



# John

Jesus and Nicodemus

Lesson #3  
June 13/14

**Lesson Objective:** Jesus makes it possible to be born again.

**Activity:** How in the World? (supplies: index cards, 2 per person; pencils)

Write four questions on separate index cards regarding how things work. Examples of questions: • How can flies land on the ceiling? • How do glasses help people see? • Why is the ocean salty? • Why does ice cream cause a “brain freeze”? Provide a pencil and two index cards to each person. Read one question and each person write down a brief answer.

If someone does not know the correct answer, encourage them to write their best guess. Take turns to read your answers. Vote which answer you think is correct. Then give the correct explanation. Play again for each question.

**Connect To activity to the lesson:**

How would you answer the question, “How can anyone be born when he is old?” Jesus poses this question to a man who has a hard time understanding how this could be. Let’s see how Jesus explained it.

**WORSHIP** - Choose 2-3 songs to worship together as a family.

**Prayers:** How can I pray for you?

**Introduction:**

Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews; that is, he was a religious leader who taught God’s law, and he was a member of the Sanhedrin—a Jewish governing body. Nicodemus held to the belief that if a person was a law-abiding Jew, he would be accepted by God. Jesus gave Nicodemus a lesson that would turn his belief system on its head. Jesus was a carpenter (Mark 6:3), so the religious teachers likely assumed He didn’t know theology. But they had seen Jesus’ miraculous signs in Jerusalem. Nicodemus had to conclude, “You are a teacher who has come from God” (John 3:2).

**Video: “ Jesus and Nicodemus”** (Video Transcript)

One night, a religious man came to see Jesus. The man’s name was Nicodemus. Nicodemus was a Pharisee. He studied and taught God’s law, and he tried very hard to obey the law. Nicodemus wanted to know more about Jesus. “Rabbi,” he said, “we know that You are a teacher who has come from God. No one could do the miracles You do unless God were with him.” Nicodemus had that right. Jesus said, “I tell you: Unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Now Nicodemus was confused. He thought that keeping all God’s laws was how a person got into heaven. Besides, what Jesus said didn’t make any sense! “How can anyone be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. Jesus said, “A person cannot enter God’s kingdom unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit.” When a baby is born, he gets physical life from his parents. Physical life doesn’t last forever. But the Spirit gives people a better kind of life—spiritual life—so they can live with God forever. Jesus said, “Don’t be surprised I told you that you must be born again.” Nicodemus still didn’t understand. “How is this possible?” he asked.

Jesus said, “When you don’t believe what I say about things I’ve seen on earth, how will you believe what I say about the things I’ve seen in heaven? Do you remember how Moses raised up the bronze snake in the wilderness? Everyone who looked at it was healed. Like that, the Son of Man will be raised up, so that everyone who believes in Him will have eternal life.” Then Jesus told Nicodemus about God’s great plan. Jesus said, “God loved the world in this way: He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. God did not send His

Son to declare the world guilty, but to save the world. Anyone who believes in Him is found not guilty, but anyone who does not believe in Him is guilty already.”

*Christ Connection: Nicodemus needed new life—eternal life—but he could not do anything to earn it. Eternal life is a gift that comes only from God. God showed His love in this way: He sent His one and only Son to save the world. Everyone who believes in Him will not perish but will have eternal life.*

### **Read – John 3**

#### **Debrief:**

**What does it mean to be “born again”?** *(When a baby is born, he gets physical life from his parents. Physical life doesn’t last forever. But the Spirit gives people spiritual life so they can live with God forever. Every person is born a sinner—spiritually dead and separated from God. Eternal life is a gift that comes only from God. It is by God’s Spirit—not our own effort—that we are born again.)*

**How was the bronze serpent being lifted up like Jesus being lift up?** *(Like the serpent, Jesus was lifted up on the cross. He died for our sins and was raised from the dead. Like the Israelites with snakebites, we can’t do anything to save ourselves. But we can look to Jesus for salvation.)*

**Can a person get into heaven by doing enough good things? Why or why not?** *(God wants us to obey Him, but the Bible says everyone sins. (Rom. 3:23) If we had to obey God perfectly to go to heaven, no one would ever get to heaven! We are accepted by God when we trust in Jesus, who lived a perfect life and died the death we deserve for our sins.)*

#### **Apply the Story:**

Nicodemus initiated the conversation, but Jesus chose the subject. His words perplexed Nicodemus: “Unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). Jesus explained that spiritual birth is not unlike physical birth in that a person cannot do it himself; it is something that happens to him. Jesus reminded Nicodemus of an Old Testament account, the disobedient Israelites and the bronze snake. The Israelites could not help themselves, but when they trusted in God and looked to the bronze snake lifted up on the pole, they were healed. (Num. 21:4-9) Emphasize to kids that every person is born a sinner—spiritually dead and alienated from God. It is by God’s Spirit—not our own effort—that we are born again. We look to Jesus and His finished work on the cross for our salvation.

**Momentum Moment:** Make Oobleck (supplies: disposable bowl, 1 cup of water, 1½ cups cornstarch, paper towels or wet wipes for cleanup, optional: spoon)

Demonstrate how to make oobleck, a substance that acts like both a solid and a liquid. First, pour 1 cup of water into a disposable bowl. Gradually add 1½ cups cornstarch. Stir thoroughly or mix with your hands. Adjust the consistency of the oobleck by adding more water or cornstarch.

Show kids how the oobleck reacts to touch by slowly pulling your fingers through it. It will flow and drip like a liquid. Poke or punch the oobleck. Applying pressure to the mixture will make it will feel hard like a solid. If you wish, allow kids to experiment with the oobleck. Invite them to knead it, roll it, or pour it. Provide paper towels or wet wipes for cleanup. Remind kids that Jesus taught that we must be born again to enter God’s kingdom. Without Jesus, we are spiritually dead. Our hearts are hard, and we love sin more than we love God. But God can soften people’s hearts and make them moldable to His ways, just like the oobleck was moldable around whatever it was near. Jesus offers new life to those who trust in Him for salvation.

**Close with a prayer:** Let each person take a moment to say a one sentence prayer.