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JESUS AND NICODEMUS

Being Born into God's Kingdom

Year 1 – THE KINGDOM STORY

1 | Teacher's Notes

Scripture John 3: 1 – 21

Objectives To explain that

- Our lessons are all a part of a bigger story which is the story of the Forever Kingdom. This big story is found in the Bible.
- Jesus explains to Nicodemus that to see the Kingdom of God, one must be "born again." This does not mean born again as a baby, but born "from above", from God's Holy Spirit.
- We have all sinned and need God's forgiveness.
- We can repent and place our faith in Jesus at any time, and receive his forgiveness.
- When we are baptized, we receive forgiveness and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We have been given new life in Christ and are then a new creation.

Memory Verse "No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." (John 3:3 - NIV)

ACNA The following Catechism questions are linked to today's story:

**Catechism
Connection**

Q 2 What is the human condition? ...all have sinned

Q 133 What are sins? ...disobedient acts, fallen human nature

Q 12 What does it mean for you to repent? ...to have a change of heart, turn from our sins

Q 13 What does it mean for you to have faith? ...To believe the Gospel of Jesus' death for my sins and that he rose from the dead, to obey him as Lord

Q 14 How may a person repent and place faith in Jesus Christ? ...we may do this anytime, by prayer

Q 15 What should you do once you have returned to God for salvation in repentance and faith? ...be baptized

Q 84 How does the Holy Spirit relate to you? ...indwell and empower me in Christ...

Q 85 How do you receive the Holy Spirit? ...through repenting and being baptized in Christ...given new life in Christ by the Spirit...

**Suggested
Materials,
Props, and
Costumes**

Big story props:

- Crown - or picture of a crown
- Large Bible.

(These props relate to the bigger story of the Forever Kingdom, and will be used for every lesson. The crown will be referred to as the Kingdom Crown.)

Lesson props:

- A sign, saying "Freeze" on one side, and "Unfreeze" on the other side
- Cue cards are encouraged if a child reads the part

Costumes: Jesus (with blue sash) and Nicodemus

Memory Verse: "No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." (John 3:3 - NIV)

(Found on the last page of this lesson plan.) Printed out and placed inside the large Bible.

2 | Lesson Outline

Welcome	As the children arrive ensure each one is personally welcomed and everyone knows each other's name.
Greeting & Collect for Purity	Light the candles Say the Greeting and Collect for Purity (see Resource Section)
Prayer of Confession	Say the Prayer of Confession (see Resource Section) Extinguish the candles
Music	Books of the Bible - New Testament Also choose another song from the Resource Section
Review of foundations	Choose from the following as appropriate: The Lord's Prayer, The Apostles Creed, The Ten Commandments or The Greatest Commandment <i>For more information on how to teach these, see Resource Section</i>
Reading	Memory verse (Printed out and placed in large Bible – invite older child to read)
Poster Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss this week's poster. • Ask "I wonder questions" – these will be answered during the story. <p><i>Poster discussion is found in Section 3 and on the back of the poster</i></p>
Props/Costumes	Take a few moments to arrange the narrator and actors. (Props should already be set up prior to the start of the class.) Big story props: Kingdom Crown, Large Bible
Bible Story	<i>Proceed with story and life application found in Section 4.</i>
Related activities	<i>After the story, proceed with related activities found in Section 5.</i>
Preparation for Communion & leaving class	Gather the children together for the Preparation for Communion prayer before exiting the classroom. <i>See Resource Section.</i>

3 | Poster Discussion

Poster

(During the poster discussion, explain any difficult words in the story.)

What do you see in this picture? (Two men outside in the evening...)

Is there anything you wonder about?

I wonder who these two men are.

I wonder what they are talking about.

Let's find out more in our story...



4 | Story and Life Application

CROWN: *Point to the crown and say: 'Today we are continuing our big story of God's Forever Kingdom.'*

BIBLE: *Hold up the Bible and say: 'Our story today is from the Gospel of John, in the New Testament. We know that it is a true story because it comes from the Bible and the Bible is God's Word.'*

LESSON SUMMARY: *The teacher reads the lesson summary from back of poster:*

Today our Bible story takes us into the night in the city of Jerusalem. There was a man named Nicodemus. He was a Pharisee. The Pharisees were a powerful religious group in Israel. Nicodemus admired Jesus and was curious about the things that Jesus was teaching. Nicodemus wanted to know more about the Kingdom of God. Jesus told him that to see the Kingdom of God he must be born again, born from above. Nicodemus was confused and asked, "How can a grown man be born again? Surely he does not have to become a baby again?" Jesus told Nicodemus that one must be born from God's Holy Spirit, from above. The Bible tells us that when we repent of our sins, believe in Jesus and are baptized, we have God's Holy Spirit living in us and we have new life in Christ. Now that's GOOD NEWS!

STORY:

TEACHER: One night, Nicodemus walked along the streets of Jerusalem. He wanted to talk with Jesus.

You see, Nicodemus liked Jesus, but he thought that Jesus was making a mistake about something and he wanted to talk to Jesus about it.

Look – over there – here comes Nicodemus now.

ACTION: *Nicodemus walking toward a house where Jesus was staying. Nicodemus and Jesus stand outside in the evening air.*

TEACHER: Let's listen and hear what they are saying.....

NICODEMUS: Jesus, "we know that you are a teacher sent from God. No one can do the miracles you do, unless God is with him."

JESUS: Nicodemus, I tell you the truth, you must be born again, born from above, or you cannot see the Kingdom of God.

ACTION: *Hold up the "Freeze" sign and explain to the children that during the play when we hold up the freeze sign, the actors will freeze on the spot and the teacher will explain what is happening. Jesus and Nicodemus freeze on the spot.*

TEACHER: What??? Jesus just said that a person must be born again, born from above! How can that be? I think that Nicodemus is wondering about that too.

Let's listen.....

ACTION: *Jesus and Nicodemus UNFREEZE.*

NICODEMUS: (Look surprised). What? Born again? How can a grown man be born again? Does he become a baby again? That sounds strange....I don't understand at all!

ACTION: *Jesus and Nicodemus FREEZE.*

TEACHER: Nicodemus was surprised that Jesus told him that a person must be born again to see the Kingdom of God. He had been a Pharisee (a religious teacher) for many years and had read the Scriptures many times. But he still didn't understand what Jesus was teaching him.

Let's ask Jesus to help us understand.

ACTION: *Jesus and Nicodemus UNFREEZE and carry on the conversation.*

JESUS: God's Holy Spirit brings new life. It is not that you are born again as a little baby; instead, God gives you new life by giving you the Holy Spirit from Heaven. The Holy Spirit living in you will help you follow me.

TEACHER: Ohhh...Jesus is saying that we must be born again from God's Holy Spirit!

STUDENT: But why must we be born again?

TEACHER: The Bible tells us that everyone has sinned and has gone the wrong way. There is sin in everyone's heart. The Bible says, that by repenting, having faith in Jesus and being baptized, we have forgiveness for our sins AND God's Holy Spirit to live in our hearts. God gives us new life and we will be a **new creation**. Then we start wanting to love, obey and follow Jesus. He will be our King and we enter into his wonderful Kingdom.

NICODEMUS: Hmmm...Jesus has given me much to think and pray about. I am a teacher of God's holy book. I must go home and think about these things.

ACTION: *Nicodemus walks away. Jesus also walks away, but in a different direction.*

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS:

- **What do we learn about Jesus in this story?** (Jesus is an amazing teacher. He is willing to teach anyone who is willing to hear. He offers the way to the Kingdom of Heaven. He teaches people spiritual truths.)
- **Who was Nicodemus?** (a man, someone who liked Jesus, a Pharisee, religious teacher)
- **Why did Nicodemus want to talk with Jesus?** (He thought that Jesus was a teacher from God, but Nicodemus had some questions)
- **What did Nicodemus think when Jesus said that a person must be born again, born from above, to see the Kingdom of God?** (He thought that Jesus meant that you had to become a baby again.)
- **What was Jesus really telling Nicodemus about when he talked about being born a second time?** (He meant you must be born from above. God gives you new life by giving you the Holy Spirit from Heaven, and then you are born again.)
- **Why do people need to be born again, born from above?** (Everyone has a sinful nature and falls short of the glory of God. Therefore we need to repent and be forgiven of our sins, and have new life, so that we can obey and follow Jesus. When we believe in Jesus and are baptized, we have God's Holy Spirit living in us and we have new life in Christ - eternal life.)

Older children may wonder and discuss:

- **Why did Jesus also say that we must be born of water (be baptized) and the Spirit to enter the Kingdom of God?** (The Church teaches that by faith, when a person is baptized, they are baptized into the death and resurrection of Christ and receives the Holy Spirit. That is how being born of water and the Spirit is understood. It is an action initiated by God, hence, it is being "born from above". Through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, the person is made a new creation and is united with Christ and the body of believers, the Church.)

Life Application (this discussion can also take place during craft/activity time):

Using a chalkboard, draw a large heart and discuss with the children the sins (bad thoughts, words and actions) that people have said or done (lied, stolen a toy, disobeyed parents, broken something and didn't own up to it, thought mean thoughts, etc.).

Write some of these words on the chalkboard heart or simply draw messy scribbles in the heart to represent this concept. Explain that sin separates us from God and leads to death. But the good news is that Jesus came to give us new life through his death and resurrection. We can repent of our sins, and we can ask Jesus to forgive us and thank him for dying on the cross to take away our sins. We can do this anytime by prayer.

Use a damp cloth to wash away all the sins listed and colour the heart WHITE. That is what happens when we receive God's forgiveness. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, our hearts can be made pure, and we can have new life in him.

When we live as a follower (disciple) of Jesus, we will get baptized. As we place our faith in Jesus, and are baptized, God's Holy Spirit comes to live in us. The Holy Spirit will help us to follow Jesus and be his disciples. Sometimes babies are baptized and sometimes adults or teens are baptized. Baptism is a wonderful event that everyone in the Church celebrates!

If you haven't yet been baptized, then talk about it with your parents. Your Sunday School lessons prepare you for baptism. When you are baptized we will ALL celebrate with you!

5 | Response Activities

Kingdom News handout and colouring supplement

- Have the children complete the activities in the Kingdom News handout and colouring supplement.

Optional Activities

- Different learning stations, such as: a book table, modelling clay, colouring papers.



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kingdom of God
unless he is born
again."

(John 3:3)