

March 30, 2025

**Bible Passage:** John 2:23–25; 3:1–21  
(Nicodemus’s Question)

## God Is Love

### REMEMBER VERSE

The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.

Psalm 145:8

### SCHEDULE

CONNECT

GATHER

RESPOND

BLESS

## Leader Prep

Each week you'll find a list of resources along with encouraging articles that help you prepare your heart to present the lesson.

## Further Resources

A Small Group Enhancement is available for this lesson.

### Download the following resources to help you plan and lead TruStory lessons:

Customizable copy of Lesson 8

TruStory Cycle A Scope and Sequence

TruStory How It Works document

At Home Weekly: Lesson 8 is provided for this lesson. The weekly for the next lesson—to be sent home for preteaching by parents—is found in BLESS.

If you have questions about Tru curriculum or are looking for great training, blogs, and other support resources, visit [truministry.com](http://truministry.com).

## Inspire

*Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives*

My grandpa once told me a story about a friend of his who was on his deathbed, lying in his room, with his friends gathered around him. My grandpa said that at the moment of this man's death, his eyes turned sky blue, he clapped his hands in excitement, and he said, "I can see Jesus." How comforting that must have been to those who witnessed it.

A friend, whose mom died from cancer, told me that while she and others were gathered in her mom's room worshipping, her mom began to cry with tears of joy that she would soon be worshipping in the presence of Jesus.

One of the most amazing benefits of knowing Jesus and receiving eternal life is that we get to live with Him for all eternity. This knowledge is comforting and exciting. The two who died are now joyfully living with Jesus. They're seeing Him face-to-face.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13:12, "For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known." We experience God in this life through a reflection, or only in glimpses. But, someday, we will be able to see Him face-to-face—the One who loves us enough to die for us.

*Tori Funkhouser*

**ROCKHARBOR Church**

## Equip

*Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage*

Jesus' message in John 3 is both comforting and troubling. He asserts in verse 16 that "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." Then, in verse 18, Jesus says, "Whoever does not believe stands condemned already."

This message came directly after a Passover feast, during which the people “saw the signs [Jesus] was performing and believed in his name” (John 2:23). But Scripture also says, “Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all people” (v. 24). Jesus knew the people at the Passover feast only believed because they saw Him perform miracles; their faith wasn’t true saving faith. Nicodemus probably fell into this category of believers.

Jesus came to save people, not to punish them. Through Jesus’ death and resurrection, people can have new life, and only through God’s Spirit can people truly become born-again children of God. Throughout John 3, Jesus asserts that being “born again” into a new life is required to receive eternal life, not just believing in Him. As Christians, we need to know that true faith in Jesus is so much more than just looking to get things from God or looking for signs and wonders from God, as the crowds did. True faith is about giving our whole life to God, who loves us overwhelmingly.

### Jesus’ Reference to Moses

In John 3:14, Jesus says, “Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up.” This refers to Numbers 21:4–9. In these verses, the Israelites complained again about having to live in the wilderness, so God sent snakes into their midst, and many people died.

The people realized they had sinned and asked Moses to pray that God would take the snakes away. When Moses prayed, God said, “Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live” (Numbers 21:8). Jesus compares Himself to the bronze snake in this situation because both were sent from God to be physically lifted up so that people might be saved.

## Support

*Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God’s Word*

God loved us so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to bridge the gap between God and man caused by sin, thus restoring our relationship with Him. This is the whole point of The Big God Story! God loves the world and everyone in it, and He offers us eternal life. We just have to choose to accept His gift and follow Him wherever He may lead.

Spend some time thinking about this truth. When did you choose to follow Jesus? How has this decision changed your life? What has God brought you through since then? In your own way, praise God for how He has changed you, saved you, and brought you into relationship with Him.

Pray for the kids to know how wonderful it is to be changed and saved by Jesus. Pray that they, like Nicodemus, will be curious enough to ask questions about God and seek Him out. Pray that they will, even now, be changed forever and follow Jesus.

## CONNECT// 10 min.

*Children develop relationships with their leaders and one another through simple activities and conversation starters.*

## Question Race

Students will race around the room to gather as many answers as possible to a fun question.

### SUPPLIES

- Paper (1 sheet per child)
- Pens

### RELATE

**CONNECT QUESTION:** Welcome and greet students. Open your time by asking this question: **What's something you'd like to know more about?**

**There are many things in the world that we'd all like to learn more about. Today, let's spend some time learning more about one another by answering questions to help us get to know one another better.**

Invite your class to stand up, and pass out a sheet of paper and a pen to each student. Then, when you say, "go," have each child go to another child in the class and ask the question "What's something I don't already know about you?" When he receives the answer, have him write the answer on his paper and race to another child. The game ends when one kid has learned something new about every other person in the class.

## GATHER// 30 min.

*Children experience and learn more about God through memorizing Scripture, storytelling from *The Big God Story*, prayer, and discussion.*

## Remember Verse

Each week children will spend time memorizing a portion of Scripture together. The Remember Verse focuses on a character trait of God that's highlighted in today's portion of *The Big God Story*.

**The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. Psalm 145:8**

## Game: Soda Can Scramble

### SUPPLIES

- Empty soda cans (6)
- Paper (approx. 3 sheets)
- Tape
- Black marker
- Optional: water bottles (6)

### PREPARE AHEAD

Cover each empty soda can with paper. (Optional: Use water bottles instead of soda cans.) Then, write one phrase of the verse on each soda can. Break up the verse into the following: The Lord/is gracious/and compassionate/slow to anger/and rich/in love.

### RELATE

Invite your class to recite the verse together a few times. Then, have students take the scrambled soda cans and work together to rearrange the phrases of the verse in the correct order. When they've successfully

arranged the verse, re-scramble it and challenge kids to see if they can individually put the verse together in order.

## Storytelling

**Bible Passage: John 2:23–25; 3:1–21**

**Storytelling Technique: Beach Ball Toss**

**God Is Love**

### SUPPLIES

- Optional: Investigate Questions (see Resources)
- Bibles
- Inflatable beach ball
- Permanent marker

### SET UP

Blow up the beach ball.

### RELATE

Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds. Hold up the beach ball. **We're in a very special part of The Big God Story. God loves the whole world, and today we get to learn about how Jesus made that very clear. This beach ball is going to represent the world and all of the people in it.** Invite your students to open their Bibles to John 2 so they can follow along as you storytell.

**Jesus had been teaching, preaching, and healing people all over Israel. There were so many people who were amazed at the things Jesus was doing.** Invite a volunteer to read John 2:23 aloud. **But Jesus knew that many people only followed Him because of the miracles He did. Jesus knew what was really in their hearts.** Gently toss the beach ball and a marker to one of the students, and invite her to write "hearts" somewhere on the ball. She can hold on to it while you continue.

**One night, a man named Nicodemus came to Jesus.** Invite the child with the beach ball to gently toss it and the marker to another child. Encourage him to write "Nicodemus" on the ball. **Nicodemus belonged to a group called the Pharisees. Who were the Pharisees?** Invite the kids to respond. **Yes, the Pharisees were religious leaders in Israel. They wanted to follow God's law very carefully. But some of the Pharisees didn't like Jesus because they thought He did things the wrong way. They didn't understand that He was God's Son and that He knew the perfect way to love God and follow His law.** Have a student toss the ball and marker to a new person so she can write "God's Son" on the ball.

**Nicodemus was a Pharisee who had some questions for Jesus. He knew that Jesus was a great teacher, and he told Jesus that God must have been with Him because of all the amazing things He was doing. But Nicodemus wasn't quite sure what to think about Jesus. So Jesus told Nicodemus something very important.** Ask a volunteer to read John 3:3 aloud. **Does anyone know what it means to be born again?** Invite responses. Have a student toss the ball and marker to someone who will write "born again" on the ball. **Nicodemus was very confused. He pictured a mother giving birth to a baby. But Jesus was talking about becoming a part of God's family. When we're born again, we repent of our sin and accept Jesus' gift of salvation. We're "born again" into life with God!**

But Nicodemus was still kind of confused. So Jesus began to explain further. He said that when God’s Spirit comes into our lives, He has an amazing effect. Jesus compared it to the wind. When the wind blows, we can’t see it. We don’t know what wind *looks* like. But we can see the effects of the wind. When we see a tree branch waving, we know the wind is blowing it. When we go outside and our hair blows, we know it’s a windy day. Jesus said that when God’s Spirit is in us, we’ll see the effects. Have the student toss the ball and marker to someone who can write “Holy Spirit” on the ball.

For example, a healthy tree produces a lot of fruit. If a tree isn’t healthy, sometimes it will produce a few pieces of withered, yucky fruit. Just like a healthy plant produces good things, the Bible says that when we live a life of trust and obedience, good things will come from us—things like love, peace, patience, and more.

Nicodemus was surprised by all Jesus had to say. He wondered how it was all possible. So Jesus began to talk about God’s plan that has been going on throughout all of The Big God Story. Jesus told Nicodemus that He was going to be lifted up, which meant that He was going to die on the cross. And then He told Nicodemus something very remarkable. Encourage a student to toss the ball and marker to someone who will write “John 3:16” on the ball. **Does anyone know what John 3:16 says?** Invite the kids to respond and then open their Bibles to the verse as you read it. **Yes, Jesus told Nicodemus, “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.”** Encourage the kids to recite it with you. **This is the amazing plan of The Big God Story—God sent His Son to die for our sins because He wants everyone to have eternal life. He loves us so much!**

Nicodemus and many of the other Jewish people believed that God only saved Jews. But that wasn’t true. Ask a volunteer to read John 3:17 aloud. **God loves everyone—every person in the whole world—and Jesus came to invite everyone to know and love Him.** Ask the student to toss the ball and marker to a new kid who can draw a cross on the middle of the ball.

Jesus then reminded Nicodemus of the problem that began at the very beginning of The Big God Story. **People sin and ignore God’s way. People love the darkness instead of the light. But Jesus said that light had come into the world now. He was the light!** Invite a volunteer to read John 3:21 aloud. **Jesus was offering the truth to anyone who wanted to be in the light. He had come to overcome the darkness—this was the best part of God’s amazing story!**

Jesus came to invite us to know Him. **All we have to do is repent of our sins and accept Jesus’ gift of salvation. This is the amazing plan of The Big God Story!** Ask the kids to toss the ball back to you. Hold it up for everyone to see. **God loves the whole world so much. He invites everyone to have eternal life with Him. When we’re born again, God’s Spirit comes to live in us and helps us follow God’s way. It’s all an incredible gift from God because He loves us and wants us to live with Him forever!** Share with the children your personal salvation experience.

## Discussion Questions

- What had Jesus been doing all over Israel? John 2:23
- Who were the Pharisees? John 3:1
- What does it mean to be born again? John 3:5–6
- What does John 3:16 say?
- What did Jesus come to the world to do? John 3:17
- How do you know that God loves you?

- **Whom do you want to tell about Jesus' love?**

## RESPOND// 15 min.

*Children reflect on what the Holy Spirit is teaching them and respond to God through creative activities and games.*

### For God So Loved ...

Students can choose portions of John 3:16 to ponder as they pray and respond to God.

#### SUPPLIES

- John 3:16 cards (see Resources)
- Bible
- Scissors
- Worship music (suggestion: "Remain," TruWorship *Sincerely Yours*)

#### PREPARE AHEAD

Print enough sets of the John 3:16 cards for each child to have one. Cut apart the cards and group them into piles of Card 1, Card 2, and Card 3.

#### RELATE

**God's love is perfect—so perfect that He made the way for us to be with Him forever by sending His Son, Jesus, to be a sacrifice for us. Jesus gave His life because of His love for us and so that we might have the chance to have a relationship with Him.**

**One of the most well-known Bible verses is John 3:16.** Read John 3:16 aloud again. **Today, you can spend some time reflecting on different portions of this verse or just one section, if you prefer.**

Show the piles of cards. Share that the cards are broken up into the following phrases:

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

Suggest that each child pick up the card that corresponds to the section of John 3:16 that stands out to her today. Allow the kids to spread out around the room as they consider the thoughts and questions found on the cards. Play "Remain" from TruWorship *Sincerely Yours* softly in the background as the children read over their cards and talk with God about the questions and thoughts prompted by the phrases. After a few minutes, give them the opportunity to share anything they discovered or heard during this time. Remind the children that it's okay if they don't feel like sharing as well.

### (Optional) Musical Hearts

In this musical game, students will celebrate God's love for them by doing the actions written on hearts.

#### SUPPLIES

- Heart template (see Resources)
- Scissors
- Marker
- Upbeat music

### SET UP

Print a copy of the Heart template for each child. Cut out each heart and write a different command on each one. Place the hearts facedown on the floor in the shape of a circle.

### RELATE

**Jesus explained to Nicodemus how much God loves us—so much that He would even send His Son to die on the cross. Because of God’s love for us, we can have joy and celebrate that God loves each of us.**

Today, invite your class to play a game of Musical Hearts. To play, invite each child in your class to stand on a heart in the circle. Turn on some music, and have children walk clockwise around the circle, going from heart to heart as the music plays. Then, stop the music. When the music stops, each child should be on a heart. Have the children reach down, turn the hearts over, and do what the hearts say. For example, if a heart says to “Do jumping jacks,” then that child will stand and do jumping jacks in place until the music starts again. After a few moments, start the music and have kids continue to walk around the circle.

When you’re finished playing the game, invite kids to talk more about God’s love: **How does it make you feel to know God loves you? How do you think you can share His love with others?**

### Developmentally Speaking

Studies show that physical activity is linked to better cognitive skills. Encourage your fifth and sixth graders to run around and engage in various physical activities.

## BLESS// 5 min.

*Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing can be a prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.*

### SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse cards (see Resources)
- At Home Weekly: Lesson 9 (see Resources)
- Heart template (see Resources)
- Bible
- Scissors (1 pair)

### PREPARE AHEAD

Print a Heart template for each child and cut out the hearts.

### RELATE

Gather the children and read the blessing from 1 John 4: 9, 11:

**This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we**



**might live through him ... Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.**

Then, invite children to bless one another individually. Pass out the paper hearts to the children, and have them find partners in the room to exchange their hearts with. As they exchange hearts, have children repeat to one another: "(Child's name), may you love others as God loves you."

When the children have blessed each other individually, gather them together and bless them as a group:

**May you know that God is love. And may you show love to others as God has loved you. May your love show the world who God is.**

### **Leader Tip**

Next week your children will be assembling Blessing Bags containing food items. You might ask parents to bring items for these bags next week. Check the Blessing Bags activity in next week's lesson for more details.

Send home Remember Verse cards and the At Home Weekly with your kids.