
Children's Message: God's Big Picture

Jesus Explains Who He is (John 3:14-21)

This message is focused on recognizing the importance of who Jesus is in relation to God's great plan for the salvation of all people. Children may be familiar with the John 3:16 passage, but might not fully understand what it means and why it is so important. The object lesson in this message uses images at unique angles to explain the importance of seeing Christ in light of the whole story of the Bible.



Law/Gospel Theme: This passage gives us the Gospel in a nutshell. The law condemns and confuses us, and when we focus on the tiny details of rules or regulations, we miss the big picture of Jesus and His love. People in His time (and in ours) often fail to understand the good news of His grace and fulfillment of God's promises. We might not always understand what God is doing in our lives, but we can trust His "big picture" promises since we know He gave us Jesus!

Optional Materials: Pictures of common items, and pictures of the same items at close-up "zoomed in" angles.

Bible Passage: John 3:14-21

Note: This concept can actually be used for a variety of Gospel passages in which Jesus describes Himself, or where leaders misunderstand who He is. For this passage, use the picture puzzle to explain how we recognize Jesus and His sacrifice as part of God's "big picture."

More Teaching Ideas:

- Watch the [video demonstration of this message](#) and related [craft ideas](#)
- Compare our [Sunday School Lesson on John 3:14-21](#)
- Compare the [children's sermons from rfour.org](#) and [sermons4kids](#) on this passage
- See all our latest [children's sermons](#), [Sunday School Lessons](#), and [Sunday School curriculum](#)

Children's Sermon (John 3:14-21) God's Big Picture

Greet the children, and invite them to solve a "puzzle" of sorts.

Hello, children of God! Do you like puzzles? There are many different kinds of puzzles...word puzzles, number puzzles, jigsaw puzzles, just to name a few. Well, I happen to have a puzzle here, and maybe you can help me figure it out. I am going to hold up some pictures, and I want you to tell me what they are. That sounds pretty simple, right? Let's see if you can tell what these are... *One by one, hold up images of everyday items at close-up levels. Give children an opportunity to guess what they might be, and then display the items at a "backed-up" level.*

Wow, it can be kind of tough to figure out what some of these things are when we are zoomed in so close, right? It helps to back up and look at the big picture to understand what these images are. You know, sometimes we do this in our lives. We get really concerned with little details, and we worry about things, and we forget to back up and look at the big picture of the most important things. We can miss out on some great joys if we focus on "zoomed-in" details.

Well, people did this when Jesus was here on Earth, too. A lot of people had been waiting for a Messiah to come and rescue them. But sadly, when Jesus came, they didn't always recognize Him. They missed out on who He really was and why He was there. They were focusing on things that He said or little details and specifics of what He did, and they didn't see that He was fulfilling God's big picture plan! In the Gospel of John, Jesus explained who He was and described why He came. These verses are some of the most well-known and celebrated in the Bible, but sometimes we can forget how important and impactful they are. Jesus was saying that God sent Him to save the world, and all we have to do is believe in Him. He came to die so that we could live. Prophets had spoken about who the savior would be, and Jesus announced that He was God's Son. But people still missed that big picture. Jesus is the light of the world and the focus of the whole Bible! God loved us and wanted to rescue us through His son.

Now, we know that Jesus did die and come back to life, and that He fulfilled God's big picture plan and prophecies. We recognize that, but sometimes we still get lost in our worries and wonderings. We forget that God has a big picture for our lives, because we get caught up in everyday details and fears. But God does have a plan for us. He has a plan to do wonderful things in our lives, and we know we can trust that! We don't always understand what's going on. Things in life can be hard. But we know that

God has given us Jesus. Because of that, we have eternal life and eternal hope. Because of Jesus, we know God always keeps His promises and has good things in store for us. When we lose track of the big picture or get confused, we can turn to Him and pray for peace. Why don't we say a prayer right now?

Prayer:

(Have kids repeat each line)

Dear God,

Thank you for your marvelous plans

You gave your Son to bring us life

You are the true light

Help us to trust in you

Even when we don't understand things

Or when life is really hard

Thank you for your love

We love you, God!

In Jesus's name, Amen!

Bible Verses/story to Reference: *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. ²⁰For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. ²¹But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.” -John 3:14-21*