

Life today

How often do we experience total darkness today? If you live in a city, it probably never happens. If you spend time in the countryside, the darkness is very powerful, and there is a bigger contrast with the bright light of day. Reflect on when you last were, or felt, 'in darkness'.



Imagine

Your life in Thessalonica depends a lot on the amount of darkness and light there is. You can't work in the dark, you can't go very far when it's dark, and you don't feel very safe when it's dark. The light is especially important for growing food, of course, as well as for the various trades which you and others work in. It's often very risky to go out in the dark – you need to be alert to hazards and danger. Even to have light inside the house where you live requires much work: someone needs to keep the fire burning while someone else tends the lamps. Darkness certainly causes a lot of problems. The idea of a thief coming in the night is a really scary one – not being able to see someone or work out where they are. The idea of being children of light and living in the light is incredibly reassuring.



Did you know?

The people in Thessalonica were ruled by a military government who controlled them. The images of armour (breastplate and helmet in verse 8) in this passage would have meant a lot to them, as well as the promise of salvation with which they are linked. Paul shows that he understands that life and faith can be a battle, yet all the armour mentioned in this passage is defensive; it is our faith, hope and love that will protect us as we work out our salvation.



Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians

A nugget to explore with children: Chapter 5, verses 2,4 and 5

For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness.