Preschool–Grade 6

Jesus and Nicodemus

Sunday School Lesson for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade, 45 minutes

Main point: God loves the world so much that He gave Jesus. Jesus told Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again."
Bible passage: John 3:1–21. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." *John 3:16 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible, a few small paper balls, a table, a long paper streamer, 6 paper strips, a marker, tape, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the 6 paper strips (see part 4). Crumple a few small balls of paper. Put a bookmark in your Bible at John 3.

1. Opening game: Blow It Across (5 minutes)

Put a paper ball at one end of a table. One child at a time blows the ball all the way across to the other end, with no hands. Cheer for every child. Then ask: *Did you see your breath? (No.) How do you know it was there? (The ball moved.)* Say: "You can't see wind or breath, but you can see what it does. Today Jesus talks about the wind, in a true story about a man who came to see Jesus at night."

2. Bible story: A Visit by Night (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to John 3, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words:

There was a man named **Nicodemus** (John 3:1). He was a **Pharisee**, one of a group of men who worked very hard to keep God's law. And he was a **ruler of the Jews**, a leader of his people (3:1). Jesus called him "a master of Israel" (3:10), which means a teacher of God's people.

One time Nicodemus "came to Jesus by night" (3:2). It was dark outside. Nicodemus said, "**Rabbi**," which means teacher, "we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him" (3:2). Say: "Nicodemus had seen that Jesus did **miracles**, wonderful things only God can do."

Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be **born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (3:3). Say: "**Verily** means truly. The **kingdom of God** is where God is the King."

Nicodemus did not understand. He asked, "How can a man be born when he is old?" (3:4). Can a grown-up man be born all over again, like a baby?

Jesus answered, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (3:5). Then Jesus said, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (3:7). Say: "**Marvel not** means don't be surprised."

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The story continues: Jesus talked about the **wind**. He said, "The wind bloweth where it listeth" (3:8). Say: "**Listeth** means wants to. You can hear the wind, but you can't see where it comes from or where it goes. Jesus said it is like that with everyone who is born of the Spirit (3:8)." Nicodemus asked, "How can these things be?" (3:9).

Then Jesus said that He must be **lifted up** (3:14). Later Jesus was lifted up on the cross, to die for us (John 12:32–33).

And then Jesus said the most famous verse in the Bible. **Read John 3:16 from your Bible:** "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Say: "**So loved** means loved so very much. **Whosoever** means anyone at all: you, me, everyone! **Everlasting life** means life with God forever."

Jesus said God did not send Him to **condemn** the world, to punish it, but so the world could be saved through Him (3:17). And Jesus said that **light** has come into the world (3:19). Jesus is the Light (John 8:12). Nicodemus came in the dark of night to Jesus, the Light of the world. Hold your arms out wide and say together: "God so loved the world!"

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. When did Nicodemus come to Jesus? *(By night, John 3:2)*
2. What did Nicodemus call Jesus? *(Rabbi, a teacher come from God, 3:2)*
3. What did Jesus say a man must be? *(Born again, 3:3, 3:7)*
4. What did Jesus talk about that you can hear but can't see? *(The wind, 3:8)*
5. Who does God love? *(The world: everyone, 3:16)*

4. Memory verse: Six Strips game (5 minutes)

Tape the 6 paper strips up in order: *For God so loved the world, / that he gave his only begotten Son, / that whosoever / believeth in him / should not perish, / but have everlasting life. John 3:16.* Explain the old words: **so loved** means loved so very much, **begotten** means born, **whosoever** means anyone, **believeth** means believes, **perish** means be lost forever, and **everlasting** means forever. Read the verse together. Then take down one strip and read it again. Keep taking down one strip each time until the kids can say the whole verse by themselves.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "God loves you very much. But everyone has done wrong things. The Bible calls that sin: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means none of us is as good as God. The Son of God is Jesus. Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! Jesus told Nicodemus, 'Ye must be born again.' He said we must be 'born of water and of the Spirit' (John 3:5). Later Peter told the people how: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means we are sorry for our sin and we turn away from it. We are **born of water** when we are **baptized**, buried all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). **Remission** means God takes our sins away. And we are **born of the Spirit** when God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, His own Spirit, and we speak in other tongues, words God gives us, just like the believers did in the Bible (Acts 2:4). That is being born again!"
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.
This week: tell one person, "God loves you so much!" and say John 3:16 to your family.

6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **Jesus and Nicodemus word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/nicodemus-word-search), crossword (vbshq.com/puzzles/nicodemus-crossword), maze (vbshq.com/puzzles/nicodemus-maze) or worksheet (vbshq.com/worksheets/nicodemus-worksheet), the coloring page or craft (vbshq.com/bible-stories/nicodemus), or **Where the Wind Blows:** the kids sit in a circle. You are the wind: walk around the outside of the circle, waving a long paper streamer. When you stop behind a child and let the streamer fall on their shoulder, that child answers a question from part 3, or "What does whosoever mean?" Then that child holds the streamer and becomes the wind. Say: "Jesus said, 'The wind bloweth where it listeth' (John 3:8)."

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7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for loving the whole world so much. Thank You for Jesus. Help us learn what it means to be born again, and help us tell our friends that You love them. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks why Nicodemus came at night: say, The Bible doesn't tell us why. It just says he "came to Jesus by night" (John 3:2). Don't guess.
If a child asks if Nicodemus believed in Jesus: the Bible tells us more about him later. He stood up for Jesus in front of the other leaders (John 7:50–51), and he brought spices called myrrh and aloes when Jesus was buried (John 19:39).
If a child asks if a person can really be born again: not as a baby again, like Nicodemus wondered (John 3:4). Jesus meant being "born of water and of the Spirit" (3:5): being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38).
If a child asks what "Son of God" means: Jesus is called the Son of God because He was born of Mary by the Holy Ghost (Luke 1:35). He is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16).

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