



LESSON 5 NICODEMUS VISITS JESUS

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Sent Jesus Because He Loves Us

SCRIPTURE: John 3

GOD'S BIG STORY: A pharisee named Nicodemus is curious about Jesus, so he visits Him seeking answers. Jesus tells Nicodemus that he can have eternal life through Him!

WORD OF WONDER: God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world. He sent his Son to save the world through him. —John 3:16–17

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- PRE-SERVICE
 - OPTION 1: Interactive Game: Ask a Friend
 - OPTION 2: Interactive Game: Ball of Questions
- Welcome Question: If you could ask Jesus any question, what would you ask?
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship: Goodbye Yesterday, You Are
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- In Awe of God's Wonder
- Responding in Worship: Gratitude
- Blessing Your Kids



INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Sent Jesus Because He Loves Us

SCRIPTURE: John 3

WORD OF WONDER: John 3:16–17

This week you'll share the vital truth that God sent Jesus because He loves us. But before you start planning, preparing, and practicing, take time to let this familiar (but mind-blowing!) truth sink in: God sent Jesus because He loves you too. While we're leading kids, it can be easy to forget that we're a part of God's big story too—and that we can experience the same wonder that kids do!

I invite you to read about Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus in John 3:1–21. Imagine what Nicodemus may have felt as Jesus broke down His message of love and salvation. Did Nicodemus rejoice in knowing the truth? Did he fear the immediate danger the truth could pose for him? Did he sense that his life and all he thought he understood about God had just changed? Did he feel Jesus' love for Him?

For two millennia, the message Jesus spoke to Nicodemus has changed lives ... for eternity. God's love is for you. God's promise is for you. Jesus is for you. Remember it. Celebrate it. Cherish it. And let it change your life ... for eternity.

—Andrae Jones

Nextgen Pastor

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Nicodemus was a religious leader and Pharisee. The Pharisees were very influential Jewish religious leaders during the time of Jesus. They focused on legalistically keeping God's law and even went beyond that to keeping the traditions of the elders.

WHAT?

Nicodemus believed that Jesus was a teacher from God, but he seemed confused about what Jesus was teaching. Jesus explained salvation to Nicodemus, giving a deep theological explanation to someone who would have known God's Word inside and out!

WHERE?

Nicodemus visited Jesus in Jerusalem, where the religious leaders of the Pharisees lived and where the leaders of the Sadducees, who controlled the temple, would have been. Although there was great theological depth and religious practice in the city, many of these religious leaders missed Jesus' message.

WHEN?

Nicodemus came to visit Jesus at night, perhaps because he was afraid to be seen with Jesus. We don't know what Nicodemus believed, but he helped bury Jesus after His death (John 19). We can hope that Nicodemus came to believe Jesus is the Messiah!

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY:

Jesus' words to Nicodemus include the most popular verse in the Bible—John 3:16. This verse states plainly what we see throughout Scripture: God loves us so much that He made the way for us to be saved from our sins and live forever with Him. The way is Jesus!

LESSON 5 ELEMENTARY & PRETEEN

Large Group

Spark curiosity and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Sent Jesus Because He Loves Us

SCRIPTURE: John 3

WORD OF WONDER: John 3:16-17

As kids arrive...

Around 20 minutes before service begins, display series theme loop. Play high-energy music in the background.

LG Leader walks around the room on mic and greets kids by name as they enter the room. Be extra intentional about introducing yourself to new parents and kids.

SLIDE: SERIES THEME LOOP

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN (2min OR 30sec) Start a countdown to begin game 10 minutes prior to service start)

5-7 minutes prior to service start, choose from one of the games below:

Interactive Game Option 1: Ask a Friend

SUPPLIES: writing utensils (1 per kid)

RESOURCES: Ask a Friend Sheet (1 per 2 kids) ****REQUEST only**

Ahead of time, print a copy of the Ask a Friend Sheet, one for every two kids. Display the Ask a Friend Slide and gather the kids. Ask kids to get into pairs and five each pair an Ask a Friend Sheet and a writing utensil. **Let's play a game called Ask a Friend!** Hold up an Ask a Friend Sheet. **First, write your names at the top of your sheets.** Pause for kids to write their names. **Your job is to ask the questions on your sheet to the kids and leaders in this room. If a kid or leader answers "yes" to a question, have them write their name on your sheet in the box next to that question.** (Younger kids can simply write the first letter of their first name.) **Then move to other questions and find new people to ask. Your goal is to get someone different to write their name next to all of the questions. The first pair to have a different name in each box is the winner!** Give kids time to play. Try playing alongside them and seeing how many questions you can get answered!

Name: _____	
Ask a Friend Sheet	
Ask a friend 10 of the questions. If the friend answers YES, have that person add their name into the box.	
Do you have a sister? Do you have a pet? Do you have a scooter? Do you like spinach? Do you wear glasses? Have you ever played on a team? Have you ever visited another state or province? Have you ever washed someone else's hair? Have you ever had a sunburn? Have you ever broken a bone in your arm or leg? Can you speak a different language? Can you ride a bike? Can you do a cartwheel? Can you write in cursive? Can you whistle?	
Wonder Ink <small>LESSON 5 ASK A FRIEND SHEET ELEMENTARY</small>	



Leader Tip: For Younger Kids. If your group includes pre-readers or struggling readers, pair kids up to work as teams. Just be sure each pair includes one strong reader.

Make It Inclusive: Some kids struggle to remain calm during competitions and can become frustrated if they feel they're losing or falling behind. If needed, remove the competitive element and simply invite kids to get names on as many questions as they can with no specified "winner."

Gather the kids back together. **Raise your hand if you learned something new about a friend during this game.** Pause for kids to respond. **Asking people questions is a great way to get to know them better!** **Display the Nicodemus Wonder Truth Slide.** Today in God's big story, we'll hear about a religious teacher named Nicodemus who had heard a lot about Jesus but wanted to know more about Him. So Nicodemus asked Jesus a very important question. Jesus' answer points to an important truth: **GOD SENT JESUS BECAUSE HE LOVES US.** That is our Wonder Truth today!



Interactive Game Option 2: Ball of Questions

SUPPLIES: beach balls (1 per 6–8 kids), permanent marker (prep only)

Ahead of time, inflate beach balls, about one for every 6–8 kids. On each ball, write one get-to-know-you question in each section. (Most beach balls are divided into six colorful sections.) You can use these questions or your own:

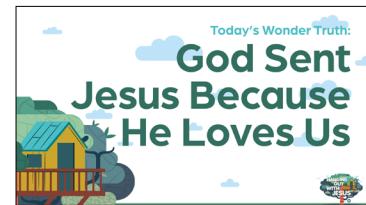
- If you could only eat one food for a week, what would it be?
- If you could have any superpower, what would it be?
- What is your favorite thing to do after school?
- What is one thing you wish you were really good at?
- If you could visit any place in the world, where would you go?
- What's something that makes you laugh?

Display the Ball of Questions Slide and gather the kids. Help kids form groups of 6–8 and have each form a circle, or if your group is small, keep everyone together. **Let's play a game called Ball of Questions!** Give each group a beach ball with questions written on it. **I have written questions on your beach ball. When I say, "Go," the person holding the ball will toss it gently to someone else in the circle. That person will catch the ball and look at their right thumb. Whatever question their right thumb is on, or closest to, is the question they will read out loud and answer. When they're done answering, they will toss the ball to another person who will do the same thing. OK, ready, go!** Kids toss the ball and answer questions. Play until everyone has had a chance to answer at least one question.



Make It Inclusive: Sharing out loud in a group can cause some kids to feel anxious. Let everyone know that they can simply say, "Pass," and toss the ball to the next person if they don't want to answer a question.

Gather everyone back together. **Raise your hand if you learned something new about a friend during this game.** Pause for kids to respond. **Asking people questions is a great way to get to know them better!** **Display the Nicodemus Wonder Truth Slide.** Today in God's big story, we'll hear about a religious teacher named Nicodemus who had heard a lot about Jesus but wanted to know more about Him. So, Nicodemus asked Jesus a very important question. Jesus' answer points to an important truth: **GOD SENT JESUS BECAUSE HE LOVES US.** That is our Wonder Truth today!



Welcome Question

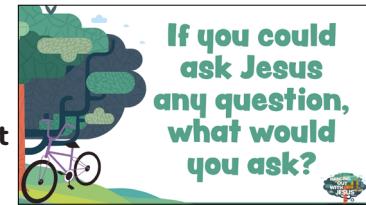
SUPPLIES: paper, coloring utensils, poster board OR , whiteboard, dry-erase markers (if needed)

SLIDE: WELCOME QUESTION

At service start time, draw kids' attention to the Welcome Question.

Invite kids to write answers on the poster board or whiteboard.

Those are fantastic questions! Today we'll hear in God's big story about a man who had a very important question for Jesus. And I can't wait to tell you how Jesus responded! But first, it's time for small group!



Small Group

Introduce small group time. While kids are in small group, consider sitting in the groups for a few minutes each. Engage and interact as is appropriate.

Countdown

After about 15 minutes of small group, give a 5 minute warning and begin the countdown.

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN

"Hey everyone! Welcome to our Large Group Worship time! My name is _____ and I'm excited to take this time to worship God, review what we just read, and talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning about God! We are going to pray as we prepare our hearts to worship God!"

Declaring God's Wonder

Display the Nicodemus Declaration Slide. Read each line boldly and invite kids to repeat after you.

Thank You, God, that You are good! (Kids repeat.)
You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Kids repeat.)
And when I follow Jesus, I am Your kid! (Kids repeat.)
You know me, love me, and lead me. (Kids repeat.)
You sent Your Son, Jesus, for us, (Kids repeat.)
All because You love me! (Kids repeat.)
My life can tell of Your wonder! (Kids repeat.)

Thank You, God, that You are good! (Repeat)
You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Repeat)
And when I follow Jesus, I am Your kid! (Repeat)
You know me, love me, and lead me. (Repeat)
You sent Your Son, Jesus for us, (Repeat)
All because You love me! (Repeat)
My life can tell of Your wonder! (Repeat)

HAVING OUT WITH JESUS

Prayer of Invitation

Lead kids in a prayer of invitation before entering into worship and God's big story: **God, thank You for loving us and sending Your Son, Jesus, to us. We invite Your Holy Spirit to lead us and teach us today. Help us to trust You with our questions and recognize how deep Your love is for us. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

Today we'll hear about an amazing conversation Jesus had with a religious teacher named Nicodemus. And we'll learn that God sent Jesus because He loves us! Let's praise God now for His love!

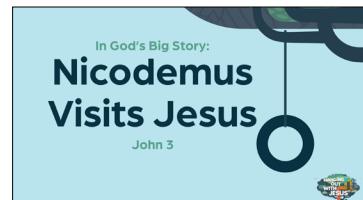
WORSHIP VIDEOS: Goodbye Yesterday, You Are

God's Big Story

Display the Nicodemus Title Slide. Tell kids today's true story comes from the Bible and is found in John, the fourth book in the New Testament. (Jesus' friend and disciple, John).

Let's watch part of God's big story directly from the Bible. Afterward, we'll watch and experience more of the story!

VIDEO: GOD'S BIG STORY



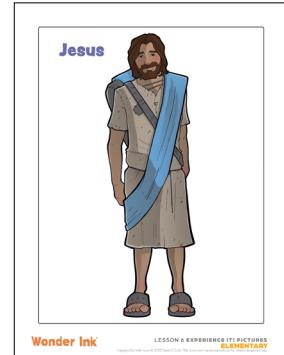
LESSON 5 NICODEMUS VISITS JESUS **EXPERIENCE IT! SCRIPT**

SUPPLIES: baby doll (optional), toy snake (optional), wooden cross (optional), globe (optional)

RESOURCES: Experience It! Pictures (1 set/LG)

Before kids arrive, print one set of the Experience It! Pictures. (Each picture should be on a separate sheet of paper.) For the baby, snake, cross, and globe, you can use the pictures or find simple props—a baby doll, toy snake, wooden cross, and globe. The pictures (and optional props) are visuals to help kids engage with the story.

Be sure there is space in the front of your room for eight kids to stand side-by-side as kids will come to the front and hold each picture or prop. (If your group is smaller than eight, some kids can hold more than one picture or prop.)



For many people who were waiting for God's chosen Savior—the Messiah—Jesus did not look or act anything like what the Jewish people or leaders expected.

Choose a kid to come up and hold the picture of Jesus for everyone to see. She can remain until the end of the story.

The people were waiting for a mighty king who would help them fight the Roman , who ruled and mistreated them. They were waiting for someone to make Israel strong again. But Jesus didn't seem to be interested in that.

Because of this, some people were against Jesus or afraid of what He was trying to do. Still, there were plenty of people who were curious about Jesus. One of these curious people was a Pharisee named Nicodemus.

Choose a kid to come up and hold the picture of Nicodemus. He can remain until the end of the story.

Though all Pharisees were Jewish religious leaders, Nicodemus was also a respected member of the Jewish council. Nicodemus had heard about Jesus preaching and healing throughout the area and wanted to know more about Him. However, many of the other Pharisees thought Jesus was dangerous—they didn't trust the things He was saying about God.

Choose a kid to come up and hold the picture of the Pharisee. She can stay until the end of the story.

Nicodemus was so curious about Jesus that he came to see Jesus at night when no one would see him. Nicodemus said to Jesus, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. We know that God is with you. If he weren't, you couldn't do the signs you are doing” (John 3:2).

In the kingdom of God, God is in charge and all the broken parts of the world are being fixed. Jesus wanted Nicodemus to understand more about the kingdom. “What I'm about to tell you is true,” Jesus said. “No one can see God's kingdom unless they are born again” (John 3:3).

“How can someone be born when they are old?” asked Nicodemus. “They can't go back inside their mother! They can't be born a second time!” (John 3:4).

Choose a kid to come up and hold the picture of a baby (or baby doll) and stay until the end of the story.

Jesus replied, “What I’m about to tell you is true. No one can enter God’s kingdom unless they are born with water and the Holy Spirit. People give birth to people. But the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised when I say, ‘You must all be born again’ ” (John 3:5–7).

“How can this be?” Nicodemus wondered (John 3:9).

Then Jesus explained that long ago, before God led His people into the promised land, they lived in the wilderness for forty years.

Choose a kid to come up and hold the picture of the wilderness with the number 40. He can remain there until the story is done.

During this time, they encountered venomous snakes who killed many of the people.

Choose a kid to come up and hold the picture of a snake (or toy snake). She can stay until the end of the story.

God told Moses to make a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Anyone who was bitten could look up at the snake and remain alive. Moses did what God asked, and the people who looked up at the bronze snake did not die.

“Just as Moses lifted up a bronze snake in the wilderness, the Son of Man must also be lifted up,” Jesus explained. “Then everyone who believes may live forever in Him.”

Jesus was revealing something completely new to Nicodemus. He—Jesus—was the Son of Man. He would be lifted up on a cross, and every person who looks to Him would not die.

Choose a kid to come up and hold the picture of the cross (or wooden cross). He can remain there until the end of the story.

Jesus said it this way: “God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life” (John 3:16).

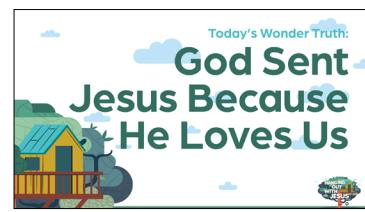
Choose a kid to come up and hold the picture of the world (or globe).

Jesus showed us that God wants to save all people from their sins—the wrong things they do. He wants to save everyone from death and bring them to new life. God sent Jesus to be the One everyone can look to for new life. God sent Jesus because He loves us.

Give a big thank you to all the kids holding pictures (or props)! Collect the pictures (and props) and have kids return to their seats.

Connecting the Wonder Truth

Display the Nicodemus Wonder Truth Slide. Our Wonder Truth today is **GOD SENT JESUS BECAUSE HE LOVES US**. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.



Jesus' words to Nicodemus include the most popular verse in the Bible—John 3:16. This verse states plainly what we see throughout God's big story: God loves us so much that He made the way for us to be saved from our sins—the wrong things we say and do that separate us from Him—and live forever with Him. The way is Jesus!

In Awe of God's Wonder

Spend a few moments allowing kids to think about the wonder of God's story.

Of everything Jesus said to Nicodemus in today's story, what was your favorite? Allow kids to answer freely.

Is there anything you don't understand in today's story? Allow kids to ask questions, but keep in mind you don't need to answer them all. Let the questions remain unanswered and invite kids to ponder the questions other kids ask.

Responding in Worship

SLIDE: RESPONDING IN WORSHIP

Talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning with next steps such as tithing, prayer, asking questions, and worship. Encourage kids to ask their SG leaders any questions they were wondering during the lesson.

***Introduce this next song and invite kids to respond and participate in worship. See the "Worship Posture Tutorial" on the RBKids Resource Page.



WORSHIP VIDEO: GRATITUDE

Blessing Your Kids

Speak a blessing over your kids, as a group or as individuals. If you bless kids individually, insert each name into the blessing.

Blessing: God loves you so much that He sent Jesus for you. May you always remember that God's love for you never ends. God is for you, and you are His!