

TEACHER BIBLE STUDY

Jesus Met Nicodemus

John 3:1-21

Jesus' ministry had begun. His first miracle was at a wedding in Cana, turning water into wine. He cleansed the temple in Jerusalem and performed signs, and "many trusted in His name" (John 2:23). Jesus likely spent a large part of His day teaching. When the day was done, He spent time alone or with His disciples. One night, however, a man named Nicodemus approached Jesus.

Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews; that is, he was a religious leader who taught God's law, and he was a member of the Sanhedrin—a Jewish governing body. Nicodemus was part of an exclusive group of religious elite who appeared to be moral men. He held to the belief that if a person was a law-abiding Jew, then he would be accepted by God. Jesus gave Nicodemus a lesson that would turn his belief system on its head.

Jesus was a carpenter (Mark 6:3), so the religious teachers likely assumed He didn't know theology. But they had seen Jesus' miraculous signs in Jerusalem. Nicodemus, a representative of the teachers, had to conclude, "You are a teacher come from God" (John 3:2).

Nicodemus initiated the conversation, but Jesus chose the subject. His words perplexed Nicodemus: "Unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Jesus explained that spiritual birth is not unlike physical birth in that a person cannot do it himself. It is something that happens to him.

Jesus reminded Nicodemus of an Old Testament account, the disobedient Israelites and the bronze snake. The Israelites could not help themselves, but when they trusted in God and looked to the bronze snake lifted up on the pole, they were healed. (Num. 21:4-9)

Every person is born a sinner—spiritually dead and alienated from God. It is by God's Spirit—not our own effort—that we are born again. We look to Christ and His finished work on the cross for our salvation.

YOUNGER KIDS BIBLE STUDY OVERVIEW

Session Title: Jesus Met Nicodemus

Bible Passage: John 3:1-21

Big Picture Question: Why do we need to be born again? Because of sin we are spiritually dead, but Jesus came to give us new life.

Key Passage: John 3:16-17

Unit Christ Connection: Jesus was revealed as the fulfillment of Scripture, the promised Savior.

Sunday,
Sept 21,
2014

Kidzone KG and 1st Grade Small Group

Small Group Time

Welcome time
Activity page (5 minutes)
Session starter (10 minutes)
Key passage activity (5 minutes)

Bible story review (10 minutes)
Activity choice (10 minutes)
Journal (5 minutes)
Prayer (5 minutes)

THE BIBLE STORY

Jesus Met Nicodemus

John 3:1-21

Jesus had traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival. **One night, a man came to see Jesus.** The man's name was Nicodemus (nik uh DEE muhs). Nicodemus was a Pharisee. That means he was a religious man. He studied and taught God's law, and he tried very hard to obey the law. Nicodemus had heard about Jesus, and he wanted to know more.

"Rabbi (RAB igh)," he said, "we know that You have come from God. You are a teacher, and no one could do the miracles You do unless God is with him."

Nicodemus was right. Jesus *was* a teacher, and He was very good at teaching. Jesus *had* come from heaven, and God *was* with Him.

Jesus said, "I tell you: Unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Now Nicodemus was very confused. He thought that keeping all God's laws was how a person got into heaven. Besides, what Jesus said didn't make any sense! **"How can anyone be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked Jesus.**

Jesus said, "I tell you: A man cannot enter God's kingdom unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit." That means that when a baby is born, he gets physical life from his parents. Physical life doesn't last forever. But the Spirit gives people spiritual life so they can live with God forever.

Jesus said, "Don't be surprised I told you that you must be born again." Nicodemus still didn't understand. "How is this possible?" he asked.

"You are a teacher in Israel, and you don't understand what I'm saying?" Jesus replied. "This is the truth: We talk about what we know, and we tell others about what we have seen. But you don't believe what I'm telling you! When I tell you about things I've seen on earth, and you don't believe me, how will you believe what I say about the things I've seen in heaven?"

"No one has ever gone up into heaven, except the Son of Man. He came down from heaven. Do you remember how Moses raised up the bronze snake in the wilderness? Everyone who

looked at it was healed. Like that, the Son of Man will be raised up, so that everyone who believes in Him will have eternal life.”

Then Jesus told Nicodemus about God’s great plan. Jesus said, “God loved the world so much that He sent His One and Only Son to save the world. Everyone who believes in Him will not perish but will have eternal life. God didn’t send His Son to declare the world guilty, but to save the world. Anyone who believes in Him is found not guilty, but anyone who does not believe in Him is guilty already.”

Christ Connection: Without Jesus, we are spiritually dead. Sin separates us from God. When people believe in Christ and are “born again,” they receive new life and become God’s children. Jesus offers new life to those who trust in Him for salvation.

SMALL GROUP OPENING

Session Title: Jesus Met Nicodemus

Bible Passage: John 3:1-21

Big Picture Question: Why do we need to be born again? Because of sin we are spiritually dead, but Jesus came to give us new life.

Key Passage: John 3:16-17

Unit Christ Connection: Jesus was revealed as the fulfillment of Scripture, the promised Savior.

Welcome time:

Arriving Activity: Night scene

- black construction paper, 1 piece per kid
- colored chalk

As kids arrive, provide each with a piece of black construction paper and some colored chalk. Invite them to draw a picture of their homes at night.

Say • In today’s Bible story, a man named Nicodemus visited Jesus one night for something very important.

Activity page (5 minutes)

- “Block Maze” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils

Guide boys and girls to complete the activity page.

Say • Nicodemus went to see Jesus because he wanted to know more about Him.

Session starter (10 minutes)

Option 1: Question game

- paper, 2 pieces
- marker
- tape

Tape a sign on one wall that reads *YES* and a sign that reads *NO* on the opposite wall. Ask the kids a series of questions. Do you like carrots? Is red your favorite color? Did you pray this week? Do you play soccer? These are just a few questions you might ask. Once you ask a question, encourage the kids to run to the wall with the answer that best applies to them. Play as time allows.

Say • Nicodemus asked a very important question when he visited Jesus. We will find out more about his question and Jesus' answer in today's Bible story.

Option 2: Question ball

- beach ball
- permanent marker

Write a question on each section of a beach ball. Here are some sample questions you might use: *What is your favorite subject in school? Where do you like to go for fun? What is your favorite color? What sport would you not want to play?* Choose a volunteer to roll the beach ball and answer the question on top when it stops rolling. The volunteer may choose the next kid to roll, but she must choose someone wearing the color the question was written on. If no one is wearing that color or the one wearing the color has already had a turn, call out another color. Play as time allows or until each kid has at least one turn.

Say • How many of you have ever wanted someone to answer a very important question? In today's Bible story, Nicodemus asked Jesus about something he didn't understand.

SMALL GROUP LEADER

Session Title: Jesus Met Nicodemus

Bible Passage: John 3:1-21

Big Picture Question: Why do we need to be born again? Because of sin we are spiritually dead, but Jesus came to give us new life.

Key Passage: John 3:16-17

Unit Christ Connection: Jesus was revealed as the fulfillment of Scripture, the promised Savior.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- dry erase board and markers (optional)
- construction paper
- markers

Make sure the key passage, John 3:16-17, is visible for each child, either as the printed poster or written on a dry erase board. Read the verses together.

Say • Why did God send Jesus? That's right! God loves us, and He wants to save us. Let's see if we can memorize both of these verses over the next few weeks.

Write the key passage in three- to four-word phrases on nine to twelve pieces of construction paper. Mix them up and place them on the floor in a grid. Choose a volunteer. The volunteer must step on the paper with the first phrase of the key passage. If successful, he must then step on the paper with the next phrase. Allow the other kids to help him take his next steps. When he steps incorrectly or if he finishes the key passage in order, his turn ends. Choose another volunteer and continue play or play again. Continue as time allows.

If you have lots of kids, create two sets of the key passage and form another grid. Form two groups and let them see which team can guide their volunteer through the key passage first. Play as time allows.

Bible story review (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Small Group Visual Pack
- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster
- paper
- pens or pencils

Encourage the kids to find the Book of John in their Bibles. Help them as needed.

Say • In which division of the Bible is the Book of John found? (*Gospels*) What are the other three Gospels? (*Matthew, Mark, Luke*) The Gospels tell us about whom? (*Jesus*)

Use the small group visual pack to show kids where today's Bible story is on the timeline. Review the Bible story provided using the bolded text, or summarize the story in your own words.

Play a game where you give the answer and the kids must guess the question. Form two or more teams. Each team should choose a captain who will give the team's final answer in the form of a question. Provide each team with a piece of paper to write their team's response. Each team to give the correct question earns a point. Here are a few examples.

1. This verse says God loved the world and gave His Son to save people. (*What is John 3:16?*)
2. He was a Pharisee who asked Jesus questions. (*Who is Nicodemus?*)
3. Jesus told Nicodemus he had to do this to enter God's kingdom. (*What is "be born again"?*)
4. Moses raised this up in the wilderness so anyone who looked at it would be healed. (*What is a bronze snake?*)
5. This person would be raised up just like the bronze snake. (*Who is Jesus or God's Son?*)

Say • Jesus wanted Nicodemus to trust in Him as the promised Messiah. God told Adam and Eve in the garden that the moment they sinned, they would die. They didn't physically die then, but they died spiritually. Romans 3:23 says all of us have sinned. Jesus told Nicodemus he needed a new birth. The only way that was possible was to trust in God's Son.

When we repent and trust in Jesus, the Bible says everything becomes new. We have been born again. Show the big picture question slide or poster.

Say • *Why do we need to be born again? Because of sin we are spiritually dead, but Jesus came to give us new life.*

Activity choice (10 minutes)

Option 1: Jesus questions

- paper
- scissors
- marker
- Bibles, 1 per group

Cut out four stars and write one of the following Scripture references on each one: *Matthew 18:21-22; Matthew 22:36-40; John 6:28-29; John 10:24-25*. Before small group, hide the stars throughout the room.

Form four groups of any number of kids. Explain that other people besides Nicodemus had questions for Jesus. Tell the groups that four stars are hidden throughout the room. Each group must find a star, look up the verse reference on it, read the verse, and try to explain it to the other groups. If you wish, invite the groups to race to see who can complete their task first.

Say • One night, Jesus explained to Nicodemus that he must be born again. *Why do we need to be born again? Because of sin we are spiritually dead, but Jesus came to give us new life.*

Option 2: Glow-in-the-dark wristbands

- heavyweight paper
- glow-in-the-dark paint, markers, tape, or stickers
- scissors
- star stickers (optional)

Cut 1-by-7-inch strips of heavyweight paper. To make a clasp, cut a small, perpendicular slit near each end of the strip. Slits should be on opposite sides and extend about half the width of the strip. To close the wristband, slide the slits into each other. Provide the kids with glow-in-the-dark paint, markers, tape, or stickers to decorate the strips of paper. You may also choose to use star stickers to decorate.

Say • Nicodemus came to Jesus at night to find out more about Him. Nicodemus was surprised when Jesus told him he needed to be born again. ***Why do we need to be born again? Because of sin we are spiritually dead, but Jesus came to give us new life.***

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

- Journal Page, 1 per kid
- markers or crayons
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- *Big Picture Cards for Families: Kids*
- Tip: Don't forget to give parents this quarter's *Big Picture Cards for Families* today to allow families to interact with the biblical content each week.

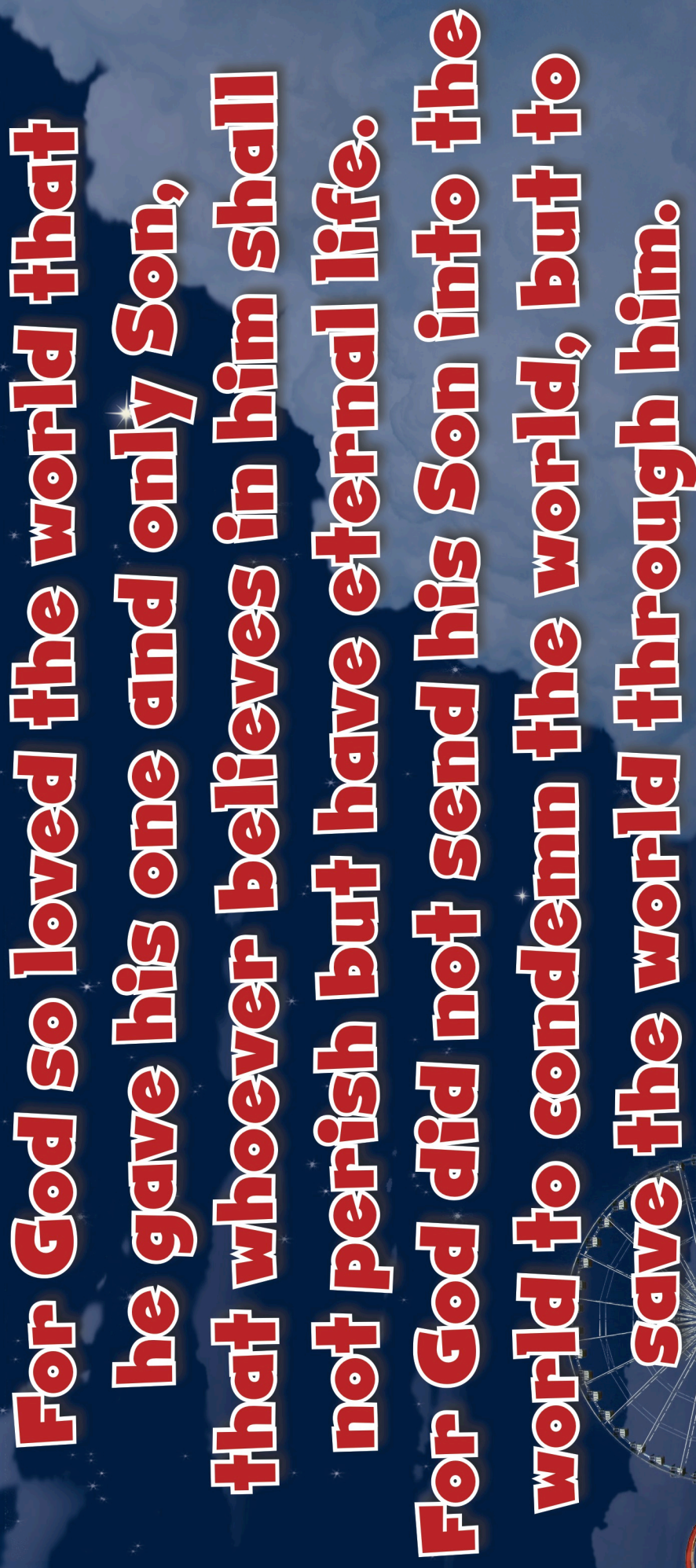
Distribute each child's journal page provided with this session. Instruct the kids to draw a picture of themselves as a baby. Writers can write a question they would ask if they got to meet Jesus like Nicodemus did.

Say • Let's review the big picture question and answer one more time. ***Why do we need to be born again? Because of sin we are spiritually dead, but Jesus came to give us new life.***

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the coloring page provided with this session. Pray, thanking God for loving us so much that He sent His Son, Jesus. Pray for each child by name, asking God to help each kid understand what it means to be born again.

Dismiss to parents – Make sure to check security tags when dismissing children.





**For God so loved the world that
he gave his one and only Son,
that whoever believes in him shall
not perish but have eternal life.
For God did not send his Son into the
world to condemn the world, but to
save the world through him.**

John 3:16-17

**Why do we need
to be born again?**

**Because of sin we are
spiritually dead, but Jesus
came to give us new life.**



Block Maze

Instructions: Help Nicodemus get to Jesus by taking the right path.



Start





Jesus' Early Ministry

Share with each of your children a baby book or other keepsakes you have of his or her birth. Tell your testimony—how you became a Christian and how your life has changed. Write the big picture question and answer below. Say that Jesus told Nicodemus he needed to be born again. Explain that people need to be “born again” because sin makes us spiritually dead, but Jesus came to give us new life.

Jesus Met Nicodemus

John 3:1-21

Preschool

Key Passage: John 3:16

Big Picture Question: How do you know God loves you? God sent Jesus to save us.

Christ Connection: Jesus taught Nicodemus about God's kingdom. God loves the world, and He sent Jesus to earth to rescue people from sin. Jesus said that people who believe in Him will be with God forever.

Kids

Key Passage: John 3:16-17

Big Picture Question: Why do we need to be born again? Because of sin we are spiritually dead, but Jesus came to give us new life.

Christ Connection: Without Jesus, we are spiritually dead. Sin separates us from God. When people believe in Christ and are “born again,” they receive new life and become God's children. Jesus offers new life to those who trust in Him for salvation.



the

GOSPEL

GOD'S PLAN FOR ME

gos-pel – *noun*. good news. the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation.



GOD RULES.

The Bible tells us God created everything, including you and me, and He is in charge of everything. *Genesis 1:1; Revelation 4:11; Colossians 1:16-17*



WE SINNED.

We all choose to disobey God. The Bible calls this sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. *Romans 3:23; 6:23*



GOD PROVIDED.

God sent Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. *John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9*



JESUS GIVES.

He lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! *Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18; Ephesians 2:8-9*



WE RESPOND.

Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus. *John 14:6; Romans 10:9-10,13*

ALLERGY ALERT



Today we will be tasting/
touching/sniffing:

Please notify the leader
if your child should not
participate.

Instructions: Print this poster. You may laminate it and reuse it throughout the quarter. Use a dry erase marker to fill in the necessary information. Display the poster where parents and kids can see it before class.