

October 8, 2017

Morning Overview

Lesson: *A Visit by Night: Nicodemus*

Lesson Objective: This week we look at the interaction between Nicodemus and Jesus at nighttime. Nighttime visitation offers a cover for the religious teacher who should know better, or should know more, than a local, itinerant teacher. But this local, itinerant teacher is no ordinary man, but is Jesus, the Son of God, whom all the Old Testament predicts. In our story, Jesus tries several times to explain to Nicodemus that the new birth must come from God; Nicodemus cannot make it happen on his own. Whether the teaching and the work of God take place in Nicodemus' life is only evident by what takes place at the end of John's gospel (John 19:38-42). As Jesus tells Nicodemus, He, the Son of Man, has come so that all can look to Him, like the Bronze Serpent, and can be saved. This story highlights elements of our spiritual deadness, Christ's redemptive work, the work of the Holy Spirit, and of faith. Continue to point the children in your room to the Son of Man high and lifted up!

Scripture: John 3:1-21

Story: Vos Children's Bible, Chapter 12 (Pages 276-277); Gospel Story Book Bible, Pages 175-176.

9:30am Sunday Schedule

Opening Activity

See instructions in classroom

Cherub Church

- Kindergarten/5's – 9:35-10:00 (Classroom's: 162, 121, 123, 124)
- 3's/4's – 10:05-10:30 (Classroom's: 168, 166, 165, 164, 163)

Craft: Nicodemus meets Jesus

Supplies: Black cardstock, moon, Nicodemus figure, Jesus figure, craft stick, stars

- Instructions:**
1. Glue Jesus figure and moon to cardstock, add stars.
 2. Tape or glue Nicodemus figure to craft stick.
 3. Slide stick through slit in cardstock so Nicodemus can visit Jesus.



Relay of the Day: See instructions in classroom

Snack

11am Sunday Schedule

Opening Activity:

See instructions in classroom

Craft: Pinwheel

Supplies: Pinwheel, straw, brad

- Instructions:**
1. Color pinwheel however desired.
 2. Attach pinwheel to straw with brad through hole in straw.



Cherub Church for 3's (Classroom's: 168, 166, 165) – 11:40-11:55

Relay of the Day: See instructions in classroom

Optional Activity: See bin of squishy balls in classroom for ideas on reviewing catechism questions.

Story: *A Visit by Night: Nicodemus*

1. **PRAY** for your time and any requests the children may have.
2. **ASK** the transition question: (Have a volunteer stand by the light switch and turn off all the lights or some of the lights; volunteer should stay there to turn lights back on). Boys and girls, what has happened in the room? (Allow for answers: it's dark). Being in the dark can make things very difficult; it's hard to see something or know what's going on. Have you ever tried to walk around in your room in the dark? In our story today, Jesus gets a visitor at nighttime, or in the dark, and this visitor is very special. Let's find out more in our story...
3. **TELL** the Story. Use the Vos Children's Bible, the Jesus Storybook Bible, the Beginner's Bible, or the story below to aid in telling the story. Feel free to edit and adapt to your own style. Include props and teaching aids as you see fit.
4. **REVIEW** the questions to help children understand the story.

Teaching Summary:

- God's promises do not change despite circumstances, people and even our inability to believe them. God keeps His promises even when we do not trust Him or follow His commands.
- For many, many years God's people expected the Promised One – a King – to come and make all things right.
- The religious teacher, Nicodemus, comes to visit Jesus at night so he would not be discovered by other religious teachers.
- Nicodemus asks Jesus several questions, but all of Jesus' answers leave Nicodemus confused.
- Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born again. To be born again, however, is the work of the Holy Spirit and not of Nicodemus.
- Jesus also tells Nicodemus that he must look, in faith, to the Son of Man high and lifted up to be saved. In our story it is important to note that the new birth and the object of our faith, or saving, are outside of us. We can conclude that we are totally unable AND incapable of saving ourselves. God must save us!
- Jesus concludes his time with Nicodemus by revealing to him the great plan God has: to save everyone from themselves, sin and the darkness (John 3:16-21).

Story

Transition

(Have a volunteer stand by the light switch and turn off all the lights or some of the lights; volunteer should stay there to turn lights back on). Boys and girls, what has happened in the room? (Allow for answers: it's dark). Being in the dark can make things very difficult; it's hard to see something or know what's going on. Have you ever tried to walk around in your room in the dark? In our story today, Jesus gets a visitor at nighttime, or in the dark, and this visitor is very special. Let's find out more in our story...

A Nighttime Visitor

There was a man named Nicodemus who was one of the Pharisees. Pharisees were leaders in Israel who taught people about the Old Testament. Nicodemus was an important Jewish leader. Nicodemus had heard about Jesus and His teachings. He had many questions to ask Jesus, but Nicodemus was afraid to ask them during the daytime. He was afraid because Nicodemus thought that if someone saw him with Jesus they might make fun of him, or even hurt him. One night Nicodemus decided to visit Jesus that way no one could see him talking to Jesus.

Nicodemus said, "Teacher, we know that you are a teacher sent from God. No one can do the miracles you do unless God is with him." But Jesus gave an answer that was a little confusing to Nicodemus. He said, "I tell you the truth. Unless you are born again, you cannot be in God's kingdom."

Nicodemus did not understand what Jesus was saying. This must have sounded like a riddle. Nicodemus asked Jesus, "But if a man is old, how can he be a baby again?" Nicodemus knew he could not be a baby again, so how can he be born again? Nicodemus was very confused. What we must understand is that Jesus was not talking about being a baby again, but Jesus was telling Nicodemus that someone would have to make Him new again. The Holy Spirit would have to make Nicodemus new again.

Jesus explained it to Nicodemus like this: “A person is born from human parents. But a person’s spiritual life is born from the Holy Spirit. Don’t be surprised when I tell you, ‘You must all be born again.’” Nicodemus sort of understood what Jesus was saying, but was still mostly confused. When a baby is born, they have a body just like their parents but only smaller. The baby has eyes, toes, lips and a belly button just like their parents. But what Jesus was trying to tell Nicodemus is that to have a relationship with God, the Holy Spirit must make you new, or born again. Just like a baby cannot be born on its own (it needs a mother to bring them into the world), no one can be made new, or born again, on their own. We all need God to make us new or born again; it’s the only way!

Nicodemus had more questions. But Jesus was not finished telling Nicodemus a few more things. “The wind blows where it wants to go. You hear the wind blow, but you don’t know where the wind comes from or where it is going. It is the same with every person who is born from the Spirit.” Now Nicodemus was very confused! But what Jesus was telling Nicodemus is that you need the Holy Spirit to change your heart. You cannot do it on your own! Nicodemus thought what Jesus was saying was unbelievable. So he asked Jesus, “How can all this be possible?”

Jesus scolded Nicodemus for not believing what He said. “You are an important teacher in Israel, but you still don’t understand these things?” Jesus, who the whole Old Testament was telling would come, was standing in front of Nicodemus. Even as an important teacher in Israel, Nicodemus should have recognized Jesus was the Promised One but he did not.

Jesus wanted Nicodemus to understand what He was saying, so He kept teaching. Jesus reminded Nicodemus about the Bronze Serpent in the wilderness and how all who looked to it would be healed from the poisonous snakebites (Numbers 21:6-9). Nicodemus knew the story well. Jesus then said, “It is the same with the Son of Man. The Son of Man must be lifted up too. Then everyone who believes in him can have eternal life.” The Son of Man was another name for Jesus. God had promised long ago that the Son of Man would come (Daniel 7:13-14). Jesus was telling Nicodemus about something to come – where Jesus would be lifted for all to see and believe. Jesus was telling Nicodemus about the Cross.

All of this happened because God had a plan to save His people. Only God could save people through Jesus, the Promised One; it was the only way! Jesus tells Nicodemus these very famous words:

“For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son. God gave his Son so that whoever believes in him may not be lost, but have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world guilty, but to save the world through him.”

Questions for Review

Questions for Younger Children:

- Who was the man that came to visit Jesus?
- What was Nicodemus’ job – what was he known as?
- When did Nicodemus come to visit Jesus? Why?
- What did Jesus tell Nicodemus must happen?
- What did Nicodemus think he must become to be born again?
- What did Jesus tell Nicodemus comes and goes as it pleases?
- What story did Jesus tell Nicodemus about from the Old Testament?
- Can you say, or recite from memory, John 3:16?

Questions for Older Children:

- What does the story tell us about God?
- What does this story tell us about God’s faithfulness?
- What does this story tell us about God’s love for us?

Scripture Memory for October:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

Catechism Questions (1-20)

Hymn of the Month:

Amazing Grace