

# Adventures with GOD!

## JESUS WITH NICODEMUS (C.1.Spring.7)

Biblical Reference	John 3:1-21
Key Verse	John 3:11-15
Key Concept	Salvation which leads to eternal life is a rebirth that takes place when I believe in Jesus Christ and he reigns in my life.
Educational Objectives	At the end of the class today, the children will be able to: 1. Tell who Nicodemus was and why he was confused 2. Explain God's plan for salvation 3. Recognize God's love

### Life Application

John 3 is perhaps one of the most important chapters in the Bible. In this chapter Jesus makes know the plan that God has to save humanity. In this chapter we see the depth of God's love for us. And God's plan to serve and transform the whole world through the sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross. Each person must decide what they will do with the information that Jesus gave to Nicodemus. The children will think about their own lives God's love for them, the effects of sin, and the good news of salvation.

### Possible Activities and Class Plan

Activity	Materials	Time
My GROW Adventure	GROW Adventure w/God materials	5 minutes
Opening Prayer	Candle	1 minute
Bible exploration	Worksheets, Information, Bibles, pens	30 minutes
Creative Reflection	Poem, acronym worksheets	10 minutes
Dialogue	Bibles, illustrations	20 minutes
Reflection		5 minutes
Conclusion	Bible Verses	10 minutes
My GROW Adventure	Review	5 minutes
Closing Prayer	Candle	1 minute

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## INSTRUCTIONS

**My GROW Adventure with God Weekly Review:** As children enter take time to have them reflect on their adventure with God booklets and either discuss or use art materials to express their journey during the past week. You may wish to add any art work, written poems, prayers or songs to a GROW wall in the room. You can find my GROW Adventure with God materials on the Covchurch.org website in the same place as the Adventures with God sessions.

**Opening Prayer:** Gather children around a candle. Light the candle and explain that we are entering into a special time with God. Encourage the children to hold their hands out in front of them palms up as a sign they are ready to receive what God has for them today.

**Prayer Example:** Lord God, thank you for making us, for loving us, for forgiving us, and guiding us. We know you are here with us right now. As we enter into your word, the Bible, help us draw close to you, to understand and to listen to what you have to say to us. Amen (For safety sake, you may wish to extinguish the candle after the prayer)

**Bible Reading:** Explain that as we read the Bible we do that first to spend time with God. Children can remain with hands out stretched palms up to receive the word as it's being read. Alternatively they can be invited to draw what they hear. Read the key verse Bible passage for the day two times and ask children to respond.

**Question examples:** What did you notice in this passage? How does it make you feel? Was there anything you would ask God about that you didn't understand or was confusing? Is God saying anything to you though the story?

**Bible Exploration:** Read John 3:1-21 again – Explain the background using the information sheet Nicodemus in the pages that follow. Work through the Nicodemus worksheet as a class or in small groups.

**Creative Reflection:** Use the poem or acronym sheets that follow for creative reflection of the story.

**Dialogue:** For children who have always been in the church, they might be familiar with the term "salvation" as it's a term that is used a lot. But, even though they've heard it might not mean that they understand it. Many times unfortunately we use terms without really

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understanding what it means. What is the salvation that Jesus explained to Nicodemus? What did Jesus say about salvation? What didn't he say? That is the focus of the dialogue today.

Begin by telling the story of Nicodemus. Help them to think about how Nicodemus, an important man, felt when he went to see Jesus. What was his motive? How nervous must he have been thinking about the fact that his reputation was at risk among his peers if they knew he was talking with Jesus? Why did he go to talk to Jesus at night? What must he have felt to see Jesus? How did Jesus react at seeing him?

Help them to "live" the story and see that many times Jesus used symbols that were familiar for his audience. What symbols did Jesus use when talking with Nicodemus? What symbols would he use today to express the same things about God's salvation and "new life" that he explained to Nicodemus? Have illustrations ready to show them. Maybe they can think of others. Let them use their creativity.

Before the dialogue is done, make sure they are all walking away with a clearer idea of what "salvation" and "new life" is all about. Help them think about their own lives and how they respond to what Jesus says. Use the "Salvation" sheet that follows. They want to experience "new life" in Christ? What would that look like?

**Reflection:** Use one of the illustrations in the following pages. Ask students to write "what they think Jesus wants to say to them" on the illustration page. You read God's part and have the students read "our part" together.

**Conclusion:** Use the time to pray with children, if possible individually. Ask them if they want to pray and ask Jesus to give them new life and salvation that is a gift from God. Spend time singing if time permits.

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## Today's GROW Adventure with God Review:

G: God's Word: What is the story? (give children an opportunity to express their understanding of the story)

R: Relationships: Is there anything in today's bible story that shows us how we should or shouldn't share God's love with others? (Remind children that sometimes God uses the stories of the bible to show us how we shouldn't act toward God or others and give them a chance to consider how we might show God's love instead)

O: Outward Action: Is there anything in the bible story that shows us how we should help or serve God or others? (Explore concrete ways the children could live this out in the coming week)

W: Worship: Is there anything in the bible story that shows us how we should accept God's love for us and others? Ask: How do you feel about God? How would you like to respond to God? What would you like to say to God?

**Closing Prayer:** Gather children around the candle again. As you light the candle explain that the flame is something that is present in the light and the darkness. In the same way, it reminds us that God is always with us. Is there anything anyone wishes to say to God? After children have responded, close the prayer time.

**Prayer Example:** Lord God, we thank you that you are always with us, and always love us. It's good to be with you. Thank you for what we have learned today. Thank you for being with us and for teaching us through the Bible. Help us to remember what you have taught us today and to live it out when we leave. Amen

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## INFORMATION SHEET

### Nicodemus

Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a member of the Sanhedrin and he was a teacher of the law.

1. Pharisees
  - a. They had to make vows in front of three witnesses that they would follow the law and not break it.
  - b. They were very concerned with purity and following the law. But, because some of the laws that were found in the Torah were not very clear, they made a book of rules to help people follow the laws given by Moses. For example, “Keep the Sabbath day and make it holy as the Lord your God has commanded,” was clarified with more laws about what it meant to “keep the Sabbath.” Instead of helping people, it just became more of a burden. Example – they couldn’t look in a mirror on the Sabbath because it was considered work.
  - c. The Pharisees identified holiness with things and external actions – the meat they ate and what they drank. But Jesus emphasized other things. For Jesus, holiness had to do with a person’s heart, a heart at peace with God. It wasn’t just about external actions, but our heart needs to be cleaned as well. Jesus’ message was radical.
2. So, one night a Pharisee came to talk with Jesus.
  - a. We have to remember that Jesus had preformed the miracle in Cana and that the news had traveled to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and expelled the people who were selling inside and abusing the house of God.
  - b. Nicodemus had heard about Jesus. We can almost imagine what Nicodemus is saying “I just want to see who this guy is. But, what if one of my friends or neighbors sees me?”
  - c. So Nicodemus came to the house where Jesus was staying and they probably went up to the roof so they could talk in private. There was probably some awkward silence, Jesus waiting for Nicodemus to start and Nicodemus not

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knowing where to start. Finally it is Nicodemus who starts the conversation with an statement that was really a question.

- i. What did he want to say with his statement?
  - ii. With his statement we know that he believed Jesus was a new prophet.
3. How does Jesus respond? It's interesting that Nicodemus, just like the Samaritan woman made Jesus get to the point of what he was saying.
  - a. This "new birth" was a new concept for Nicodemus.
  - b. Jesus was trying to show him that for all of his good intentions and the law that he had followed, for all the good things he had done, it was not enough to save him. Salvation comes through the love and sacrifice of Jesus.
  - c. But Nicodemus didn't understand what Jesus was saying. Instead of getting the idea, he was thinking how absurd it was to talk about "being born again." Jesus very patiently tried to explain it to him. Jesus had patience because Nicodemus was a very important teacher in Israel and he hadn't understood what God's will was. (read verses 9 and 10)
  - d. Jesus loved Nicodemus and wanted to help Nicodemus see how profound this new life is. He shed a little bit of light into the future when he used the example of the snake. (It was an example well known by Nicodemus. It would be good to look at the story in Numbers 21:4-9. Jesus is giving Nicodemus a clue about what will happen. Just like the snake was raised up, the son of man – Jesus – will be lifted up. What is this a reference to? And what is it that saved the people in the desert? Faith.
4. Verses 16-21 are very important verses. In them Jesus explains God's desire for everyone to be saved. It also explains that salvation does not come through works, but faith. Good works are a result of the faith we have put in Jesus.
5. How are we today? Are we like the Pharisees? Have we understood our need to be born again?

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## GROUP WORK #1

### Word find

Find the words below that are found in John 3

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

NICODEMUS      ETERNAL      GOD

BORN              MOSES              WORLD

SPIRIT            BELIEVE            JESUS

SNAKE            WATER              WIND

LIFE

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## GROUP WORK #1

### Answer key

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



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## Acronym

Read John 3:1-21 and think about Jesus' message to Nicodemus.

Make an acronym using the letters from the words "new life" (see the example below)

N

E

W

L

I

F

E

Example: L ife ambition

O pen heart

V ery important example is Jesus

E very day we need to let others experience it.

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## Bible Exploration - Nicodemus

Read John 3:1-21 and then answer the questions below.

The name who visited Jesus at night was: \_\_\_\_\_

Why did he visit Jesus at night?

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What was the title that the man used for Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the question the man asked Jesus?

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What image did Jesus use to explain what it means to be born spiritually?

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What comparison did Jesus make between the Old Testament and something that hasn't happened yet?

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Why was the son of God sent to the world?

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Why WASN'T the son of God sent to the world?

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## Poem or collage

Read John 3:1-21

As a group, decide how to express the message of new life using the method of a writing a poem, or putting together a collage or a drawing. You will find materials necessary to make a collage of pictures, or markers to draw a picture, or paper to write a poem.

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## SALVATION SHEET

Salvation = to save someone or protect someone from harm. (Example – a person saves a baby from being hit by a car.)

Because God loves us, God comes to us as a baby. God was named Jesus. God shows us how much he loves us by dying on the cross to save us from sin and death.

### God's part

John 3:16 says that God loves us and that's why Jesus came.

God says, "Sin leads us away from life with God. (Romans 1:18, 6:23)

The Bible says that no one has always obeyed God. Everyone has turned away from God and sinned. (Romans 3:10-12)

God sent his son, Jesus Christ, to suffer for our sins and show God's infinite love. (Romans 3:25)

Jesus left his glory and came to the world. He grew up and became a man. Then he suffered on a cross for our sins. He took our sins. (1 Peter 2:24, 2 Corinthians 5:21)

Jesus suffered and died, and then he rose again. He lives now in glory and defeated death.

### Our part

Love Jesus just as Jesus loves us.

God wants our lives to be changed and wants us to follow his ways.

God says that if we confess our sins and our need to be forgiven, he will forgive us.

Do you love Jesus; believe he is God who is able to save you? (Acts 16:31)

Once you choose to believe in Jesus and follow in his ways, you are a part of God's family and have a special role in God's mission on earth. You are an agent of God's love.

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ILLUSTRATION



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## ILLUSTRATION

### Jesus and Nicodemus

