

John 3

“Jesus: Savior of the World”

Scripture: John 3

Memory Verse: John 3:36 *“He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”*

Lesson Focus: This is a big chapter and while we will not study every verse, we will touch on all of the major sections. We will spend the most time on John 3:14-21 which captures the essence of the gospel and challenge the kids to respond.

Activities and Crafts: Coloring Picture of Jesus Baptism, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Make It Real Discussion for 3rd – 5th.
Craft for 1st & 2nd: New Life

Starter Activity: Jesus and Nicodemus Skit

Before we get into the skit, have some brief discussion to set the stage.

Read John 2:23. Jesus is now in Jerusalem, the ancient capital of Israel and HQ of the Jewish religious leaders. We saw Him perform His first miracle last week by changing water into wine. He is continuing to perform other signs here and it appears others are starting to believe in Him.

Read John 3:1. One person who appears to be fascinated was Nicodemus, a Pharisee.

Q: Who knows who the Pharisees were?

A: They were the religious leaders at this time and did not like Jesus at all!

Q: It says in John 3:2 that “Nick” came to meet with Jesus privately by night. Why do you think he came by night?

A: Probably because he was embarrassed to be seen with Jesus. But he couldn’t deny that there was something extraordinary about Jesus so he was willing to take the risk.

Teachers: Transition now into the skit. We will essentially act out John 3:2-10 (with some embellishments) which is the dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus. Either ask another leader to come up and be your counterpart, or ask two kids to come up and act it out. See the last page of the lesson for the script of the skit.

Afterwards, point out we actually don’t know Nicodemus’ final response to Jesus’s words because the Bible doesn’t tell us. But we do know that he was with Jesus at His burial (John 19:39) which implies that He became a follower and wanted to learn more. Then invite them to come and learn just as we presume Nick did!

Bible Study:

Jesus was teaching Nicodemus a radical truth in this conversation: the idea of being born-again or born-again. Jesus challenged him because this is something he should have been aware of as a religious leader in Israel.

Read Ezekiel 36:26-27: God promised there would be a time when He would give His people new hearts and a new Spirit to be able to walk with Him in faith and obedience!

This means we need God to INVADE us and do a work within us to save us because we cannot save ourselves. When we are born-again, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within us and we become children of God! He then begins to change us and transform us to look more and more like Jesus.

Q: Have you been baptized or watched someone get baptized? Baptism is the outward display of this inward reality: That we are dead to sin and alive to new life in Jesus.

Jesus could not be clearer that we are utterly helpless apart from Him. Nicodemus was likely thinking he would earn His way into the kingdom through keeping the law and good works. Jesus was saying instead you must recognize your works are like filthy rags before a holy God (Isaiah 64:6) and that He needs to do the work of salvation.

John 3:14: Jesus continues to give Nick a bit of a history lesson referring to Moses lifting up a serpent in the wilderness. What is that about? Let's find out!

Read Numbers 21:7-9: God's people were rebelling against Him and God was punishing them by sending them poisonous snakes. * But God responded to their cry of repentance by giving them a solution to their problem. They needed to respond to God's provision in faith to be healed. Again, they could not save themselves!

John 3:15: In the same way, God has now provided His Son as the remedy to the poison of our sin. For Jesus Christ was lifted up and nailed to the cross for our sin. This is God's solution to the problem of our sin and we simply look to Him in faith and we are healed!

If the people of Israel chose not to look to the bronze snake that God provided, they would die. If people today do not look to the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world that the Father provided, they will also perish, but forever in hell!

Q: But why did God send His Son to be our Savior?

John 3:16: This is the answer! Because God loves people! **1 Timothy 2:4** says that God desires **all people** to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. Not just the "good", or the rich, or the poor, or the beautiful, or the ugly. All people!

To Nicodemus, this must have been shocking since He thought God's love was only for Israel. No, it is for the whole world and that is why we are to tell everyone about God's love for them!

John 3:17-18: Again, those who do not trust in God's provision are in trouble.

Q: What does it mean to be condemned? This means punishment and doom: hell.

Condemnation is the bad news. The Bible is clear that we all are deserving of this punishment before the Holy God of the universe, because we all have sinned. We all are guilty. It doesn't matter if you have sinned a lot or a little, you still have this problem!

Once you admit this, then you understand why this is called the gospel, or the "good news". First you understand and accept this bad news, then you gladly receive the good news and believe in Jesus Christ unto salvation.

Q: If you believe you are healthy and someone brings you the "good news" of a cure, do you care? No! But if you know you are sick, then you want the cure!

John 3:19: Jesus is that light that came into the world to overcome the darkness.

Q: How many of you are or once were afraid of the dark? Light is a very good thing. Once we turn on the light, the darkness is gone and we feel safe!

Jesus came to be the light to overcome the darkness of sin and evil. But it says here that people actually love the darkness of their sin and doing whatever they want.

Q: Is this not what we see out there in the world? People love doing whatever they want and make excuses when they get caught or in trouble. *

Q: Is this not also what we see when we look inside of our own hearts also? Maybe you are thinking that this isn't talking about you, but only "bad" people. *

Teachers: Draw on the white board a vertical line. Put the word "goodness" near the top of the line. This represents perfection. Also put Jesus' name next to that word. Then put "badness" near the bottom of the line. Now ask the kids to think of someone really, really, bad. If appropriate, put those names there (if answers are ridiculous, put Hitler). Now ask the kids where they think they fall on the line. Expect most of them to think they are closer to Jesus than to Hitler. But what did v. 19 say? We commit evil deeds. We love our sin. Romans 3:23 teaches this applies to everyone, not just "bad" people. The Bible actually teaches that in God's eyes we are a lot more like Hitler than we are like Jesus! Furthermore, then draw a little horizontal line across the very top. This represents God's requirement if you want to get into heaven on your own. Perfection!

No, this verse is talking about all of us! If you have sinned, you are guilty!

John 3:20-21: The Bible often divides all people into two groups and we see that here:

- 1) Those who continue in darkness and sin (v. 20). They hate the light. They want to continue in their sin so they hide from the light, otherwise they will be exposed. *
- 2) Those who come to the light. They confess and turn from their sin. They admit they have no hope apart from God. Then God invades them and changes them!

Key Point: What did Jesus teach Nicodemus in our skit? That one must be born-again. (John 3:3). That is what happens when we come to the Light. We come to Jesus Christ in faith, admitting we have sinned, recognizing He is our only hope, and then the Holy Spirit invades us, making us His own, never to leave us again! *

We then become a child of God and He takes care of us and helps us sin no more.

Read John 3:30: As John the Baptist says here, once we become a child of God, our lives look more and more like Jesus as the Holy Spirit changes us. He increases in us and our old nature decreases. This is called sanctification.

But this doesn't happen automatically to everyone! Remember, there are two groups of people. Which group are you in? **Read John 3:36:**

- 1) Those who believe and trust in Jesus Christ who is the Light, have eternal life.
- 2) Those who do not believe will come under God's wrath, because they will be punished for their sin forever.

As we read a few weeks ago in **John 1:12**, believing involves receiving. You are not a Christian just because your parents or grandparents are! God has no grandchildren! Everyone must make their own decision to believe and receive. What is your decision?

ABCs of salvation:

- Admit that you are a sinner and have broken God's law (1 John 1:8)
- Believe that Jesus Christ took your sins upon Himself when he died on the cross and that He has taken your punishment upon Himself (John 3:16, Romans 5:8)
- Confess your sin and that Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior (Romans 10:9-10)

Teachers: If any of your kids respond to this gospel call, please be sure to pray with them and talk about it with their parents afterwards.

Bring It Home

Lesson Theme: “Jesus: Savior of the World”

Scripture: John 3

Memory Verse: John 3:36 *“He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”*

Teachers/Parents: We spent some time talking about what it means to be born-again (John 3:3) and described it as a holy “invasion” of God taking over and claiming us for Himself. When you think of the word “invasion”, what do you think of? How does this accurately describe what God does for us in salvation considering our sinful state?

Discussion Questions:

- 1) **In John 3:2**, it mentions that Nicodemus came by night. We discussed how it was likely he came to Jesus in secret because he was embarrassed to be seen with Him. Can you think of a time when you were afraid to be known as a Christian? What can you do to overcome those fears?
- 2) **Read Luke 5:36-39**. How is this parable analogous to Jesus’s teaching to Nicodemus about being born-again (**John 3:3-8**)?
- 3) **Read Romans 6:1-4** which connects the ordinance of baptism back to the idea of being born-again. Baptism is the outward sign of the inward reality of being born-again to new life in Christ. Have you been baptized? If not, why not?
- 4) **John 3:16** is probably the most famous verse of the whole Bible. Why do you think that is?
- 5) **John 3:17-18** introduces the idea of condemnation for those who do not believe in Jesus Christ, God’s provision for sin. Why must we understand the “bad news” of God’s judgment of our sin before we can fully receive and appreciate the “good news” of the gospel?
- 6) **John 3:19-21** challenges all of us to look deep in our hearts and consider if we truly love Jesus or we love the darkness. Is anyone in your family committing sin in secret? Be real and give everyone an opportunity to confess and bring their deeds before the holy Light of Jesus Christ. Pray, ask for forgiveness, and help each other to walk with Jesus.
- 7) It’s been said that God has no grandchildren. This means that you aren’t a Christian just because your parents are. Everyone must choose to follow Jesus themselves. **Read John 3:36**. Which group are you all in?

Jesus and Nicodemus Script

Characters: Jesus and Nicodemus (Nick)

The act should begin by Jesus being off on His own with Nicodemus creeping up to Jesus looking over his shoulder to see if anyone is watching.

Nicodemus: Psst! Psst! Rabbi! You gotta second? We know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God with him. Are You doing these to restore God's kingdom of Israel?

Jesus: Nick: truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus: Whoa! Hold on there, Rabbi. How can I be born again when I am already old? Are you saying I'm supposed to give my Mom a call and ask her if I can re-enter into her belly?

Jesus: Know this for certain Nick: That unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I said to you, "You must be born again."

Nicodemus: Ummm...I don't get it. How can this be?

Jesus: C'mon Nick! Really? Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?

Nicodemus: Rabbi: Would you teach me?