

# Nicodemus

## John 3:1-15

Big Idea: We believe only because we are born of God, born of the Spirit.

Author: Sandy Galea

### Instructions

This story needs to be memorised. When the story has been memorised, practise in front of a mirror and work out the appropriate hand and body movements to enhance the retelling of the story.

### Requirements

- Storyteller
- Props:
  - Large wooden cross with a large stuffed toy snake draped over it and pinned into position (but still easy to remove snake from cross)

### Script

Nicodemus stepped out into the darkness.

He pulled his coat over his head and made his way through the narrow streets.

He was on his way to see Jesus – and he went by night.

Nicodemus was an important man.

He was a Pharisee - everyone respected him.

So why did Nicodemus go at night to see Jesus?

Why go in the darkness?

Crowds had surrounded Jesus during the day and it was hard to get to him.

But that wasn't the real reason Nicodemus went at night.

Nicodemus had questions he wanted to ask Jesus.

Questions he didn't want others to hear him ask.

So he went to Jesus at night - and he went alone.

Nicodemus came to the house where Jesus was staying.

He knocked on the door and waited in the darkness.

The door opened and Nicodemus stepped into the light.

There standing in front of him was Jesus.

Nicodemus cleared his throat and said, "Teacher we know that you are from God because no one does the things that you do unless he is from God."

Jesus looked at Nicodemus and said, "I tell you the truth - unless you are born again you will never be part of God's Kingdom."

Nicodemus was shocked!

How can someone be born a second time?

How can they go back inside their mother when they are old?

Jesus smiled and said, "I'm speaking of heavenly things. I know these things because I come from heaven."

Nicodemus was still confused.

No one can be born twice.

Then Jesus said, "Unless God's Spirit makes a person new again, they can never be a part of God's Kingdom."

Nicodemus did not understand what Jesus was saying.

Jesus then reminded Nicodemus of something that had happened long, long ago.

When the Israelites were wandering in the desert they turned against God - they failed to trust him.

So God sent snakes.

The snakes bit the people and people died.

The people knew they'd done the wrong thing and they cried out to God to save them.

God heard their cry and was kind to them.

He told Moses to place a bronze snake in the middle of their camp. (pick up cross and wrap snake around it)

Then whenever anyone was bitten by a snake they'd look at the bronze snake lifted (lift snake on cross up) up on the pole and they'd be saved.

(lower cross and remove snake, put snake to one side)

Jesus then said to Nicodemus, "God's people will be given eternal life when I am lifted up (lift up cross) and they look to me and believe."

(put cross to one side)

Nicodemus again stepped out into the darkness, deep in thought.

He thought about Jesus' words, "Unless God's Spirit makes a person new again, they can never be a part of God's Kingdom."

(pause)

Children, it's God's Spirit who gives us life.

It's God's Spirit who makes us new.

It's God's Spirit who makes us believe in Jesus.

That's what it means to be born again.

And only those who've been born again have life with God now and forever.

How amazing is that!

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# 7. Nicodemus

## John 3:1-15

Big Idea: We believe only because we are born of God, born of the Spirit.

### Game: Beware The Snake!

**Warning:** *one child runs across the rope at a time. If you have more than twenty children, play multiple games at once.*

Need:

- Clear open space
- Long, thin rope

Instructions:

- Line children up at one end of the space.
- Lay the rope down across the space.
- Two leaders move the rope so that it wriggles back and forth.
- The aim is for children to take turns running and jumping over the snake.
- If they land on the snake or the snake hits them after they've jumped they're out.
- Repeat making the snake wriggle in bigger and bigger movements.
- Continue children jumping until only one child is left.

Conclusion:

- In the book of Numbers we read how God rescued the Israelites from Egypt.
- He took them across the desert.

- God fed them with manna and gave them water to drink from a rock.
- But, they complained about the food God gave them.
- They grumbled about being in the desert.
- So God sent snakes among the people and many died.
- The people cried out to God.
- God told Moses to make a bronze snake and put it high on a pole.
- Anyone bitten by the snakes was to look at the bronze snake and they would live.
- Jesus was lifted up on a cross.
- And if we look to Jesus we will be saved.

## Introductory Activity: Baby Photos

Need:

- One photograph of each leader as a baby blown up and copied onto A4 paper
- Blu tac

Instructions:

- Blu tac photos across a wall.
- Leaders line up.
- Select a child to come and select a photograph and match it to a leader (i.e. hand it to them).
- Repeat with a different child.
- **Note:** a leader may be given more than one photograph and some leaders may not have any.
- When all photographs have been handed out, reveal which photograph belongs to which leader.

Conclusion:

- Look at how tiny each leader was when they were a baby.
- So tiny when they were born and so big now.
- Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again.
- Nicodemus was shocked.
- How can someone be born a second time?
- And looking at these photos, Nicodemus sounds right.
- It's impossible for a person this big (point to a leader) to go back inside their mum and be born a second time.
- Especially when we know babies are this big when they're born.
- But Jesus wasn't talking about people going back inside their mum.
- He was talking about being born again by God himself.
- It's God's Spirit who makes us new.
- Who makes us born again.

Go along the line of leaders and ask: Are you born again?

## Singing

See page 5 for song suggestions. Sing 2/3 songs about being made new by God's Spirit and becoming a child of God.

## Memory Verses

John 8:12 (see page 12 for instructions on how to teach it)

John 3:16

Purchase the audio track of this verse here <http://bit.ly/jn-3-16>

## Story Time

Use the script titled, The Bronze Snake (pages 71-73) and retell using the pictures indicated in the script.

## Small Group Time

Need:

- Copy of the booklet from last week titled, Who Is Jesus? One booklet per child. **Note:** do not send this booklet home until the end of this unit.
- Find the picture of the cross (John 1-4 Resource Pack - Ages 8-11). Copy on yellow cardboard and cut one cross per pair. Place pieces in snap lock bags.
- Set of coloured markers or pencils
- Set of International Children's Bibles (ICB)

Icebreaker

- Have you ever been locked out of a room and needed someone to let you in? (i.e. you couldn't get in by yourself)

Read John 3:1-2

Booklets:

- Open up to the page with the picture of Nicodemus and the title, Nicodemus John 3:1-15.
- Around the picture of Nicodemus write down everything you learn about Nicodemus (e.g. he was a Pharisee, an important leader, came at night, knows Jesus is a teacher, knows Jesus comes from God, knows about Jesus' miracles, comes to ask Jesus questions).

Discuss:

- Why do you think Nicodemus comes at night?  
(wanted to keep his visit to Jesus a secret, afraid of what other Pharisees might think - add this information around the picture of Nicodemus)

Revision Activity:

- Look at the brainstorming activity on the titles of Jesus (last page of booklets).
- Was 'Teacher' one of the titles you recorded for Jesus?
- If not, add it to your list.

Read John 3:3-7

- What strange thing did Jesus say to Nicodemus?  
(you must be born again)
- What did Nicodemus think Jesus was telling him he had to do?  
(go back inside his mum and be born again - add this information around the picture of Nicodemus)
- What do you think Jesus meant?  
(God's Spirit needs to make us new, we need another birth by God)

Conclusion:

- We all know that's impossible.
- Once you're born you can't go back inside your mum.
- Jesus was using words like a picture.
- When you were born, you were new.
- Jesus said that all of us need to be made new again.
- It's not our mums who make us new again, but God's Spirit.
- It's only God's Spirit who can make us turn to Jesus and believe in him.
- We can't believe in Jesus unless God's Spirit makes us.

Booklets:

- Fill in the sentence at the bottom of the page.
- We believe only because God's Spirit first makes us new. Only then will we believe in Jesus.

Read John 3:14-15

- What story did Jesus remind Nicodemus of?  
(the story about the snakes)
- If an Israelite was bitten by a snake, what did God do so that they could live?  
(got Moses to make a bronze snake, lifted up on a pole, if they looked at it, they lived)
- The bronze snake was lifted up onto a pole. What was Jesus lifted up onto? What did he do to save us?  
(Jesus was put up on a cross, he died to save us)

Activity:

- Remind children that we are to look to Jesus, who died on the cross, in order to be saved.
- Hand each pair a cross cut into pieces and ask them to make a cross from the cut shape.
- Give them about 5 minutes, then show them how to make a cross (see uncut stencil to know how).

Conclusion:

- Nicodemus was right to come to Jesus.
- Jesus is the only one we can look to to be saved.
- But, in John chapter 3 we read that none of us would ever think to look to Jesus by ourselves.
- You and I only look to Jesus, because God's Spirit makes us.
- God's Spirit makes us new and then, only then, will we look to Jesus and be saved.

Think It Through:

- The door to heaven is shut. We can't get into heaven on our own. So how do we get in?  
(God's Spirit makes us new, then we believe in Jesus and then Jesus opens that door and lets us in)
- How do you know if God's Spirit has made you new?  
(if you believe that Jesus died for you, then you've been made new, we believe because God's Spirit makes us believe)

Application (select from options below):

- Has God's Spirit made you new? (if you believe in Jesus then he has)
- Who can you ask God to send his Spirit to to make them new?



## Prayer Time

Pray about what was shared in response to the application questions.

## Craft: Beaded Snakes

**Warning:** *only leaders to use glue guns. Supervise glue guns at all times.*

Need:

- Bronze beads, 10-15 per child (for snake's body)
- Wooden bead (for snake's head)
- Either googly eyes or sticker eyes
- Warm glue gun, if appropriate (to attach googly eyes)
- Thin wire
- Paddle pop sticks, 2 per child (one large and one small)
- Wood glue

Instructions:

- Glue paddle pops sticks together (use wood glue) to form a cross. Set aside to dry.
- Cut a length of wire and thread through the large wooden bead and tie off around the base of the bead.
- Thread bronze beads on the other end of the wire, pushing beads up to the 'snake's head'.
- Thread until a long 'snake' has been made.
- Tie off the wire.
- Attach eyes.
- Drape 'snake' over the wooden cross.



# The Bronze Snake

**John 3:1-15; Numbers 21**

Big Idea: Only those who look to the bronze snake will be saved. Only those who look to Jesus lifted up on the cross will be saved.

Author: Sandy Galea

Illustrator: Amy Song

## Instructions

Download the Kidswise file titled, The Bronze Snake Pictures.

The introduction and conclusion of this story need to be memorised.

## Requirements

- Narrator
- Pictures (see Instructions)
- Data projector
- Screen

## Script

Nicodemus came to Jesus at night.  
He wanted to ask Jesus some questions in secret.  
Jesus told him that a person must be born again to be part of God's Kingdom.  
Nicodemus was confused.  
But Jesus was using words like a picture.

## Picture

And the picture is this: God has to make each one of us new again before we can be in his Kingdom.

Like a baby is new, we need to be made new.

And the only way we can be made new is by God's Spirit.

It's God's Spirit who makes us look to Jesus and be saved.

Jesus then reminded Nicodemus of something Nicodemus knew.

Something that happened long, long ago.

Let's remember that story now.

(pause)

God rescued his people from Egypt.

Moses led God's people.

Let's use our hands and walk God's people... out of Egypt... through the sea... across the hot desert.

They walked and walked and walked.

The people grumbled.

They grumbled against God.

*We're hungry.*

*We're very, very hungry.*

God was kind to his people.

Every morning he gave them manna to eat.

The manna tasted like bread and honey.

But still the people grumbled.

They grumbled against God.

*We're thirsty.*

*We're very, very thirsty.*

Again God was kind to his people.

Ask children to help by repeating the Israelites' words.  
Practise a few of their lines before beginning the story.

Picture 1

Picture 2

Picture 3

Children repeat.

Children repeat.

Picture 4

Picture 5

Children repeat.

Children repeat.

He gave them water from a rock.	Picture 6
But still the people grumbled.	
They grumbled against God.	Picture 7
<i>Why did he bring us out into the desert to die?</i>	Children repeat.
<i>We should've stayed in Egypt!</i>	Children repeat.
<i>We hate this food you give us!</i>	Children repeat.
So God sent snakes among the people.	Picture 8
The snakes bit the people.	
And people died.	
The people went to Moses and said, <i>We've sinned against God.</i>	Picture 9 Children repeat.
<i>Please speak to him for us.</i>	Children repeat.
<i>Tell him we're sorry.</i>	Children repeat.
<i>Ask him to stop the snakes!</i>	Children repeat.
So Moses spoke to God on behalf of the people.	
And God was kind.	
He told Moses to make a bronze snake and put it up high on a pole.	Picture 10
Anyone bitten by a snake who looked at the bronze snake would not die.	

(Narrator moves to centre stage and addresses the audience)

Only those who looked at the bronze snake lifted high on the pole would be saved.

Jesus was lifted up and put on a cross.

Only Jesus can save us.

But we won't look to Jesus by ourselves.

In John chapter 3 we learn it's God's Spirit who makes us look.

You and I only look to Jesus, because God's Spirit makes us.

God's Spirit makes us new and then,  
only then, will we look to Jesus and be  
saved.



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