

## NICODEMUS

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: JOHN 3:1-21



## The STORY

Read the story of Nicodemus and his encounter with Jesus in John 3:1-21. The story is a bit longer and more difficult to understand, so try changing your voice to act out the dialogue. Look for a picture book to accent the story or tell it with the felt board while you read the text.

**Please note:** *The discussion questions in the following sections are written to serve as a guide in teaching our youngest children. Three to six year olds are not going to be able to answer these questions like their older brothers and sisters. Please refer to the God's Story Preschool Curriculum Outline for additional ideas.*

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

- Who came to Jesus? (A man named Nicodemus came to Jesus. Nicodemus 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 was attracted to Jesus and wanted to ask Him questions.)
- What attracted Nicodemus to Jesus? (Nicodemus was attracted by the wonders Jesus did.)
- Who did Nicodemus think Jesus was? (Nicodemus believed Jesus was a teacher sent by God.)

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**CRAFT QUESTIONS**

**Coloring sheets have been provided that exemplify today's lesson: a man talking with Jesus at night. Engage the children by asking:**

- Why did Jesus say He was sent into the world?

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 will be punished by death and be separated from God forever. God sent His Son to rescue rebellious sinners.)

- What did Jesus do to take the penalty for sin so that men could be forgiven? (Jesus died on the cross where He took the punishment that we deserved for our sin.)

- What happens when the Holy Spirit causes people to become born again? (Their sin is taken away and they are forgiven. The eyes of their spirits are opened so they can understand the beauty of God and His kingdom.)

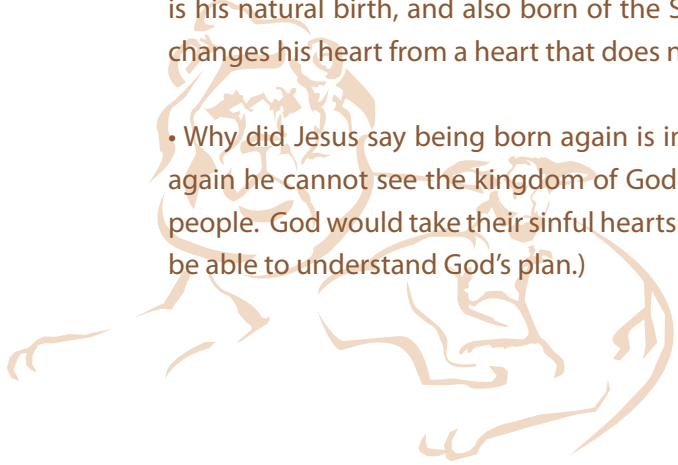
**SNACK QUESTIONS**

**While the children are eating the snack, engage the children by asking:**

- 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, that is his natural birth, and also born of the Spirit. That is when the Holy Spirit comes into a person and changes his heart from a heart that does not love God to a heart that does 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 born again, so that they would be able to understand God's plan.)



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**WHERE IS the Gospel?**

*Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.*

John 3:16 is the first half of the Gospel. Why the first half? Because, this passage alone does not explain what it means that God gave His Son.

Make sure that you connect the dots for the children that God gave His Son to die. Jesus died on the cross for our sin so that we might be forgiven. It is not enough to see Jesus as a good teacher; we must be born again. The work of the Spirit in making us born again is only possible because our sins were punished in Christ.

If Jesus had only been a good teacher, it leaves us to take our own punishment for our sin. We cannot separate John 3:16 out of the Bible as if it declares the whole Gospel. John does make one thing clear, salvation is about what God does, not what we do. Only God can make a person born again.

**SWORD BIBLE MEMORY****BE A DOER OF THE WORD**

*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 worker.*

