



2011

# **Go And Make Disciples**

**The Cross and Beyond**

## **Lesson 22: Nicodemus Visits Jesus**

**Scripture**

John 3:1-21  
 John 7:40-53  
 John 19:38-42

**Memory Verse**

For God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.  
 John 3:16 (NLT)

**Lesson Goals**

Understand that Nicodemus sought out Jesus.

Understand that Jesus answered the questions Nicodemus hadn't even asked.

Understand that God loved you so much that He sent His one and only Son.

The following is a summary of the Bible story to help supplement your preparation. In your personal study time, use this summary as a guide, and make notes to help you remember your plans for the lesson. Please do **NOT** read to the children.

There is an account from the earliest months of Jesus' ministry that we only find in one of the four gospels—the gospel of John. Even though it is not mentioned in Matthew, Mark, or Luke we will study it anyway. It tells us about a late night visit that Jesus had.

The visitor was a Pharisee, one of the important leaders of the Jewish people. His name was Nicodemus. "Late one night he visited Jesus and said, 'Rabbi, we all know you're a teacher straight from God.'" (John 3:2a MSG) Nicodemus explained how they knew that Jesus must be from God. He said that no one could do the kind of miracles that Jesus performed if he wasn't from God.

As Jesus often did, He replied in a way that seemed completely random. Know this, though, that nothing Jesus ever did was random. Jesus knows men's hearts. Jesus knew why Nicodemus was there and Jesus knew that Nicodemus was seeking something important. "Jesus replied, 'What I'm about to tell you is true. No one can see God's kingdom without being born again.'" (John 3:3 NIV)

Nicodemus was so confused. "'How can I be born when I am old?' Nicodemus asked. 'I can't go back inside my mother! I can't be born a second time!'" (John 3:4 NIV) Nicodemus was thinking the way most of us think, about the physical—the things we can see and touch. Jesus, on the other hand, was always pointing to the spiritual, the things you can't see, but must believe by faith.

Then Jesus explained the idea to Nicodemus. He told Nicodemus that a physical birth into a certain family or religion is not what gets you into heaven. What gives you entrance to the kingdom of God is a spiritual birth, new life from God's Holy Spirit. That new life is like the wind that blows wherever it wants to and you can hear it. You can't see the wind, though, and you can't tell where it comes from or where it is going.

Nicodemus was still confused. Even though he was an important religious leader, he didn't understand.

Jesus said, "Listen carefully...I speak only of what I know by experience; I give witness only to what I have seen with My own eyes. There is nothing secondhand here, no hearsay. Yet instead of facing the evidence and accepting it, you procrastinate with questions. If I tell you things that are plain as the hand before your face and you don't believe me, what use is there in telling you of things you can't see, the things of God?" (John 3:10-12 MSG) Jesus continued by explaining that no one has ever gone up into heaven, but that One had come down from heaven. Jesus was talking about Himself. He

### Application

Do you know that Jesus was sent from God? Have you decided to follow Jesus?

Is your relationship with Jesus something you keep a secret? Are you like some of the religious leaders? Are you afraid to admit that you believe? That account in John continues by saying, "They loved praise from people more than praise from God." (John 12:43 NIV) If that is you, cry out to God for boldness. Think of someone that you know that needs to know about Jesus and share with them this week.

Maybe your relationship with Jesus is something you are proud to share with others. If so, good for you.

There is always room for growth and improvement. Are you telling everyone you can? Make it a point to add people to your circle of influence. Start visiting the same cashier or waiter each time you go to the store or your favorite restaurant. Be intentional this week to reach out to them.

also gave a clue to the death He would die on the cross. Jesus explained to Nicodemus that just as Moses had lifted up a serpent, or snake, when the Hebrew children were wandering in the desert, He, the Son of Man, would be lifted up. Jesus said, "Then everyone who believes in Him can live with God forever." (John 3:15 NIV)

Then Jesus said something to Nicodemus that has been remembered and quoted for many years. He said, "For God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16 NLT) And then, Jesus explained that He hadn't come into the world to judge or condemn it. Jesus came so that people can be saved.

Jesus came into the world as the Light of the world. Anyone who believes in Jesus isn't judged, but anyone who doesn't believe is already judged. That means that those who accept Jesus have accepted the Light, the Truth. Heaven awaits those people. There are others, though, who prefer the darkness. They want nothing to do with the Light, or with the truth of God's word because what they do is evil. They refuse or reject Jesus. They are judged already because they have not believed.

You may be wondering what Nicodemus decided, did he believe or didn't he? The Bible doesn't say exactly, but John does mention Nicodemus again. Once, when the Pharisees were trying to arrest Jesus, Nicodemus spoke up for Him. John also tells us that "many of the leaders believed in [Jesus]. But because of the Pharisees, they would not admit they believed. They were afraid they would be thrown out of the synagogue." (John 12:42 NIV) And then, after Jesus' crucifixion, we find Nicodemus helping Joseph of Arimathea as they prepared Jesus' body for burial in a tomb that Joseph owned.

How about you? Do you believe that God loved YOU so much that He gave His one and only Son, so that if you believe in Him you will not perish but have eternal life? (John 3:16) The choice is yours.

### Preparing for the Next Lesson

Jesus Talks with the Woman at the Well



## Preschool Lesson

### Teachers:

Bring stars. If possible, affix glow-in-the-dark stars to your ceiling before Bible study. Tell the story in the dark if none of your students are afraid of the dark.

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Late one night, as the stars were twinkling bright, a very important man walked through the dark streets. Around this corner and that, Nicodemus walked toward the home where Jesus was staying. Nicodemus was a very important man in the city. He was a leader at the temple church. Nicodemus was looking for Jesus at night because he didn't want to be seen.

Knock, knock, knock. Who could it be?

Nicodemus and Jesus sat down to visit. Nicodemus knew that Jesus was a great man. He must be from God. That is why He could do such amazing miracles!

But Jesus said something to Nicodemus that confused him. "You must be born again," Jesus said.

"Born again?" questioned Nicodemus. "I can't go back inside of my mother."

Jesus was talking about a different kind of birth. Jesus wasn't talking about mommas and babies. Jesus was talking about something only God could do. God's Holy Spirit could make people new again, but how?

Jesus said, "For God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16 NLT)

Did you know that you can put your name in that verse. (Read the verse again, replacing the phrase "the world" with the names of each of your students.)

God loves YOU so much that He sent Jesus. Who can you tell this week?

Sing: Jesus Loves Me



## Activities

- Memory Verse Activity - Make John 3:16 bookmarks. Review the memory verse as your students decorate their bookmarks.
- Encourage your students to fill out the journal/note page found on page 8. This can be used during the story to help focus your students or after the story as a review.
- Bring cereal with stars for the snack. Talk about Nicodemus' late night visit.
- Make posters on construction paper of the memory verse. Try writing the memory verse in the shape of a cross.
- Design John 3:16 bumper stickers.
- Sing "John 3:16," "Jesus Loves Me," "You Must Be Born Again," "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus," or another song related to the lesson.
- Find Jerusalem on a map of Israel. Find the temple on a detailed map of Jerusalem. Share with your students that the temple is where Nicodemus worked.
- Dig Deeper: Read John 3:13-15. Also look up Numbers 21:6-9. Discuss.
- Dig Deeper: Read John 3:16-18 in the Message. Talk about the court imagery used and discuss the verses.

For God loved  
the world so much  
that He gave  
His one and only Son,  
so that everyone  
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but have eternal life.

John 3:16

Trace the letters.

GOD

LOVES

ME!

# Focus on the Story

○  
**Story Title:**

**Scripture References:**

**Main Characters:**

**Story Summary:**

When?

○  
Where?

What?

How?







# Word Search

W Y O H R W O G D O D O Y Y O  
O N E A N D O N L Y S O N S Y  
E G D V O W R D O Y U H G U M  
V E V E R Y O N E S E H T R I  
I D U E W O R G R G V R W D H  
L S O T R U O O A O I W U R N  
N G D E O W R V O Y L O O O I  
W D L R O W E H T D E V O L S  
O O R N Y O U N W O W D H R E  
R D O A D R O E R U O C E U V  
U N W L O U R W O R U O V O E  
O E R L H U D S O M U U O Y I  
Y H S I R E P T O N L L I W L  
O Y S F A I N S L A S S E H E  
U O Y E U R W O R D R O W R B

Find the underlined words from the memory verse in the puzzle above.

For God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son,  
so that everyone who believes in Him  
will not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16



# Word Search

W	Y	O	<u>H</u>	R	W	O	G	D	O	<u>D</u>	O	Y	Y	O
<u>O</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>Y</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>N</u>	S	Y
E	G	D	<u>V</u>	O	W	R	D	O	Y	U	<u>H</u>	<u>G</u>	U	<u>M</u>
V	<u>E</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>Y</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	S	<u>E</u>	H	T	R	<u>I</u>
I	D	U	<u>E</u>	W	O	R	G	R	<u>G</u>	V	R	W	D	<u>H</u>
L	S	O	<u>T</u>	R	U	O	O	<u>A</u>	O	I	W	U	R	<u>N</u>
N	G	D	<u>E</u>	O	W	R	<u>V</u>	O	Y	L	O	O	O	<u>I</u>
W	<u>D</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>S</u>
O	O	R	<u>N</u>	Y	O	U	N	W	O	W	D	<u>H</u>	R	<u>E</u>
R	D	O	<u>A</u>	D	R	O	E	R	U	O	<u>C</u>	E	U	<u>V</u>
U	N	W	<u>L</u>	O	U	R	W	O	R	<u>U</u>	O	V	O	<u>E</u>
O	E	R	<u>L</u>	H	U	D	S	O	<u>M</u>	U	U	O	Y	<u>I</u>
Y	<u>H</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>
O	Y	S	<u>F</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>S</u>	L	A	S	S	E	H	<u>E</u>
U	O	Y	<u>E</u>	U	R	W	O	R	D	R	O	W	R	<u>B</u>

Find the underlined words from the memory verse in the puzzle above.

For God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son,  
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John 3:16



# Preschool Word Search

R F I M A I O N D R E D  
S L A T E N I G H T E E  
H A R I G U M J E S U S  
R I V A N G O D W A Y S  
J L A O L I V F N Y L S  
Q U E S T I O N S E E O  
R T O R E I V E N M R E  
H D E V L O V E E S U S  
M D I L E D E S E A T S  
D I E M S T I T O R B N  
L A K I N Q U E S T S J  
P N I C O D E M U S L N

JESUS

LATE NIGHT

NICODEMUS

QUESTIONS

GOD

LOVE



# Preschool Word Search

R F I M A I O N D R E D  
S L A T E N I G H T E E  
H A R I G U M J E S U S  
R I V A N G O D W A Y S  
J L A O L I V F N Y L S  
Q U E S T I O N S E E O  
R T O R E I V E N M R E  
H D E V L O V E E S U S  
M D I L E D E S E A T S  
D I E M S T I T O R B N  
L A K I N Q U E S T S J  
P N I C O D E M U S L N

JESUS

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QUESTIONS

GOD

LOVE