

Jesus Meets with Nicodemus- John 3:1-17

THE POINT

Focus:

Jesus provides salvation to the world.

Application:

We trust Jesus to be born again by the Holy Spirit

Last Week: Jesus' Temptation

2 Weeks Ago: The Parable of the Lost Coin

HEART CONNECTION (5-7 MINUTES)

OPTION #1:

MATERIALS:

- Box fan or rotating fan
- crepe paper streamers (a short length for each child)

Content: Talk about how today you're going to talk about something that's very important, but it's invisible! Is there anything they can think of that's invisible? How do they know that it's there?

Guide the conversation toward air and wind. In our passage today, the Spirit is compared to wind that blows different directions and cannot be controlled.

Demonstrate how the fan can blow the streamer with different forces.

Let the class take a few minutes to experiment with their own streamers and fan- it makes sense to you an an adult, but it's not common-sense to children!

OPTION #2:

MATERIALS:

- Balloons- enough for one for each child (not blown up)

Content: Talk about how today you're going to talk about something that's very important, but it's invisible! Is there anything they can think of that's invisible? How do they know that it's there? Guide the conversation towards air.

When we blow on the back of our hand, we can feel the air, but we can't see it. When we blow air into a balloon, we see the balloon get bigger. When we let go of the balloon, the air goes back out again.

Let the class have a few minutes to experiment with the balloons. Then, gather the together to hear the story.

STORY CONNECTION (8-11 MINUTES)

MATERIALS:

- two human figurines: peg people, clothespin dolls, etc.
- 1 felt square, any neutral color
- John 3:16 printable (available online) or at these links;
 - <https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B0RweH-3RyI0MVJ5aFFmVFBqS0E/edit>
 - <http://www.makinglearningfun.com/t.asp?b=m&t=http://www.makinglearningfun.com/Activities/Bible/Bible-GodSoLovedWorld-Coloring.gif>
 - <http://www.religiousdoodles.com/uploads/2/6/1/6/26162462/forgodsoloved.pdf>

Optional: Dim the lights and use flashlights, LED candles, or twinkle lights to emphasize the nighttime setting of the story.

Note: If you have an amateur actor on your children's teaching team, this is a great story to have Nicodemus "show up" and share a first-person account of his experience.

Have the children sit in a circle for the story This helps include children who might feel shy, and it helps each child feel equally engaged. It reassures children that they are seen and welcome in the community.

This is an easy story to overlook because it's very common in Evangelical circles. Keep in mind that it's not "old news" to most children- some of them have never heard it before! If your congregation celebrates the Eucharist each week, you can tie verses 16 and 17 into the celebration of Christ's sacrifice and our new life.

If your congregation stresses a personal conversion experience, this would be an appropriate lesson to provide literature or other materials to children or families.

John 3:1-8, 16-17

There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus. He was one of the Jewish rulers. 2 He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. We know that God is with you. If he weren't, you couldn't do the signs you are doing."

*Hold out one figurine when you introduce Nicodemus. Place him on the felt square.
Do the same for the Jesus figurine when you read verse 2.*

3 Jesus replied, "What I'm about to tell you is true. No one can see God's kingdom unless they are born again."

4 "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "They can't go back inside their mother! They can't be born a second time!"

5 Jesus answered, "What I'm about to tell you is true. No one can enter God's kingdom unless they are born with water and the Holy Spirit. 6 People give birth to people. But the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised when I say, 'You must all be born again.' 8 The wind blows where it wants to. You hear the sound it makes. But you can't tell where it comes from or where it is going. It is the same with everyone who is born with the Spirit."

Refer back to the crepe streamers or balloons when you talk about the Spirit and the wind in verse 8. Let the children try again to wave their streamers or blow open their balloons.

16 God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life. 17 God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world. He sent his Son to save the world through him.

Pass out the John 3:16 printable after reading verses 16 and 17. Explain that much of God's message to people is summed up in this verse: God's love for us was so huge that Jesus died on the cross for our sins. By choosing to receive God's love, we can live with God in his Kingdom forever.

WONDER CONNECTION (3-5 MINUTES)

MATERIALS: None.

I wonder what it was like on that night that Nicodemus met with Jesus.

I wonder if Nicodemus was confused about the wind.

I wonder if I will ever know how much God loves each of us.

What do you wonder?

SPIRIT CONNECTION (7-10 MINUTES)

MATERIALS: Coloring supplies: paper, crayons, pencils, hard drawing surfaces (floor, clipboard, or a table).

Today, this is an appropriate time to color the printable.

Take a few minutes to talk quietly with the Lord while you draw, write, or just think inside your heard. Talk with God about the story today. This is a quiet time for you to spend with the Lord, not with your neighbor or anyone else.