

Lesson: Jesus Teaches Nicodemus – For God So Loved the World

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Use this children's Sunday School lesson about John 3:16 to teach kids why Jesus came to Earth.

Needed: Bibles, (optional: a flashlight), soft balls, paper wads

Intro Game: Jesus Our Light

Play a game of Red Light, Green Light with the change of turning the light on and off. Students run from one side of the room to the other when the lights are on. But when you turn the lights off, they have to stumble around and pretend to be afraid. If they keep running when the light is off, they're out. The winner is the first one who makes it to the other side of the room.

Remind students that Jesus is our light who helps us find our way to Heaven and gives us courage not to be afraid.

Lesson

Say, Imagine your favorite place, the place you like best or would like best in the whole world. What is it? (Ask each student to tell you a little about their special place. You should give your answer to this question as well.)

Would you like to live there and be there all the time?

What would make you leave that place?

Well, you know, Jesus' favorite place was in Heaven. That's where He lived with God, and everything was perfect. But one day, Jesus left Heaven, and He came to Earth as a little baby.

(Read [John 3:13](#).)

“No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man.”

Jesus is saying that He came down from Heaven. Who can tell me what Heaven is like?

(Nothing bad happens in Heaven, Heaven is beautiful, God lives in Heaven, no one dies or is sad in Heaven, etc.)

Before Jesus was born, His spirit lived in Heaven with God. In fact, Jesus is part of God. And Heaven was Jesus' favorite place because it's so great there. But then, Jesus left Heaven so that He could be born as a little baby. Why do you think Jesus left Heaven and let Himself be born as a baby?

(Read [John 3:16](#).)

“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

Jesus left Heaven, and God sent Jesus from Heaven, because He loved us so much. Jesus had to come to Earth so that He could die on the cross so that we could be forgiven for our sins. Now, all we have to do to be forgiven for our sins, all the wrong things we do, is believe in Jesus. If we believe in Jesus, we'll live forever with God and Jesus in Heaven when we die instead of going to Hell.

(Read [John 3:17](#).)

“For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.”

Why does that verse tell us God sent Jesus? (To save the world.)

God sent Jesus to save us. He doesn't want anyone to go to Hell, and Jesus doesn't want anyone to go to Hell either. That's why He left His favorite place in Heaven and came to Earth as a little baby. He loves and wants to save us.

(Read [John 3:18](#).)

“Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.”

What do we have to do be saved? (Believe in Jesus.)

Game: Taking Our Place

Play a game of dodgeball with soft play balls or paper wads. When one team starts to accumulate a lot of players in the “Out” zone, run in and say that you'll take their place being out. They can get back in the game. Do the same for the other team. Keep doing it as long as time allows. Then, explain that just like you were taking the place of people who were out, Jesus took our place on the cross. He took our punishment so that we could be forgiven for our sins.

An alternative is a game of two-team tag. Take the place of students who are tagged and out of the game.

Lesson continues...

Jesus took our place when He died on the cross, and we're saved if we believe in Him. But some people don't want to believe in Jesus. Why do you think some people don't want to believe in Him?

(Read [John 3:19-21](#).)

“This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.”

One reason people don't want to believe in Jesus is that they want to keep doing their bad things. They know that if they come to Jesus, they have to stop doing their bad things and start doing the right things. It's the difference between light and dark. Doing bad things is like the dark because you don't want anyone to see you doing those bad things. You don't want to get caught. But doing the right things is like the light because you don't have to hide or be sneaky when you're doing the right things. You want people to see you doing the right things.

So, remember, Jesus left Heaven, His favorite place, so that He could come and die on the cross to save us and forgive us because He loves us. And Jesus wants us to believe in Him and do the right things that we can be proud of, and not have to hide or feel bad about the wrong things we're doing.

Game: STOP Light

In this game of Freeze Tag, you'll choose one student to be It. The rest of the group runs as normal until you turn on a light or shine your flashlight on someone. If you turn the light on and shout “Stop!” everyone but It freezes in place. If you shine your flashlight on someone, only that person freezes. The It can then tag as many people as they can until you turn the light back off, signaling that everyone can run again.

Anyone It tags stands on the sidelines. The last person becomes It for the next round.

Remind students that when we come to the Light, when we come to Jesus, we have to stop doing our bad things and start doing the right things.

Closing Prayer

Jesus, thank You for coming to Earth to save us. Help us to believe in You always so that we can go to Heaven and be with You someday. Amen.

You can also find this lesson for Kindle or in print in my book, Jesus Starts His Work.