

LESSON 9

Nicodemus

JOHN 3:1-21



BIBLE TRUTH

YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

SUPPLIES: skit helper or puppet

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: *The Gospel Story Bible* (story 87)

3. BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION 5 MIN

Where Is the Gospel?

SUPPLIES: Bible (ESV preferred); Review “Where Is the Gospel?” to prepare

4. SNACK QUESTIONS 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: snack food and beverage

5. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5–10 MIN

6. ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS (CHOOSE ONE OR MORE) 20–30 MIN

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES: coloring page for NT Lesson 9—one for each child; markers or crayons

Turn off the Lights

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a dark sheet
- ✓ bright flashlight

Born Again

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard
- ✓ black marker
- ✓ whiteboard eraser
- ✓ whiteboard cleaner and cloth

7. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

TOTAL 60–75 MIN

THE LESSON

OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

In today's lesson the children will learn about Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus.

Work out the following skit with a puppet or helper.

Have your puppet or helper wear a fabric remnant over their head as a shawl. They should seem a bit nervous and be looking back and forth as though they are afraid someone might see them.

TEACHER: Hi, Puppet. How can I help you?

PUPPET: Is anyone looking? I don't want anyone to see me.

TEACHER: Why don't you want anyone to see you?

PUPPET: I am teaching in another classroom and I don't know much about today's lesson. I need to find out what it's about, but I'm afraid that if people see me coming to you they will think I'm not a very good teacher.

TEACHER: Oh, Puppet. We all have to ask for help now and then. It is OK. What do you need to know?

PUPPET: How do you say the name of the guy we are learning about? Is it Ny-shoo-demus or Neece-ood-emoosy?

TEACHER: Kids, can you help Pup pet out? Can any of you help him learn how to say the name of the Pharisee who came to see Jesus at night? *(If the children don't know whisper the answer to them.)*

PUPPET: Why did Ni-c-o-demus come at night?

TEACHER: Well, I was just about to read the story to the children, but I will tell you. Nicodemus came at night for the very same reason you put that shawl over your head when you came into the classroom.

PUPPET: He didn't know how to say his own name?

TEACHER: No, he was afraid that other people would see him and think poorly of him for coming to Jesus. That's a lot like you not wanting anyone to know you were asking for help.

PUPPET: *(looking at the clock)* Oh my, it is time for me to read the story to my children. Thank you, thank you for the help. I've got to go. Ni-c-o-de-mus. OK, I think I've got it.

Pray for the remainder of the class time before moving forward with the lesson.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read story 87, “Nicodemus,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION 5 MIN

After reading the story, use the following questions to involve the children in a discussion:

- **Who came to Jesus?**
(Nicodemus came to Jesus. He was an important religious leader, similar to a pastor in the church.)
- **Why did Nicodemus come to Jesus at night?**
(Nicodemus came at night so no one would know that he wanted to know more about what Jesus was teaching.)
- **What attracted Nicodemus to Jesus?**
(Nicodemus was amazed by the wonders Jesus did.)

Where Is the Gospel? _____

How does today’s Bible story fit into God’s greater plan of redemption?

The third chapter of John introduces the idea of the new birth: being born again. Like our first birth, this new birth is not something we can do for ourselves; it is something that God does. When the Holy Spirit makes us alive or born again, we are given a new heart, and our eyes are opened to believe the truth of the gospel, that Jesus Christ was “lifted up” (John 3:14) on the cross so that all who look upon him for their salvation will be saved.

Moses lifting up the bronze serpent in the wilderness (Numbers 21:8–9) was a picture of how God planned to save his people from their sin. Bitten by the snakes, the Israelites could do nothing to save themselves. But, because of the grace and mercy of God, if they looked to the serpent on the pole, God healed them. Nicodemus was a teacher of Israel yet he failed to see that our salvation is by the mercy and grace of God, not by our own works. Perhaps it was when he saw Jesus “lifted up” on the cross that he finally understood and believed.

■ **Who did Nicodemus think Jesus was?**

(Nicodemus thought Jesus was a teacher sent by God.)

SNACK QUESTIONS 10 MIN

While the children are eating the snack, engage them by asking the following questions:

■ **What did Jesus tell Nicodemus that confused him?**

(Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again. This confused Nicodemus because he knew that a man could not go back into his mom's body to be born again.)

■ **What does it mean to be born again?**

(Jesus told Nicodemus that a man must be born of water—his natural birth—and also born of the Spirit. That is when the Holy Spirit comes into a person and changes his heart so that he can love God.)

■ **Why did Jesus say being born again is important?**

(Jesus told Nicodemus that unless a man is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. Jesus was explaining to Nicodemus God's plan to save his people. God would take their sinful hearts and change them, make them as if they were born again, so that they would be able to understand God's plan.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5-10 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult.

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS. 20-30 MIN

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 9—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

■ **Who is Jesus standing with in the picture?**

(Nicodemus)

■ **What did Jesus tell Nicodemus?**

(Read John 3:16–18 again to the children. Keep helping them until they are able to share the main parts of the verses.)

■ **Why did Jesus need to come into the world to save us?**

(Jesus came into the world because of our sin. All men would have had to be punished by death and separated from God forever. God sent his Son to rescue rebellious sinners.)

Turn off the Lights

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a dark sheet
- ✓ bright flashlight

Darken the room. Explain to the children that you are going to pretend that they are the shadows of sin in the darkness. Turn off the classroom lights and tell the children to lurk about and move their arms and hands in scary ways to pretend they are sin.

In the center of the room seat a helper holding the flashlight (turned off) and covered with a dark sheet. The flashlight represents the light of God. At some point pull the sheet away while the seated helper turns on the flashlight. Have the children scurry away from the light to look for a dark place to hide. Tell them to look for shadows of any kind to try to hide in. Explain that in the light of God, none of us can hide.

When the exercise is over, turn on the lights and explain to the class that not only is God light, but also that in him there is no darkness at all. Share with them how amazing it is that a God who is described as light would come to die for sinful wicked people who are described as darkness.

Born Again**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ whiteboard
- ✓ dry erase marker
- ✓ whiteboard eraser
- ✓ whiteboard cleaner and cloth

Tell the children that our lives are like the whiteboard. (Draw a big sad face on the board and the word “SIN.”) Tell them that although we are made in the image of God, we have a big problem: we all sin.

Ask the children to give you ways that we sin. Each time they come up with a new way, draw a letter “S” for sin on the board. When they can’t think of any more sins, ask them to describe the board. They should say that it is ugly or not so good.

Tell the class that Jesus told Nicodemus that he needed to be born again or born from above. Jesus meant that Nicodemus needed God to make his heart brand new by forgiving his sin and taking it away. Jesus didn’t mean that Nicodemus was supposed to be born all over again like a baby, but that he needed his sins washed away.

Take the eraser and erase the board while you are talking. Tell the class that we try to erase our sins by ourselves but no matter how much we try, the stain of our sin remains. (Point out how, even after you erase the board, you can see where the lines were—still see the sin.)

Then, using the cleaner and the cloth, clean off the board so no marks remain and it is as clean as it was when new. Say, “Jesus knew that only by believing in his death on the cross can our sins be truly wiped away.”

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Take time at the end of class to thank God for what you learned today. Include parts of your Bible lesson in your prayer as a way for the children to remember today’s lesson.

LESSON 9 - NICODEMUS

