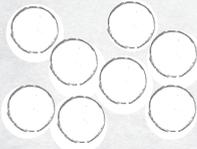


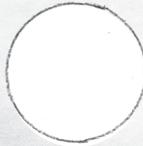
## Jesus Met Nicodemus

- 1 **BIBLE PASSAGE:** John 3:1-21  
**MAIN POINT:** Jesus told Nicodemus about God’s plan.  
**KEY PASSAGE:** John 14:6  
**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Who did Jesus say He is? Jesus said He is God’s Son.

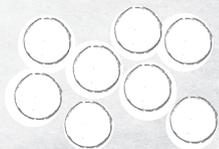
**SMALL GROUP OPENING**  
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## Leader BIBLE STUDY

Jesus’ ministry had begun. His first miracle was at a wedding, turning water into wine. He cleansed the temple in Jerusalem and performed signs, and “many trusted in His name” (John 2:23). Jesus likely spent a large part of His day teaching. When the day was done, He spent time alone or with His disciples. One night, however, a man named Nicodemus approached Jesus.

Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews; that is, he was a religious leader who taught God’s law, and he was a member of the Sanhedrin—a Jewish governing body. Nicodemus was part of an exclusive group of apparently moral men. He held to the belief that if a person was a

law-abiding Jew, he would be accepted by God. Jesus gave Nicodemus a lesson that would turn his belief system on its head.

Jesus was a carpenter (Mark 6:3), so the religious teachers likely assumed He didn't know theology. But they had seen Jesus' miraculous signs in Jerusalem. Nicodemus had to conclude, "You are a teacher come from God" (John 3:2).

Nicodemus initiated the conversation, but Jesus chose the subject. His words perplexed Nicodemus: "Unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Jesus explained that spiritual birth is not unlike physical birth in that a person cannot do it himself. It is something that happens to him.

Jesus reminded Nicodemus of an Old Testament account, the disobedient Israelites and the bronze snake. The Israelites could not help themselves, but when they trusted in God and looked to the bronze snake lifted up on the pole, they were healed. (Num. 21:4-9)

Emphasize with preschoolers that every person is born a sinner—spiritually dead and alienated from God. It is by God's Spirit—not our own effort—that we are born again. We look to Christ and His finished work on the cross for our salvation.



**MINISTRY GRID**  
training made simple

Additional resources for each session are available at [gospelproject.com](http://gospelproject.com). For free training and session-by-session help, visit [www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject](http://www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject).

# The BIBLE STORY

**Bible  
Storytelling  
Tips**

## Jesus Met Nicodemus

*John 3:1-21*

• **Create a nighttime**

**feel:** Turn out the overhead lights and tell the story by lamplight, night-light, or candlelight.

• **Living statues:** Set up a table with two chairs and invite two preschoolers to pose like statues of Jesus and Nicodemus as you tell the Bible story.

**One night**, when Jesus was in the city of Jerusalem, a **man named Nicodemus** (NIK uh DEE muhs) **came to visit Jesus**. Nicodemus was a religious man. He studied God's law and tried very hard to obey it. **Nicodemus wanted to know more about Jesus**.

**“Teacher,” Nicodemus said, “we know You came from God. You are a teacher, and You do miracles. God must be with You.”**

**Nicodemus was right**. Jesus was a good teacher. Jesus came to earth from heaven, and God was with Him.

**Jesus decided to teach Nicodemus an important lesson. Jesus said, “A person cannot see God's kingdom unless he is born again.”**

**Nicodemus** was confused. He **thought that a person got to go to heaven if he** was good and **obeyed** all of **God's** laws. Jesus' words did not make sense.

“How can anyone be born again when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. **Nicodemus knew that babies are small when they are born. How can a grown man be born again?** That sounded awfully silly.

**Jesus told Nicodemus that when a baby is born, the baby gets life from his parents**. But that kind of life does not last forever. Nobody lives forever. **Jesus said that people can get life from God**. This kind of life means people can live with God forever.

**Nicodemus still did not understand. “How is it possible to get life from God?” Nicodemus asked.**

Jesus told Nicodemus, “When I tell you about things we have seen on earth, you do not believe Me. Will you believe

Me when I tell you about things I have seen in heaven?”

Then Jesus reminded Nicodemus of the time when God’s people disobeyed God and got sick. The people were healed when they looked at the bronze snake on the pole. Jesus said that He would be raised up like the snake so that everyone who believes in Jesus will be healed from their sin and have eternal life.

Jesus told Nicodemus about God’s great plan. **Jesus said, “God loved the world so much that He sent His One and Only Son to save the world.** Everyone who believes in Him will not die but will have eternal life.” **Jesus** was talking about Himself; **He is God’s One and Only Son!**

*Christ Connection: Nicodemus wanted life with God, but he could not do anything to earn it. Eternal life is a gift. God showed His love by sending His One and Only Son to rescue people from sin. Everyone who believes in Him receives God’s gift of eternal life through Jesus.*



**WANT TO  
DISCOVER  
GOD’S WORD?  
GET  
MORE!**

Invite preschoolers to check out this week’s devotionals to discover that Jesus told Nicodemus about God’s plan. Later, Jesus promised to give believers—those who have been born again—the Holy Spirit. (John 14:26) Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out [www.lifeway.com/devotionals](http://www.lifeway.com/devotionals).

# Small Group OPENING

**SESSION TITLE:** Jesus Met Nicodemus

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** John 3:1-21

**MAIN POINT:** Jesus told Nicodemus about God's plan.

**KEY PASSAGE:** John 14:6

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Who did Jesus say He is? Jesus said He is God's Son.

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## Welcome time

- "That's What Jesus Did" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert download
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play the unit theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

## Activity page

- "What Is Different?" activity page, 1 per child
- pencils or crayons

Invite boys and girls to look at the pictures and circle the six differences in the second picture.

**SAY** • Today's Bible story is about a man named Nicodemus who wanted to know more about Jesus. One night, Nicodemus went to talk to Jesus. Jesus taught Nicodemus an important lesson about God's kingdom.

## Day or night?

Tape a sheet of yellow paper to one wall to represent daytime and a sheet of black paper to another wall to represent nighttime. Suggest specific activities and instruct preschoolers to move to the wall that best describes when the activity would take place. Use the following activities or create your own: eat lunch, put on your pajamas, go to the



- yellow construction paper, 1 sheet
- black construction paper, 1 sheet
- tape

park, brush your teeth, come to church. For the last activity, suggest “look at a stars.”

**SAY** • If we want to look at the starry sky, we need to wait until it gets dark. Nicodemus waited until after dark before he went to talk to Jesus.

## Play with flashlights

Disassemble flashlights. Show preschoolers how to insert batteries, secure the top, and turn on the switch. Encourage boys and girls to experiment with light in various ways.

- Shine light against a wall and demonstrate how to make shadow puppets. Consider building block towers and explore the shadows they cast.
- Poke pinholes in black construction paper and tape the paper over the light. Shine it on the ceiling and talk about stars in the night sky.
- Move a beam of light across the floor, making a path for friends to follow.

**SAY** • Flashlights are fun! We most often use flashlights to help us see things in the dark. Today’s Bible story took place at night when things are dark outside. A man named Nicodemus went to talk to Jesus. Jesus told Nicodemus about how people get life from God.

## Transition to Bible study

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, flip off the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Invite children to follow you as you shine a light toward the Bible study area.

- flashlights, disassembled
- blocks (optional)
- black construction paper
- pin (teacher use)
- tape

Tip: Cover windows with blankets or thick paper to darken the room.

- countdown video (optional)
- flashlight

# Large Group LEADER

**SESSION TITLE:** Jesus Met Nicodemus

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** John 3:1-21

**MAIN POINT:** Jesus told Nicodemus about God's plan.

**KEY PASSAGE:** John 14:6

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Who did Jesus say He is? Jesus said He is God's Son.

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## Introduce the Bible story

• baby pictures

Show baby pictures to the preschoolers.

**SAY** • Have you seen pictures of you when you were a newborn baby? Did you have any hair? How big were you? You were much smaller than you are now.

In today's Bible story, Jesus told Nicodemus that knowing God's plan is like being born. What did Jesus mean? Let's listen to our Bible story to find out.

## Watch or tell the Bible story

• bookmark

• Bible

• "Jesus Met Nicodemus" video

• Bible Story Picture Poster

Place a bookmark at John 3 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

**SAY** • God gave us a great gift by giving us His words in the Bible. The Bible is a true book. Today's Bible story is found in the New Testament in the Book of John.

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling helps. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

## Talk about the Bible story

• Main Point Poster

• Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

**SAY** • Nicodemus wanted life with God. **Jesus told Nicodemus about God's plan.** Eternal life is a gift. We cannot not do anything to earn it. God sent Jesus

to rescue people from sin. We only have to believe in Him to have life forever with God.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline or big story circle as you ask the following review questions:

1. Whom did Nicodemus want to talk to? (*Jesus*)
2. What did Jesus say must happen to someone before he can be part of God's kingdom? (*be born again*)
3. Did Jesus' words make sense to Nicodemus? (*no*)
4. Babies get life from their parents. Who gives people life forever with God? (*God through His Son, Jesus*)
5. Why did God send His One and Only Son to save the world? (*because God loved the world so much*)

## Learn the big picture question

**SAY** • Our big picture question is ***Who did Jesus say that He is? Jesus said He is God's Son.*** God showed His love by sending His One and Only Son to rescue people from sin. Everyone who believes in Him receives God's gift of eternal life through Jesus.

• Big Picture Question Poster

## Practice the key passage

Open your Bible to John 14:6. Read the key passage aloud several times. Sing together the key passage song, "John 14:6" song.

• Key Passage Poster  
• "John 14:6" song

**SAY** • Our key passage is what Jesus said about Himself. Eternal life, or life forever with God, is a gift we cannot earn. Jesus is the way. Only Jesus can give a person life forever with God. Jesus' gift is for anyone who will ask for it!

## Transition to small groups

# Small Group ACTIVITIES

**SESSION TITLE:** Jesus Met Nicodemus

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** John 3:1-21

**MAIN POINT:** Jesus told Nicodemus about God's plan.

**KEY PASSAGE:** John 14:6

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Who did Jesus say He is? Jesus said He is God's Son.

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- ball
- Key Passage Poster
- "That's What Jesus Did" song (optional)
- "I Am the Way" song (optional)

## Key passage ball pass

Invite preschoolers to sit in a circle on the floor. Pass a ball clockwise around the circle while playing music. When the music stops, the preschooler with the ball may say the key passage or ask the group to say the key passage with her. Start the music and play again.

### **SAY • Jesus told Nicodemus about God's plan.**

Nicodemus wanted life with God, but he could not do anything to earn it. Eternal life is a gift. Our key passage reminds us that Jesus is the only way to have life with God. God showed His love by sending His One and Only Son to rescue people from sin. Everyone who believes in Him receives God's gift of eternal life through Jesus.

## Investigate people from around the world

Print two sets of "People Matching Cards" onto heavyweight paper and cut out the cards. Arrange the cards facedown for older preschoolers or faceup for younger preschoolers. Encourage children to take turns choosing pairs of cards to discover a match. Observe and discuss the different types of people as they overturn each card.

- "People Matching Cards" printable, 2 sets
- heavyweight paper
- maps (optional)
- atlas (optional)
- globe (optional)

Invite preschoolers to unfold a map, turn pages in an atlas, or gently spin a globe. Show the difference between land and water. Locate your country, state, or town. Point to various regions throughout the world and mention that all kinds of people live all over the world.

**SAY** • God made everyone. Not everyone looks the same, but God made each person in a special way. God loves people. God knew that all people need to be rescued from sin, so God sent Jesus. ***Who did Jesus say He is? Jesus said He is God's Son.*** Everyone who believes in Jesus receives God's gift of eternal life through Him.

## Write on dry erase boards

Print the words *Jesus*, *God*, *life*, *love*, and *Nicodemus* on index cards and display on a table. Provide small dry erase boards and markers. Remind preschoolers to be careful with dry erase markers and only use them on the white boards. Read words on cards and challenge boys and girls to print the letters. Allow younger preschoolers to print single letters or make dotted letters on the dry erase boards for a younger preschooler to trace over. Retell portions of today's Bible story as preschoolers work.

**SAY** • When Jesus talked to Nicodemus, He told him that God loved people so much that He sent His One and Only Son to save the world. **Jesus told Nicodemus about God's plan.** Jesus wanted Nicodemus to understand that He was talking about Himself.

## Create a nighttime picture

Provide dark-colored construction paper and other materials. Encourage preschoolers to draw a night sky with

- Bible
- dry erase boards
- dry erase markers
- index cards
- marker (teacher use)

- Bible
- black or navy paper
- chalk
- star-shaped stickers

chalk and add star-shaped stickers. Commend a child's work as she creates. Open a Bible to John 3:2 and show a child where the Bible says that Nicodemus visited Jesus at night.

**SAY** • Who remembers what happened in today's Bible story after dark? (*Nicodemus came to talk to Jesus.*)

Nicodemus wanted to talk to Jesus. **Jesus told Nicodemus about God's plan.** Jesus explained to Nicodemus that a new baby gets life from her parents, but life that lasts forever comes from God. We cannot do anything to earn life with God. Eternal life is a gift God gives through Jesus.

## Play out Bible stories

- Bible times costumes
- fabric (optional)
- scissors (adult-use)

Provide pieces of cloth cut to approximately one square yard. Cut an opening in the center. Demonstrate how to slip the cloth over a child's head through the opening and secure around the waist with a fabric strip. Invite preschoolers to pretend to be Bible people and play out familiar Bible stories. Praise children's efforts. Suggest two children pretend to be Jesus and Nicodemus. Encourage them to play out today's Bible story. Prompt children as they repeat the story's dialogue.

**SAY** • Nicodemus went to visit Jesus, and **Jesus told Nicodemus about God's plan.** Jesus helped Nicodemus understand that no one can earn eternal life; it is a gift. God's gift is for anyone who asks for it. When people trust in Jesus, they receive life forever with God.

## Snack

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Guide preschoolers to clean their areas. Take a restroom break and wash hands. Gather preschoolers for snack time. Thank God for the snack.

Serve apple slices for snack. Cut an apple in half horizontally and examine the star-shaped pattern made by the core. Ask boys and girls if the star shape reminds them of what time of day today's Bible story took place. Remind preschoolers that one night long ago **Jesus told Nicodemus about God's plan.**

## Transition

When a child finishes his snack, guide him to throw away any trash. He may select a book or puzzle to examine, play quietly with play dough or a favorite toy, or color the Bible story coloring page.

Offer the journal page and invite preschoolers to draw a picture of Jesus talking to Nicodemus about God's plan. Remind boys and girls that God's plan is for people all over the world. God showed how much He loves people when He sent His Son. Guide the boys to repeat the big picture question, and ask the girls to answer it. Pray for the children.

**SAY** • Thank You, God, for the Bible, and for the true story of Nicodemus. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to rescue us from sin so we can have life with You forever. Amen.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- snack food
- paper cups and napkins

- books
- puzzles
- play dough
- Journal Page printable, 1 per child
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- *Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers*