



ONLINE GROUP PLAN

Spring 2020 // Unit 21: Jesus Among the People
Session 3: Jesus Teaches About New Birth

Suggested Use Date: 5/24/2020

For use with The Gospel Project Leader Guide and Daily Discipleship Guide



PREPARATION

Best Practices for Leading an Online Group



PRAY for your group members and for God to grant you insight as you study and prepare for your Bible study session. Do this throughout the week.



SCHEDULE your group's online Bible study using the online meeting tool you prefer. Invite group members and guests to participate using a meeting ID if required by your online meeting tool. [Click here](#) to view a Best Practices document for online groups.



SEND a digital copy of the next session in the *Daily Discipleship Guide* to group members who do not have a print copy. Encourage your group members to have this session handy for your group's upcoming online Bible study and the five daily Bible readings for the week following your session.



CONNECT with your group via email or text messaging early in the week.

Create your own message:

- Remind group members to follow up your previous online study with the daily readings in their *Daily Discipleship Guide*.
- Briefly tell the group the title of your next Bible study, why it is important, and what they will learn.
- Remind group members when your group will meet online.

Or copy and paste this suggested wording into the email or text message to your group:

WEEKLY MESSAGE

Remember to keep up with your daily devotions for Unit 21, Session 2 this week. And consider ways to discuss insights and questions with others from the group.

Outbreaks are a clear reminder that as human beings, we can only control so much that happens in our world. This week in our study of John 3 in Unit 21, Session 3, we will learn that like the wind, we cannot control or predict the work of the Holy Spirit—the new birth is a gift from the Father, received through the Son, and produced in us by the Spirit. This miraculous gift proves that our triune God can bring transformation at any time and in any place, including in nations facing quarantine protocol.

We will meet at (add time) using (name of online tool). Here is the link to our meeting: (add meeting ID if your online tool doesn't do that automatically).



PREPARE to lead your group's Bible study.

- **Study** the Bible passage(s).
- **Listen** to *The Gospel Project* for Adults Weekly Leader Training Podcast. Go to gospelproject.com/podcasts for an overview of the main points and key ideas from each session.
- **Visit** *The Gospel Project* website for additional leader helps at gospelproject.com/blog and gospelproject.com/additional-resources.
- **Create** your teaching plan for guiding your group's online Bible study experience. Use the Online Group Plan on the next pages as a starting point, modifying it for your group as needed. Consult *The Gospel Project* for Adults *Leader Pack* and *Biblical Illustrator* for additional ideas and resources.



REMIND your group members early in the week via another email or text message to follow up the weekly study with the daily devotions in their *Daily Discipleship Guide*.

- Include a quote from a *Daily Discipleship Guide* devotion, a question, or an insight you found helpful to encourage this step of personal discipleship and growth for your group members.



HELPFUL LINKS

- *The Gospel Project* main landing page: gospelproject.com
- Digital version of *The Gospel Project*: curriculum.lifeway.com
- *The Gospel Project* leader helps: gospelproject.com/additional-resources
- *The Gospel Project* podcast: gospelproject.com/podcasts
- Free Coronavirus links and leader helps: lifeway.com/coronavirus



ONLINE GROUP PLAN

The Gospel Project // Spring 2020 // Unit 21: Jesus Among the People // Session 3: Jesus Teaches About New Birth

NOTES

GREET people as they join your online group. **SHARE** the following story: When he was three years old, Kendall showed signs of Kawasaki disease, a rare and potentially fatal condition that causes inflammation in blood vessels and can damage the heart. On his second day in the hospital, Kendall had a heart attack, and an aneurysm on one of his swollen arteries burst, filling his chest cavity with blood. He survived with immediate surgery, but his heart was damaged beyond repair. Yet within a week, Kendall had received a donor heart and is alive and healthy today (*Daily Discipleship Guide [DDG] p. 114; Leader Guide [LDR] p. 127*).

ASK: What thoughts and feelings might you have if you needed a new heart and then received one?

TRANSITION: *Kendall's condition could not be solved by patching up his heart; he needed a heart transplant. Like Kendall, our hearts are damaged beyond repair with the spiritual disease of sin. Jesus taught that only through a completely new birth can we enter the kingdom of God. New birth is a gift of God the Father through the work of the Holy Spirit through faith in the Son of God.*

READ: Ask a volunteer to read **John 3:3-8** (DDG p. 115; LDR p. 128).

EXPLAIN Jesus' teaching about our inability to solve our sin problem and the necessity of spiritual new birth by the Holy Spirit (DDG p. 115; LDR p. 128).

FILL IN THE BLANKS: Provide group members with the answers for the essential Christian doctrine call-out in their DDG (p. 115): **"Regeneration":** *Regeneration takes place at the beginning of the Christian life and is the miraculous transformation, or the new birth, that takes place within an individual through the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit (John 3:3-8; Titus 3:5). It is the divine side of conversion (a person turning to Christ in repentance and faith), being the work of God within a person's life that causes him or her to be born again, a work that human effort is unable to produce.*



ASK: How has the storyline of the Bible through the Old Testament demonstrated the need for the new birth?

HIGHLIGHT God's breathing in Adam (Gen. 2:7) and Ezekiel's vision of dry bones (Ezek. 37:1-14) as answers to the previous question (DDG p. 115; LDR p. 129).

READ: Ask a volunteer to read **John 3:9-15** (DDG p. 116; LDR p. 130).

EXPLAIN that only Jesus, the eternally begotten Son of God, possessed the knowledge and authority to explain the new birth (DDG p. 116; LDR p. 130).

ASK: What are some reasons we should trust Jesus' teaching?

EXPLAIN: Show how Jesus presented Himself as the answer to Nicodemus's question "How can these things be?" by comparing His eventual work on the cross to the bronze snake in the wilderness (Num. 21:4-9). What was once impossible on our own is now made possible in Christ, whose life, death, and resurrection grant us new birth and eternal life by faith (DDG p. 116; LDR p. 131).

READ: Ask a volunteer to read **John 3:16-18** (DDG p. 117; LDR p. 132).

EXPLAIN: Emphasize that the new birth is a Trinitarian work: Salvation is a gift given to us by God the Father, obtained for us through God the Son's death and resurrection, and initiated in us by God the Holy Spirit (DDG p. 117; LDR p. 132).

SHARE YOUR SCREEN with a PDF of **Pack Item 13: Life Itself Died** from the Leader Pack. Read the Augustine quote on this poster. Then stop the screen share and **ASK:** What are some ways we should respond to God for the gift of His Son?

HIGHLIGHT: Stress that God loves the world not because the world is lovable but because love is His nature (1 John 4:8,16); therefore, God sent His Son so we would not be condemned (DDG p. 117; LDR pp. 132-133).



NOTES

FILL IN THE BLANKS: Provide group members with the answers for the essential Christian doctrine call-out in their DDG (p. 117): **“God Is Love”**: To say that God is love is to say that God is the essence of love, or that perfect love both resides and resonates within God Himself—one God in three Persons. The imperfect love that human beings share between one another is a dim reflection, a **sign** that points to the perfect love that resides within God. The greatest act of love by God toward humans isn’t the giving of earthly goods but the giving of **Himself** in Christ so that we might become **reconciled** to Him.

ASK: How does the loving God of the Bible contrast with the ways the world views Him?

CHALLENGE group members to reflect on and respond to the My Mission questions, especially for sharing God’s love through the gospel (DDG p. 118; LDR p. 134). **ENCOURAGE** group members to use the daily devotions in the week ahead. **ASK** group members to share **prayer requests** and then **PRAY**.

NEXT STEPS



- Contact group members regularly to pray with them. Encourage them to devote some personal quiet time with God this week with the daily devotions in the Daily Discipleship Guide that follow up on today’s session.
- Send a digital copy of the next session to group members who do not have a print copy.
- Repeat the process outlined in the Preparation section of this document.