

Session 1: There Is a Light in You

Reading 1 · John 1:4–5 · Ages 9 to 18

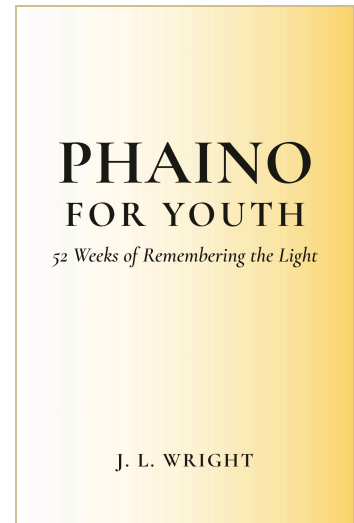
The light of God is already in you. It has always been there. It does not need you to feel it, or believe in it, to be there.

Every session is a set of pieces. The core is one way to spend 45 minutes with the reading, and the blocks on the last pages add to it or stand in for parts of it. Use what fits your room and leave the rest.

YOU HAVE	ONE WAY TO RUN IT
45 minutes	The core: Gather, Read, Talk, Do, Send.
60 minutes	The core, plus Game.
90 minutes	The core, plus Game, Make, and Snack and Talk.
2 hours	Everything, in the order listed.

What you need

Copies of the reading (the book, or the student page). A Bible. Battery tea lights, one per person. Index cards and pens. For Make: paper bags or jars, and markers. For Serve: notecards, envelopes, and names from the church office.



The student's book.

Fifty-two readings, three questions under each.

Churches or groups:
\$5 a copy, ten or more.

Also on Amazon, \$9.99.
getphaino.com

Gather 5 MINUTES

Everyone answers one question in a sentence, around the circle. The leader goes first.

What is one thing that has been true about you since the day you were born?

Younger ones may say their eye color or their name. That is the right answer. If a teen stalls, offer yours. Nobody passes; a short answer is fine.

Read 5 MINUTES

Read the entry aloud, slowly. Read the Gospel passage. Then ask one person to say the entry's idea in their own words.

Reading 1

There is a light in you.

It was there when you were born. It was there before you learned your name. It has been there every day since, whether you felt it or not.

When you were happy, the light was there. When you were sad, the light was there. When you forgot about it for years, the light was there.

The darkness has never put it out. Not the hardest thing that happened to you. Not the worst thing you did. Not the long season when you could not feel anything at all.

The light is still there. It is in you right now.

It does not need you to believe in it. It is simply there. Like your heartbeat. Doing its quiet work whether you are paying attention or not.

Entry 3 in *Phaino: 365 Days of Remembering the Light*.

John 1:4–5 (NIV): In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Say it back. Ask: "What is the one thing this reading wants you to know?" Take the first answer without correcting it. If no one speaks, ask the youngest person in the room.

Talk 15 MINUTES

The three questions are printed under the reading in the book. Ask them in order. Younger groups may stop after two. Teens may argue with the third; that is the point.

1. The light in you cannot be put out, no matter what happens. What is one other thing about you that no one can take away?
2. The light stays even when you forget about it for years. Think of a time you forgot it was there. What was going on? Was it still there?
3. The light is there whether you believe in it or not. Does that help, or does it bother you?

Where it goes. On question 1, younger ones may name things they own. Ask: “What about something inside you?” On question 2, someone may name something hard: a move, a death, a parent leaving. Thank them. Do not fix it; the reading already says the light was there in it. On question 3, a teen may ask about people who do terrible things. Say that the reading answers that: “not the worst thing you did.” Let the question stay open. **Silence:** count to ten before you speak.

Do 15 MINUTES

Ages 9 to 12: Still On

Give everyone a lit battery tea light. Turn off the room lights. Have them cover the light with both hands until no glow shows. Ask: “Is it still on?” Open hands: it is. Repeat with a cup over it, then a jacket. Then ask: “When does your light feel covered?” Take three or four answers. End with hands open and the line: it was on the whole time.

Ages 13 to 18: Heartbeat

Everyone finds their pulse, at the wrist or the neck. Sixty seconds of silence, counting beats. Then say: that has been going since before you were born, through everything, without you doing anything. The reading says the light is like that. Hand out index cards. They finish the line *The light in me has kept going through _____*. Sharing is optional. The cards go home with them.

Send 5 MINUTES

This week: once a day, when you notice your heartbeat, say to yourself: the light is still here.

Closing prayer (read it, or say it your own way):

God, you put a light in each of us before we knew our own names. Thank you that it is still there, even on the days we cannot feel it. Help us notice it this week, in ourselves and in each other. Amen.

Blocks

Add these in any order to reach the time you have. Each stands alone, and any one of them can replace a part of the core.

Game 15 TO 20 MINUTES

Hidden Light. Before the session, hide six or more lit battery tea lights around the room or the building. Teams of three find them all. Then say: every one of those was on the whole time, found or not. In a dark room, hide fewer and let the glow show; younger ones love this.

Make 20 TO 30 MINUTES

Ages 9 to 12: Name Lantern

A paper bag or a jar with their name written large on it, decorated any way they like, and a tea light inside. Lights off, lanterns on, and read the entry's last paragraph again.

Ages 13 to 18: The Card

A folded card. Their name on the front. Inside, their line from Do, written cleanly, and one good thing a person who knows them well would say about them. It stays in their book as a bookmark.

Music 10 MINUTES

"This Little Light of Mine" for the younger ones. For teens, one song your church already sings about light. Nothing new to learn.

Serve 20 TO 30 MINUTES

Get a few names from the church office: homebound members, or people in a hard stretch. Each student writes one of them a short note: "There is a light in you" on the front, two or three lines inside in their own words, and their first name. The office mails them. Teens can write one to a classmate having a hard month.

Snack and Talk 15 MINUTES

Lights low, tea lights on the table, any snack. One question: **What is the first thing you remember being good at?**

Quiet 10 MINUTES, AGES 13 TO 18

Read the entry's last paragraph once, then ten minutes of silence. A prompt for anyone who wants it: *What would change this week if I lived as if the light were there, even when I could not feel it?*

Home A HALF PAGE FOR PARENTS

Send the reading home with one question for the dinner table: **Tell your kid one thing you saw in them as a baby that is still there.** That is the whole assignment.

Leader notes

If a kid says there is no light in them. Do not argue, and do not rush to reassure. Say that the reading says it is there even when you cannot feel it. Then tell them one specific thing you have seen in them. Come back to it later, one on one.

Mixed ages in one room. Run the younger Do with everyone, and give the teens the index-card line as well.

About this book. *Phaino for Youth: 52 Weeks of Remembering the Light* is fifty-two readings, each grown from a passage in the four Gospels, chosen for ages 9 and up from *Phaino: 365 Days of Remembering the Light*, with three questions under each reading. This session is free. The full year of the guide, all fifty-two sessions, is \$49.99 at getphaino.com.

Start the program

The book: *Phaino for Youth: 52 Weeks of Remembering the Light*. Copies for churches or groups are \$5 each, ten or more, shipping included. We invoice; pay by check or card. Single copies are on Amazon at \$9.99.

The guide: this session is free. The full year, 52 sessions in this format, is \$49.99.

Order or ask: getphaino.com · lightandlovenodes@gmail.com · (330) 203-1229

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