

Only Jesus Can Give You New Life!

Bible Lesson: Nicodemus Can't Save Himself – *John 3:1-16, John 19:38-42*

Main Teaching: Only Jesus can give you new life

Word Up: Jesus gives new life!

Supplies:

- Word Up Booklet – Word Up (Resource Pack)
- Paper and writing utensil for each child – Small Group
- Recording for “Let’s Get Started” and “God Wants to Spend Time with Just You” - Worship (Sing About the King 4 CD)
- Optional Song Visual for “Let’s Get Started” – Worship (cefpres.com)
- Monopoly bill and \$5 bill – Object Lesson
- Flashcards for Bible Story “Nicodemus” – Bible Lesson
- Poster with months of the year, marker – Review Game (Resource Pack)
- Quiet Time Guide Week 2 – Dismissal (Resource Pack)

Schedule at a Glance (75 min club):

- 15 min – Small Group
- 10 min – Worship / Rules / Word Up
- 10 min – Object Lesson
- 15 min – Bible Lesson
- 10 min – Review Game
- 5 min – Missionary Story
- 10 min – Small Group

INTRODUCTION

All his life Nicodemus had been doing good deeds to earn favor with God but then he met Jesus who told him he needed to be born again—completely changed. His good deeds would never make him right with God. The children you teach need to know that it is only by faith in Jesus that they can be saved from sin and made new. Reading their Bibles and going to church on Sunday, although those are good things to do, will not save them. In this lesson they will learn that when they have trusted Jesus as Savior, the Holy Spirit changes their hearts to help them do good like Jesus did.



SMALL GROUP

Say Memory Verse

Have kids say their memory verse from last week to their small group leader

What Does it mean to Praise God?

Last week we talked about the fact that Jesus is the almighty God and we can praise Him. What does praise mean? If you want to praise someone for something, what would you say? (*Allow response.*) You might say, “You did a good job!” or “Nice work.” Maybe your teacher or your parents have said those things to you. They were praising you for what you did. You can praise God for what He does and also for who He is. Praising God means telling Him how much you appreciate who He is and what He has done.

What is something you have learned about what God has done? What is something you have learned about who He is? *(Allow responses.)* Here is a piece of paper. Try to draw a picture of something God has done or something that shows who God is.

(Allow time to draw.) You can praise God for these things! *(Have children takes turns showing what they drew and saying, "God, I praise you for _." Demonstrate for children with your own picture.)*

WORSHIP

To learn songs and motions, go to <https://www.cefcmi.com/lessons/song-demos>

"Let's Get Started"

"God wants to Spend Time with Just You"

RULES

Go over the Ups Rules and show the rule chart.



WORD UP!

"Jesus gives new life!"

If I go to church every week and read my Bible every day and live a good life, would that save me from my sin so I can be with God forever? *(Allow response.)* No! All those things are good, but they can't save anyone. Jesus is the only one who has the power to give us new life so we can have a special friendship with God. Listen carefully throughout club for the words "Word Up!" for you to know when to stand and say, **"Jesus gives new life!"** *(Say with children.)*

OBJECT LESSON

Heart Changes Object Lesson Script

Would anybody like one of these? This is a five dollar bill, isn't it? Doesn't anyone want a five dollar bill? You know I could hand you this five dollar bill and let you take it to a store, but if you tried to buy anything with it, it wouldn't work. You know why? Because this is Monopoly money. It's only good for paying bills in a Monopoly game, isn't it?

(Pull out a real five dollar bill.)

Now I bet all of you would like to have this bill, right? This is a real five dollar bill, right? How can you tell? It's larger than the Monopoly money. It's a different color. It has printing on both sides. It has United States Treasury written on it, says "In God We Trust" and has Abraham Lincoln's portrait.

You know, as distinct as this bill is, there are people out there who still try to copy it. They can copy the paper, the ink, the colors, and the designs to make counterfeit money. But even if they do all that, you can tell a real bill, not by the outside, but by the inside. You see, every bill has security thread inside the fibers of the bill. Did you know that? This little fiber, made of plastic or metal, depending on the size of the bill is actually woven into the dollar bill. It's

almost invisible when you look at the bill, but if you hold it up to the light, you can see that security thread appear as a solid line. So we can say this is a five dollar bill, not because of the outside, what we can see, but what's inside.

You know the Bible says something similar about us. We can go to church, sing songs to God, put money in the offering plate. But God doesn't just look at these outward signs. He also looks where? At the heart. The Bible says, "The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16 :7) In other words, you can't fool God.

I want to challenge you guys not to be counterfeit Christians, but real. Let God change the inner fibers of your heart so when people see you, they don't see just a smiling face, but the heart of a real Christian.



BIBLE LESSON

INTRODUCTION

Close your eyes and think about something you have done that was good. Maybe you helped a younger brother with his schoolwork. Or maybe you gave someone a compliment. Maybe you followed all the rules in your class today. What's one good thing you have done? (*Allow response.*)

Did you know that God tells us in the Bible about a man who thought he did all the right things? He tried his hardest to follow all the rules. His name was Nicodemus (*nick-oh-DEE-mus*). Can you say that with me? (*Say with children.*)

PROGRESSION OF EVENTS

Flashcard 2-1

The night was dark and quiet. The only sound was the soft shuffling of sandals as Nicodemus, an important leader in Israel, hurried through the shadowy streets of Jerusalem. Nicodemus had some questions and he hoped he could find answers!

What were his questions? Who was he going to see? Nicodemus was an expert on the Old Testament—the part of the Bible written before Jesus was born. (*Show how big Old Testament is in your Bible.*) He had been studying this part of God's Word for a very long time. He knew all about God's law and taught the Israelites about it.

Flashcard 2-2

He belonged to a group of religious leaders called Pharisees (*FARE-uh-sees*). The Pharisees were thought of as the religious experts at the time. People looked up to them as examples to follow. They were very strict about keeping God's laws—they even made their own! For example, God told His people that His commands should be in every part of their lives.

So they decided to put God's words into little boxes like this (*show a picture of or hold up a phylactery*) and strap them around their heads and arms. If they wanted people to think they were very holy, they made the boxes bigger!

The Pharisees added rules of their own to God's laws until they had hundreds to remember and obey. The Pharisees prayed every day so others would notice; sometimes they would go to a busy place and pray loudly. Some of them looked down on people who were not as good as they were. They thought they were honoring God but they were not. They were known for trying to follow the laws to make themselves look good instead of following them because they loved God.

Flashcard 2-3

But there was someone in Jerusalem who was going to do something no one else had ever done! He was going to keep all of God's laws perfectly! This teacher was doing things only God could do. Who do you think He is? (*Allow response.*) Jesus! Do you remember what He did in last week's story? (*Allow response.*) He turned water into wine and His disciples believed in Him.

Flashcard 2-4

Nicodemus arrived at the place where Jesus was staying and they sat down to talk. He said to Jesus, (*read John 3:2*). Nicodemus knew that only God could do the miracles that Jesus did.



Jesus was different because He is completely God and man. He came to the Earth He created to show how much He loves and cares for His creation. You are part of what God created and He loves you very much. At the beginning of John 3:16 it says, (*quote with children*). He wants you to know who He is. He wants you to know that He is holy—completely without sin and perfect in every way, different from every other person.

Only Jesus could do the miracles He did because He is God. Jesus wanted Nicodemus to know that being good could not save him from sin. Jesus loved Nicodemus. Jesus used words and examples to help Nicodemus understand that he could not save himself no matter how hard he tried. Jesus told Nicodemus that he would have to be born again to see God's kingdom. (*Read John 3:3.*)

Flashcard 2-5

This was very confusing for Nicodemus. He asked, "How can I be born again when I am old?" What was Jesus talking about? Could Nicodemus be born as a baby again?

Jesus meant that in order to be saved from the punishment of sin and no longer be dead in sin, Nicodemus needed to be completely changed and made new on the inside. Only God the Holy Spirit could make him new—alive instead of dead in sin!



You were born dead in your sin. (*Read Ephesians 2:1-2a.*) This means if you have not trusted in Jesus, your spirit (the part of you that can have a relationship with God) is dead. You and I are born dead in our sins. You might think that if you are really good, you will be saved from sin's punishment. But there is no good thing you can do to save yourself. You choose to do things that go your way instead of God's. Can you think of some wrong things children your age do? (*Allow response.*) These things are sin. You sin when you do what you want instead of what God wants for you. God hates sin because He is completely holy and separated from sin. The punishment for your sin is to be separated from God. All the good things you do are not enough for a good and holy God. Even people who go to church every Sunday might not be saved. Going to church does not save you and doing good things does not get rid of your sin. We are born in sin.

Nicodemus was born in sin but Jesus wanted him to know that to be born again is to be made new—alive instead of dead in sin. But Nicodemus was still confused. He had always thought that keeping God's laws was enough to save him. What Jesus was telling him was very different.

To help Nicodemus understand, Jesus reminded him of something that had happened hundreds of years earlier. The Jewish people were traveling from Egypt to the land God had promised to give them. Even though God had miraculously cared for them, the people grumbled and complained. They were angry with their leader, Moses, and with God. Instead of thanking God for the loving way He provided for them, they sinned against Him by complaining.

As punishment for their sin, God sent venomous snakes among the people. Many people were bitten and died. Others cried to Moses, begging him to ask God to remove the snakes. Moses prayed for the people and God answered by making a way for the people who were bitten to be healed. God told Moses to make a snake out of bronze and lift it up

on a pole. God told Moses, “Anyone who looks at the snake of bronze will live.”

Moses followed God’s instructions. The bronze snake was lifted high on a pole and Moses told the people that anyone who looked at it would be healed. Those who believed God and looked at the bronze snake lived just as God had said.

Nicodemus would have known that story very well. When Jesus finished telling the story, He said, *(read John 3:14-15)*. Jesus was telling Nicodemus that He was going to be lifted up on a cross. He would die for the sins of the whole world.

Then Jesus told Nicodemus the best news ever—the words of our memory verse! Say it with me. *(Say John 3:16 with children.)* Jesus wanted Nicodemus to know that He came to Earth so Nicodemus could be born again and not be dead in his sins.

Flashcard 2-6



Jesus made it possible for you to be born again too. Jesus, the Son of God, perfectly obeyed His Father. He never sinned against God. The Bible says Jesus had no sin in Him. *(Read 2 Corinthians 5:21a.)* Jesus did not come into the world to tell you how bad you are. He came to the world to take your punishment for sin. **Only Jesus can give you new life.** Say with me, **“Jesus gives new life!”** *(Say with children.)* When Jesus bled and died on the cross, all your sin was put on Him. *(Read 1 John 1:7b.)* He didn’t have any sin of His own but He willingly gave His blood so you could be forgiven and not be dead in your sins anymore. He came back to life on the third day and is alive and ruling in Heaven today. When you believe in Jesus, He gives you new life and gives you the power to do good and live for God. That is good news! When you trust that Jesus has done this for you, you are born again and are no longer dead in your sins.

Jesus wanted Nicodemus to know He came to Earth so people could be born again and not be dead in their sins. Nicodemus had so much to think about when he was finished talking with Jesus. Jesus cared for Nicodemus and told him true things that Nicodemus had never heard before. What happened after Nicodemus talked to Jesus that night? Did he believe?

CLIMAX

The Bible doesn’t tell us when it happened, but there was evidence that Nicodemus was changed! He had new life! Say with me, **“Jesus gives new life!”** *(Say with children.)*

CONCLUSION

After Jesus suffered and died for sin on the cross, the Bible mentions Nicodemus’ name again. He was one of the men who helped bury Jesus’ body. This important Pharisee who had once come to Jesus at night was now showing others his love for Jesus. God had changed Nicodemus on the inside—he was born again, a new person because of Jesus!



If you’ve been born again, you are a new person because of Jesus. The Bible says, *(read 2 Corinthians 5:17)*. Think about what God has done for you. He has forgiven your sin—something no one else could do! He has given you new life. Say with me, **“Jesus gives new life!”** *(Say with children.)* He has changed you on the inside so you can now live to please God. Maybe before you believed in Jesus, you said a lot of bad words when you were angry. But now God is helping you to change the way you talk. Or maybe you used to be disrespectful to your parents or teachers but now God is helping you show respect to them. God gives you the power to say no to sin. **The Holy Spirit will change your heart and help you do good.** Does your life show that you have been changed on the inside? Take time each day to thank God that you are a new person in Christ! Ask Him to help you do good.

Because of knowing Jesus, Nicodemus' life was changed. Knowing Jesus can change your life too.

INVITATION



Have you believed in Jesus as the only one who can save you from being dead in sin? No matter how many good things you do or how many rules you obey, your good works can never save you. (*Read John 3:15.*) It is by believing, trusting only in Jesus, that you can be saved from the punishment of sin and be born again. When you believe in Jesus you are no longer dead in your sins, but you will be a new person in Christ. You will have everlasting life! This is life that starts the minute you believe and lasts forever with Jesus. Have you believed in Jesus as your Savior and been born again? Please bow your head and close your eyes. If you would like to believe in Jesus as your Savior today, will you show me by standing up? (*Acknowledge responses.*) You may sit down. Everyone open your eyes. If you stood up and want to talk with me, meet me (*designate time and location*) so we can look at the Bible to see what it means to have everlasting life.



REVIEW GAME

Birthday Points

Divide the children into teams. Write the 12 months of the year in big letters on a piece of paper. When a child answers a question correctly, have him choose a month of the year and cross it off the list. Every person with a birthday in that month has to stand up. Count the number of people who have birthdays in the chosen month and award 100 points to the child's team for each person standing. Continue playing until all the months have been chosen. Each month may be chosen only once.

1. Who was Nicodemus? (*Answers will vary; an important leader in Israel; an expert on the Old Testament; someone who taught about God's law; a Pharisee; a religious leader.*)
2. Who did Nicodemus hear about and want to talk to? (*Jesus; the Son of God.*)
3. Nicodemus had heard about the miracles Jesus had done. Why is Jesus the only one who could do these miracles? (*Because He is God.*)
4. How did Nicodemus react when Jesus said he had to be "born again"? (*He was confused; he didn't understand.*)
5. What does it mean to be dead in sin? (*To be separated from God.*)
6. How is Jesus different from every other person who ever lived on Earth? (*He is God and man. He is perfect—completely without sin.*)
7. What did Jesus mean when He said Nicodemus would have to be born again to see God's kingdom? (*Nicodemus needed to be completely changed and made new on the inside.*)
8. What is the only way you can be made new—alive on the inside? (*Believe in Jesus.*)
9. Who can say our memory verse? (*Quote John 3:16.*)
10. What did Nicodemus need to believe? (*Only Jesus could save him from being dead in sin.*)
11. If you have believed in Jesus, how can you spend time with God each day? (*By reading His Word and praying.*)

MISSIONARY STORY

is to your mind as you go through your day? (*Stop and think about how me through His Word.*)



Gladys Aylward Part 2:



Who can tell me something about the missionary we started learning about last time? (*Allow response.*) Gladys Aylward was a maid from England who felt deeply the need for people in China to hear about Jesus. She decided to go to China even though it meant leaving everything she knew and going to a place where she didn't know the language or culture. Finally, after a long trip, she had made it to China!

Gladys arrived in the little Chinese town of Yangcheng (*yen-CHONG*) where she met Mrs. Jeannie Lawson, the 70-year-old missionary she had come to help. Jeannie had a plan to share the Good News of Jesus. "With your help, we'll turn this old house into an inn for mule drivers," she told Gladys. Yangcheng was high in the mountains of North China. Many mule caravans passed through each day. "We will sell a hot meal and tell them Bible stories while they eat," explained Jeannie. To help Jeannie, Gladys started learning Chinese. Some of the first words she learned to say were, "We have no bugs!" Why do you think she needed to learn to say that? (*Allow response.*) Many inns where mule drivers stayed had fleas and other bugs, but Jeannie and Gladys made sure their inn was bug free.

Day after day Gladys stood outside the inn, calling, "We have no bugs! We have no fleas! Good food! Come

in here!" The mule drivers would come to the inn, and Gladys would scrape the mud from the mules while the drivers listened to true stories from the Bible. These mule drivers spread news throughout North China as they traveled. They shared the stories of God that Mrs. Lawson and Gladys had told them. They also told everyone the inn was the best place to stay. Soon the inn became famous all around Yangcheng! People were hearing about a God who loved them, and they carried stories and songs about God all over North China.

Gladys and Jeannie would also travel to nearby villages to tell them about God's amazing love. At first, the people in Yangcheng and the surrounding villages didn't treat Gladys well. They called her a foreign devil, avoided her in the streets, and even threw things at her! But this didn't stop Gladys from loving these people. She worked hard to learn their language so she could tell them of all the amazing things Jesus had done for them. And soon, people grew to respect Gladys because of her good work at the inn. Gladys helped Jeannie run the inn for a year. Then suddenly, Jeannie had a bad fall and died, leaving Gladys alone with no money and few friends. How would she manage?

Gladys wanted to keep the inn open, but she didn't have any money, and often there was barely enough food to go around. Gladys prayed, trusting God to take care of her.

Would Gladys be able to keep the inn open? Would God provide for her needs so she could keep sharing the Good News of Jesus at the inn? Or did He have another plan for Gladys Aylward? You'll have to come back next time to find out!

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Birthday Chat



Birthdays are special. Have kids share what they like to eat or do on their birthdays that is special. Today in our story Nicodemus probably had a spiritual birthday – he believed in Jesus and started following him. Ask kids if they remember their spiritual birthday and have them tell you about it.

DISMISSAL

Hand out a Quiet Time Sheet (Week 2 in the Resource Pack) to each child. Encourage them to fill it out and bring it back next week. As children are getting picked up, try and connect with the parents and let them know we learned about spiritual birthdays this week.

Only Jesus Can Give You New Life – Nicodemus Can't Save Himself

This page has been designed for you to photocopy and place in your Bible as a ready reference.

Lesson Outline	
I. INTRODUCTION Can you think of one good thing you did today?	
II. PROGRESSION OF EVENTS	
A. Flashcard 2-1 	Nicodemus had some questions and he hoped he could find answers.
B. Flashcard 2-2 (John 3:1) 	1. Nicodemus was a Pharisee. 2. Pharisees tried to follow the laws to make themselves look good instead of following them because they loved God.
C. Flashcard 2-3 (John 3:2) 	Nicodemus knew there was something very different about Jesus because of the miracles He was doing.
D. Flashcard 2-4 (John 3:2-3) 	1. Nicodemus went to the place Jesus was staying to talk with Him. 2. Jesus came to the Earth He created to show how much He loves and cares for His Creation. [John 3:16] 3. Jesus told Nicodemus that he would have to be born again to see God's kingdom.
E. Flashcard 2-5 (John 3:4-16) 	1. Nicodemus did not understand. 2. If you have not trusted Jesus as Savior, your spirit is dead. [Ephesians 2:1-2a] 3. Nicodemus was born in sin but Jesus wanted him to know that to be born again is to be made new—alive instead of dead in sin. 4. Jesus reminded Nicodemus of the bronze snake. 5. Jesus would be lifted up on a cross.
F. Flashcard 2-6 	Jesus came to the world to take your punishment for sin. [2 Corinthians 5:21a; 1 John 1:7b]
III. CLIMAX Nicodemus needed to believe that only Jesus could save him from sin!	
IV. CONCLUSION  If you've been born again, you are a new person in Christ. [2 Corinthians 5:17]  No matter how many good things you do or how many rules you obey, your good works can never save you. [John 3:15]	

Scripture verses in parentheses are background text.
Bracketed verses should be quoted or read from God's Word.