



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 Jesus seeking answers. Jesus tells Nicodemus that he can have eternal life through Him!

WORD OF WONDER: God so loved the world. He gave His one and only Son. —from John 3:16

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Curiosity Activity: Have You Ever?
- Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship: Always With Me, Your Love for Me
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Prayer and Blessing



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: From John 3:16

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 EARLY CHILDHOOD

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

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Welcome

Slide: Series Welcome Loop

As kids arrive...

Walk around the room and welcome as many kids as possible by showing excitement that they have joined you. Give high-fives, fist bumps, encourage them to sit on the floor in their spots, and ask questions about their week.

Video: Countdown

Welcome kids to worship time. Introduce yourself by name.

Curiosity Activity: Have You Ever?

Encourage kids to stand in the middle of the room. **I'm going to ask some questions. If you answer, "yes" to the question, run to the wall on the right** (point to the correct wall). **If you answer, "no" to the question, run to the wall on the left** (point to the correct wall). **Before asking each question, you'll all come back to the middle of the room.**

Use the following questions as you play the game:

Have you ever ...

- broken a bone?
- jumped off of a diving board?
- played in the rain?
- been on an airplane?
- ridden a tractor?
- touched a worm?
- worn your pajamas all day?
- played in a treehouse?
- eaten brussels sprouts?
- sang in the bathtub?
- visited another state?
- stayed up all night?
- broken a rule or disobeyed?

We've all done things we shouldn't. That's called sin. We'll learn today how God helps us and loves us! In today's story, a man named Nicodemus had a very important question to ask Jesus, and Jesus' answer helped Nicodemus understand today's Wonder Truth: **GOD SENT JESUS BECAUSE HE LOVES US.**

Leader Tip: Kids will be running in multiple directions at the same time so remind them to pay attention so they don't run into their friends.

Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions

RESOURCES: Tac the Cat puppet

Leader: Ladies and gentlemen! Boys and girls! Introducing the fantastic, fearless feline, the curious question-asking cat—Tac! Give Tac a round of applause!

Tac the Cat: Well, that was an introduction! Thank you! Thank you!

Leader: Tac, I had an idea for today. What if we switched roles?

Tac the Cat: What are you talking about? Do you want to be a cat? You can't be a cat! You don't have any fur. Plus, cats wear collars, and you don't have one.

Leader: No! That's not what I mean!

Tac the Cat: I'm confused. You want me to hold you like you are holding me? I think you might be too heavy.

Leader: No! That's not what I mean either!

Tac the Cat: I don't get you sometimes.

Leader: Tac, when I say let's switch spots, I mean you are the one always asking questions. I'm curious about some things and I wanted to be the one to ask the questions today.

Tac the Cat: Oh, now I get it! That sounds fun! So, what are you curious about?

Leader: I have lots of things! Here's my first one: Have you ever worn your pajamas all day?

Tac the Cat: Nope. I don't wear clothes. I'm a furry feline so my fur is my outfit every day.

Leader: Interesting. Next question: Have you ever coughed up a furball?

Tac the Cat: Are you serious right now? No! That's gross. I don't eat my fur. I eat cat food. I like my cat food with gravy all over it. It's so good!

Leader: Strange! OK—last question. This one is more serious. Have you ever wondered what it would be like to live forever with Jesus?

Tac the Cat: Yes! I am curious about that. I bet it would be amazing. Living with Jesus forever would be so awesome! But now I have a question.

Leader: Tac, I thought we switched spots.

Tac the Cat: We did! But please can I ask just one?

Leader: Yes. What's your question?

Tac the Cat: I'm confused. You want me to hold you like you are holding me? I think you might be too heavy.

Leader: No! That's not what I mean either!

Tac the Cat: I don't get you sometimes.

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Tac the Cat: Yes! I am curious about that. I bet it would be amazing. Living with Jesus forever would be so awesome! But now I have a question.

Leader: Tac, I thought we switched spots.

Tac the Cat: We did! But please can I ask just one?

Leader: Yes. What's your question?

Tac the Cat: How do you live with Jesus forever? What does that mean?

Leader: Tac, I'm glad you asked. Today's story is about a man named Nicodemus. He asked Jesus a question like yours. And Jesus told him how we can live with God forever.

Tac the Cat: Oh, that sounds like a great story. Nicodemus sounds curious like me! Now I need to go find my cat friends and see if they want to play the switching places game too.

Have you ever been curious about something? Let's take a moment and think: What questions are you curious about that you would want to ask Jesus? Allow the kids to respond. Who do you talk to when you have questions about God? Allow the kids to respond.

Today's Wonder Truth is GOD SENT JESUS BECAUSE HE LOVES US. Today we'll discover that God sent Jesus because He loves us.

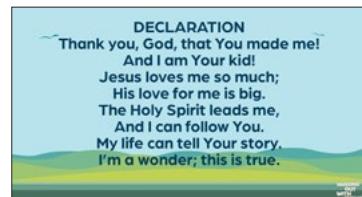
Declaring God's Wonder

Show the Early Childhood Declaration Slide and encourage the kids to say the statements and do the motions with you.

Thank You, God, that You made me! (Kids repeat words and motions.) Make prayer hands, then point up and then to yourself.

And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands on your hips.



Jesus loves me so much; (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

His love for me is big. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.

The Holy Spirit leads me, (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Bring your arms down from above, making a path in front of you.

And I can follow You. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

March in place like you're following the leader.

My life can tell Your story. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

I'm a wonder; this is true. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands up, shake your fingers, and celebrate ("praise hands").

Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **God, thank You for sending Jesus because You love us. We invite Your Holy Spirit to be with us today. We want to listen and know what it means to follow You. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

Today, we'll learn that God loves us so much, He sent His one and only Son to us. Let's sing together and be reminded today about God's amazing love for us.

Play worship videos Always With Me, Your Love for Me

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bible

Bible Time Rhyme

Say the Bible time rhyme (with motions) each week before the Bible story to remind kids that what they're about to hear is part of God's big story.

I open my Bible, and what do I see? (Hold your hands together, then open your palms, as if opening a book.)

God's big story, waiting for me! (Point to yourself.)

Let's hear part of God's big story, which comes from the book of John in the Bible. It's in the New Testament and is the last of the four Gospels—the first four books of the New Testament.

[VIDEO : GODS BIG STORY](#)

GOD'S BIG STORY SCRIPT

RESOURCES: God's Big Story Pictures (1 set/LG)

Ahead of time, print one set of the God's Big Story Pictures.

Jesus did God's work and taught people about God's kingdom. The kingdom means God is in charge and all wrong things in the world are being made right. God's people waited for a long time for the promised Savior to come. And Jesus was not what some people expected. Some people thought He would be a mighty king. Some people loved and followed Him. Some people did not understand Jesus. Some did not like Him. Some were curious about Him. One of these curious people was a Pharisee, or a religious leader, named Nicodemus.



Nicodemus was an important leader and teacher. Invite a kid to hold the picture of Nicodemus and stay until the end of the story. **Nicodemus heard about Jesus preaching and healing in the area. He wanted to know more about Jesus.** Invite a kid to hold the picture of Jesus and stay until the end of the story. **But many other Pharisees were nervous about Jesus. They did not trust what Jesus said about God.** Nicodemus was so curious about Jesus that he came to see Jesus at night when no one would see him. Nicodemus said to Jesus, "... 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).

All people sin and need to be forgiven. Sin is anything we think, say, or do that is not what God wants. In God's kingdom, God is in charge and fixing all the parts of the world broken by sin. 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). Invite a kid to hold the picture of a baby and stay until the end of the story.

"How can someone be born when they are old?" asked Nicodemus. Invite a kid to hold up the question mark picture and stay until the end of the story. **"They can't go back inside their mother! They can't be born a second time!"** (John 3:4).

Jesus told Nicodemus that no one gets to God's kingdom unless they are born again with water and the Holy Spirit. Nicodemus was still confused. What did Jesus mean?

Then Jesus said that a long time ago, God's people lived in the wilderness for 40 years. There were venomous snakes who killed many people. God told Moses—the leader of God's people—to make a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. If a snake bit them, they could look up at the bronze snake, and they would not die. Moses did what God said, and the people who looked up at the bronze snake did not die.

Jesus explained that just like Moses lifted up that bronze snake in the wilderness, the Son of Man must be lifted up too. Invite a kid to hold the picture of a cross and stay until the end of the story.

Jesus told Nicodemus something he had never heard. Jesus was the Son of Man. He would be lifted up on a cross, and every person who trusts Him would live forever in God's kingdom.

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). Invite a kid to hold the picture of the world and stay until the end of the story.

Jesus showed us that God wants to save all people from their sins—all the things people think, say, or do that are not what God wants. God wants to save everyone and give them new life. God sent Jesus to be the One everyone can look to for new life. God sent Jesus because He loves us.

Collect the pictures and have kids return to their seats.

Connecting the Wonder Truth

Slide: Wonder Truth

Ask the following question to help kids connect the Wonder Truth to God's big story:

Our Wonder Truth today is GOD SENT JESUS BECAUSE HE LOVES US. Where did you see our Wonder Truth happen 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 says the most important part of God's big story: 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!

Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish their activity, pray with them and thank God for loving us.

When I say, “loving,” or “love,” put your hands on your heart. Let’s pray and talk to God.

God, thank You for loving (hands on heart) us. Thank You for sending Jesus for us. We love (hands on heart) You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands are open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: God loves you so much that He sent Jesus to you. May you know His love is big! May you always remember there is nothing you can do to make Him not love you. God loves you, and you’re His precious child!