaceful)
- Persecuted for righteousness (ready & steady)

2. **The sermon emphasized "stay humble and teachable."** In what areas of your life do you struggle most with pride? How can being "poor in spirit" change the way you approach relationships or new situations?
3. **What does it mean to "stay tenderhearted" in a culture that often encourages us to numb out or toughen up?** Share an example of when allowing yourself to grieve or feel deeply led to spiritual growth.

Part 2: Salt & Light (15-20 minutes)

4. **Jesus says salt can lose its effectiveness when it's diluted or polluted.** What are some "pollutants" in our modern culture that can dilute our Christian witness? (Consider: entertainment choices, relationships, social media, busyness, etc.)
5. **The sermon stated: "The world needs more Christians who joyfully live out their faith, not less."** What does "joyfully living out your faith" look like in your daily life—at work, at home, in your community?
6. **Light cannot stop being light, but it can be hidden.** What are some ways Christians hide their light? Have you ever been tempted to "play it safe" spiritually? What was the result?
7. **Read Matthew 5:16 again.** How can we let our light shine in a way that points to God rather than drawing attention to ourselves?

Part 3: Letting Go (10-15 minutes)

8. **The sermon's central theme was: "The hardest part of love is letting go and letting someone else enjoy what we have worked so hard to create."**
 - For parents: How does this perspective help you process transitions with your children?
 - For everyone: How does this apply to discipleship, mentoring, or investing in others?
9. **The disciples were young men (teens and 20s) when Jesus invested in them.** How does this challenge our view of what young people can accomplish for God's kingdom?

Key Takeaways

- ✓ **We are blessed to be a blessing** - God shapes our character so we can impact others
- ✓ **Stay salty** - Don't let cultural pollutants dilute your effectiveness for Christ
- ✓ **Stay lit** - Don't hide your faith; let it shine in every room you enter
- ✓ **Remember whose you are** - You represent the family of God
- ✓ **The world needs you** - Your preserving and healing presence matters

Practical Application (15-20 minutes)

Personal Reflection:

Take 3-5 minutes of silent reflection. Ask yourself:

- Am I more salty or more bland in my current season?
- Where am I hiding my light instead of letting it shine?

- What "pollutants" do I need to remove from my life?

Group Application Exercise:

Choose ONE of the following to commit to this week:

1. **Stay Humble & Teachable:** Identify one area where you need to ask more questions and listen more than you speak. Put yourself in a situation where you're not the expert.
2. **Stay Salty:** Remove one "pollutant" from your life this week (a show, habit, relationship pattern, etc.) that is diluting your effectiveness for Christ.
3. **Stay Lit:** Intentionally let your light shine in one specific relationship or environment where you've been hiding it. Plan how you'll do this.
4. **Be a Blessing:** Identify someone you've invested in (or could invest in) and take one concrete step to bless, encourage, or release them this week.

Share your commitment with the group for accountability.

Prayer Prompts (10 minutes)

Break into groups of 2-3 and pray for:

- **Graduates and young adults** - that they would stay salty and lit as they launch into new seasons
- **Parents navigating transitions** - for wisdom and grace in letting go
- **Each other's specific commitments** - for strength to follow through
- **Our church** - that we would be known as people who bless and release others
- **Boldness** - to shine our light without shrinking back

Closing Challenge

This Week's Mantra: "Stay salty. Stay lit. Stay faithful."

Memory Verse: Matthew 5:14-16

Before Next Week: Journal about one time this week when you consciously chose to be salt and light. What happened? How did God show up?

Additional Resources

- Read the entire Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) this week
- Reflect on Philippians 2:14-16 - another passage about shining as lights
- Consider: Who invested in you spiritually? Have you thanked them recently?
- Ask: Who is God calling you to invest in?

Leader Tip: This sermon has strong application for parents of graduates, but don't let the discussion stay there. Help the group see how these principles apply to all of us in discipleship, mentoring, friendship, and daily Christian living. Everyone is called to be salt and light!