



Grace Church Elementary

Camp Grace

LESSON 55

3rd and 4th Grade

Principle: You must believe in Christ to be born again.

Bible Character(s): Jesus and Nicodemus

Scripture Reference: John 3:1-18



PERSONAL PREPARATION: Before this weekend, read John 3:1-18, and Ephesians 2:1-9. As you read, focus on how Jesus moves Nicodemus from the physical reality to the spiritual reality. Spend some time praying that your campers will be able to move from thinking of birth in the physical sense to understanding the spiritual reality of new life through Jesus Christ.

PLUG IN TIME - 5-10 minutes as the kids begin to arrive

Arrive early to check the supplies in the bin and review the lesson. Write today's principle on the whiteboard. Remember to greet all campers upon arrival; meet their parents; welcome and introduce all visitors. Create a welcoming cabin for all campers!

Birthday Party Memories

Supplies:

Copy paper (1 per child)

Crayons/Markers

Gave each camper a piece of plain white paper and have them spend time drawing pictures of a favorite and most memorable birthday or birthday party. Then let them take turns sharing the memories. Hang the pictures on the clothesline for them to see while you go through the lesson. You will use these again in the last activity.



BIG GROUP TIME - 35-40 minutes

As you line up, remind campers we are going to have fun as an entire Camp Grace group! We are going to live out GRACE by **Glorifying God** through worship, **Respecting All Leaders**, and **Accepting Responsibility** to listen with attentive ears, minds, and hearts - fully **Celebrating Christ** with passion! We should **Encourage Others** to do the same, by not distracting them from their worship of God.

*Take your cabin flag to Big Group.

The Bridge to Small Group

Today we will explore more about being born again and how we each change into a new creature and mature in Christ. We will see that we are dead in our sin and that through Jesus Christ we are given new life.

Small Group Time - 25-30 minutes

Getting Started

If your cabin did well in Big Group, acknowledge it. If not, take a couple of minutes to talk about how they can do better next time.

What did you learn in Big Group? Why did one staff member say he/she has two birthdays? (Physical birthday, and spiritual birthday of being “born again.”)

Last week, who did we learn about? (We learned about the disciples, and when they decided to follow Jesus. They spent time with Him, learned from Him, lived in a way that gave Him glory, and told others about Him.) **We also have the chance to be disciples, or followers, of Jesus. When we believe in Jesus as our Savior, confess our sin and turn away from it, we can follow Jesus just like His disciples did. We follow him by spending time with Him, learning from Him, making choices that bring Him glory, and telling others about Him.**

We talked about birthdays before and during Big Group. Why do we celebrate birthdays? (Allow responses.) On our birthdays, we remember the day that we were first born and we celebrate that we have grown another year older. In Big Group, we heard about being “born again.” We’ll talk more about that today. This is kind of like a spiritual birthday.

Let’s begin by reading the Bible in John 3 [NLT].

John 3:1-2

1 There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. 2 After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. “Rabbi,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.”

Who knows what a Pharisee is? (The religious leaders of the Jews, similar to a priest or pastor.) In verse 2 it says that Nicodemus came after dark. **Why do you think he came to talk to Jesus at night?** (He didn’t want others to see him because he is a Pharisee and many other Pharisees do not like Jesus.) Nicodemus recognized that Jesus was from God, but he did not understand that Jesus is God. Let’s continue to read the Bible and see what Jesus has to say.

John 3:3-4

3 Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.”

4 "What do you mean?" exclaimed Nicodemus. "How can an old man go back into his mother's womb and be born again?"

Birthday Line-Up



The purpose is to show that Nicodemus was focusing on the physical reality rather than seeing the spiritual reality.

Have campers line up in order of their birthdays, January to December. The older classes must get in the correct order without talking. The younger classes can be timed to see how quickly they can line up.

Tie It Together



Each one of you was born on a specific day as a baby. Nicodemus was right; he could not be born as a baby again. Nicodemus is thinking about his physical birth when God created him as a baby. Let's see how Jesus responds to Nicodemus in the Bible.

John 3:5-7

5 Jesus replied, "I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. 6 Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. 7 So don't be surprised when I say, 'You must be born again.'

We cannot have real life, the life God created us to have, as long as we are sinners. God created us to be in perfect relationship with Him, but because our hearts are filled with sin and God cannot be around sin, there is nothing we can do on our own to be in relationship with Him. In fact, the Bible tells us that we are dead because of our sin. But we have a good God, who loves us very much and provided a way for us to have life and be in relationship with Him.

Ephesians 2:4-6.

4 But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, 5 that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) 6 For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus.

This says that God gives us life when we believe in what Jesus did for us. This is what Jesus is talking about when He tells Nicodemus that all must be born again. We cannot be born again as babies, but we gain new life when we believe in Jesus. He removes our sin so that we can live with Him for eternity. Let's continue reading the Bible.

John 3:8.

8 The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit

This verse is hard to understand. We are called to have faith even when we don't completely

understand something. We know that when we believe who Jesus is and trust in Him, we are “born again,” even if we do not completely understand how this happens. We have faith in who Jesus is and who we are in having new life. Jesus uses an example in verse 8. What did Jesus use to show that we believe in things we cannot see or fully understand? (Wind.) Can you see the wind? No, but you still know it’s there. That’s like having faith. Let’s continue reading the Bible to take a closer look at what faith means.

Celebrating Faith



The purpose is to give examples of faith, believing in something we cannot see or fully understand.

Supplies:

Balloon (1 per session)

Party blowout (1 per session)

Large pinwheel (1 per bin)

Mini pinwheel (1 per camper)

Pinwheel verse tags – Hebrews 11:1 (1 per camper)

Blow up a balloon (don’t tie the end) then let the balloon go. Ask the campers if they saw the air. Blow the noisemakers, then the large pinwheel and ask the campers if they saw the air. Have the campers attach the verse to their pinwheel (with tape or punch a hole and slide the tag onto the pinwheel stem). Tell them to take the pinwheel home as a reminder that “Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see.”

Tie It Together



We cannot see the air or wind, but we know it is real. We see the noisemaker work, and we see trees move when the wind blows. We have faith that the wind and air are real. When we have faith in Jesus, we believe in who He is and what He has done for us. We have faith that He is real and that He brings us new life.

Let’s continue reading the Bible in John 3.

John 3:9-12

9 “How are these things possible?” Nicodemus asked.

10 Jesus replied, “You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don’t understand these things? 11 I assure you, we tell you what we know and have seen, and yet you won’t believe our testimony. 12 But if you don’t believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how can you possibly believe if I tell you about heavenly things?

Nicodemus knows a lot about God. Is it enough to just know about God? Does that bring you new life? (Allow responses.) Being a Pharisee (a Jewish leader) was not enough for Nicodemus. Knowing a lot about God was not enough. For us, being a straight A student, an obedient child, a star athlete, a dancer, a pianist, a gymnast, or a good person is not enough. We may know a lot about the Bible, but that is not enough. We must believe and trust in Jesus.

New Life



The purpose is to represent how we become a new person when we are born again.

Supplies:

Play-Doh - two separate colors (2 per bin)
Ziploc bag (quart or gallon-sized) (1 per bin)

Using a piece of each color of Play-Doh, roll out a snake (rope) with each color. Then take the two snakes (one color being us and one color being Jesus) and roll them together into one snake and see what happens. Be sure not to use all of the Play-Doh so there is enough for the next service. Please put your mixed Play-Doh in the plastic bag provided and seal the bag, so the Play-Doh doesn't dry out and can be reused in another area of the ministry.

Tie It Together

 When the Play-Doh is rolled together, it is no longer just two separate colors. The Play-Doh changes. When we believe and trust in Jesus our lives change. Our sins are forgiven and we are given new life. God sends His Spirit to live inside of us. It is not enough to know about God or come to church. We are given new life only by believing and trusting in God. Let's continue reading the Bible.

John 3:13-18

13 No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man has come down from heaven.
14 And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.

16 "For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. 17 God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.

18 "There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son.

Why did God give Jesus to the world? (Because of His love for us.) What kind of life will we have if we believe and trust in Him? (New life, eternal life.) What does eternal mean? (Forever, no end.) What does Jesus do for us? (Saves us from our sin by taking our punishment or judgment) Who does not have to go through judgment in verse 18? (Those who trust in Jesus.) What does trusting in Jesus mean? (To believe in who He is and what He has done for us as our Savior.)

Birthday Invitation



The purpose is to focus on and memorize John 3:16.

Supplies:

Birthday invitation verse card (1 per camper)
Picture drawn during Plug In Time

Give each camper a birthday invitation verse card. Have them glue the cards to the pictures they drew during Plug In Time. Read the verse with them and remind them that **God loves us, and because of that love, He sent His Son Jesus to save us from our sins. We are invited to have new life and live forever with Him if we believe and trust in Jesus. Only God can remove our sin and change who we are. He desires for us to be who He created us to be. When we believe in Jesus, repent of our sins and follow Him we will be “born again.” Jesus will give us new life.**

Prayer Time

Spend a few minutes in prayer to close small group time. Ask God to open each camper's heart to believe in Jesus and receive the forgiveness and new life that only He can give.



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