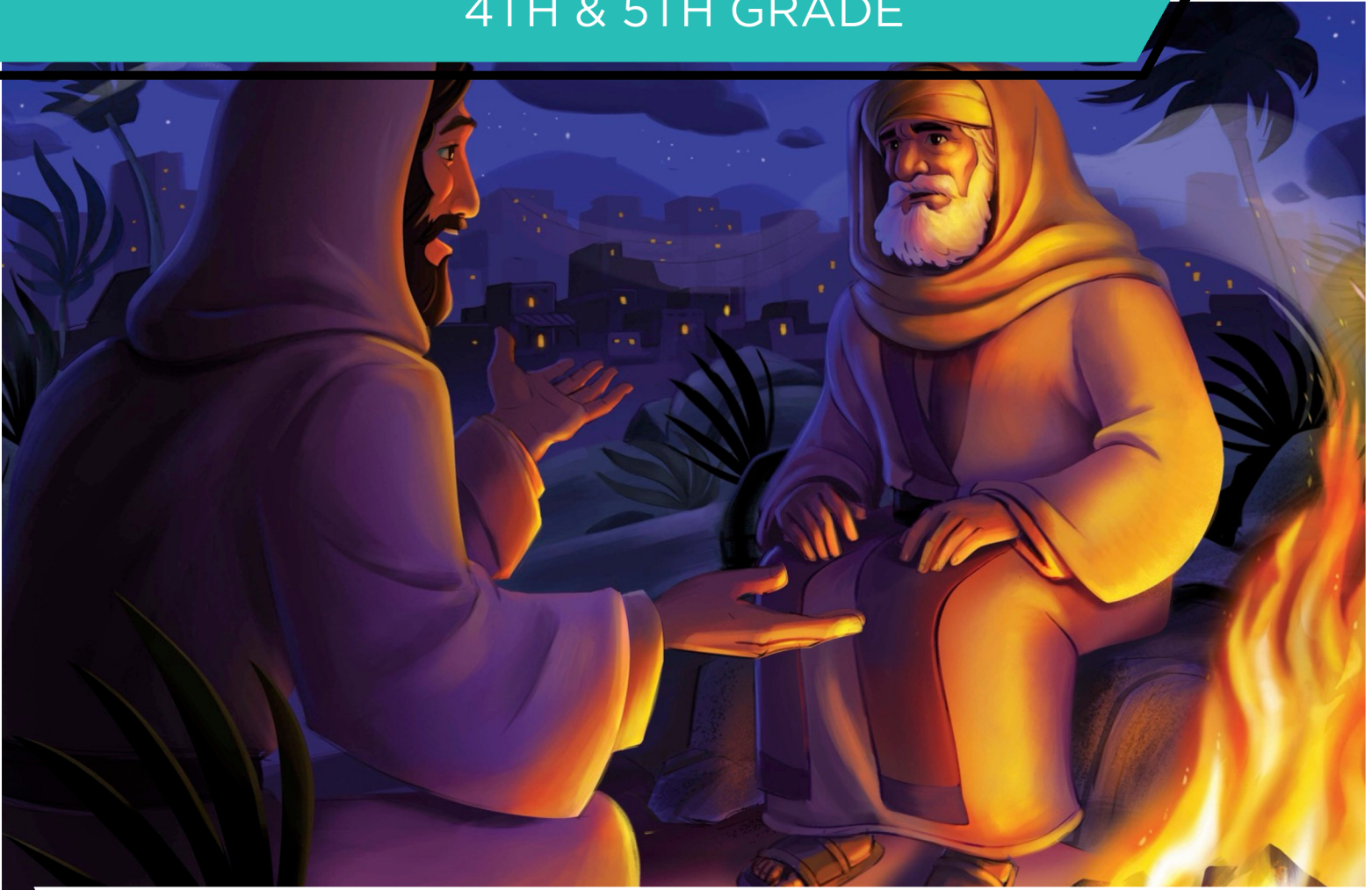


PRETEEN MINISTRY

4TH & 5TH GRADE



MAY 17, 2026

JESUS AND NICODEMUS

JOHN 3

CHRIST CONNECTION

Nicodemus was a religious leader, but he needed to be born again to enter the kingdom of God. Jesus shared how the Spirit causes people to be born again to new life. Anyone who believes in Jesus will be born again and receive eternal life.

LEADER DEVO

Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus reveals the Lord's patience and kindness toward us as we earnestly seek Him. Though Nicodemus had heard Christ's teachings, he had not yet placed faith in the true Ruler and King of the Jews. But here in this chapter, he would learn what it means to be born again.

Nicodemus was curious about Jesus and ventured to see Him under the cover of night. He called Him "Teacher" and declared that only someone who knew God could perform such miracles. Jesus knew the internal struggles of Nicodemus and spoke to his curiosity: "Truly I tell you, unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Jesus' words debunked some Jews' belief that God's salvation was their birthright as His people. Jesus likewise declared salvation for all who would place their trust in Him—Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews) alike.

When Jesus answered Nicodemus' questions, He compared Himself to the bronze snake lifted up in Numbers 21. Just as the Israelites had to look to the snake while trusting in God's salvation, so, too, are we called to look to Christ's work on the cross by faith. Nicodemus no doubt recognized this Old Testament reference; however, he had no way of knowing that Jesus would soon be lifted up on the cross as a sacrifice for his own sin.

In John 3:16, the gospel is proclaimed in a single verse: "For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." Jesus declared God's love for all of humanity, an invitation for anyone to trust in Him by faith. God didn't send His Son to condemn the world, but to save it (John 3:17)!

Pray that the words of John 3:16 will take on fresh meaning in the lives and hearts of the boys and girls who learn from you. May they realize that salvation is possible by faith alone and that they, too, may be born again into the kingdom of God!

ARRIVAL

When kids arrive, they can play in the game room, large group room, or the balcony area. They can go between the areas as they want until large group starts. Leaders should be spread out in these areas to watch kids. Use this time to interact with kids and build relationships with them. Ask them about their week, big events coming up, or follow up on a prayer request from the week before.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

THIS MONTH'S MEMORY VERSE

You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.

1 John 3:5



NEXT BIBLE BUCKS DAY

MAY 24

There are many techniques and tools to help kids (and you!) memorize Scripture.

THIS MONTH'S TOOL: VERSE ABBREVIATIONS

On an index card, write out the first letter of each word in the verse you want to memorize. For example, 1 John 3:5 will look like:

Y K T H A I O T T A S A I H T I N S

LESSON

One night, a ruler of the Jews named Nicodemus came to Jesus. Nicodemus said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, because no one could perform the miracles you do unless God were with him.”

Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth: unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Nicodemus was confused. He asked, “How can anyone be born when he is old? He cannot go back in time and be a baby again.”

Jesus answered: “I tell you the truth: Unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit. Don’t be amazed that I told you that you must be born again. Like the wind blows where it chooses to blow but you don’t know where it came from or where it’s going, so it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”

Nicodemus still didn’t understand. “How can this be possible?” he asked.

Jesus replied, “I can’t believe that you are a teacher of Israel and don’t know these things! I’m telling you the truth. You can trust me because I am the Son of Man who has descended from heaven.

Then Jesus reminded Nicodemus of a story from the Old Testament. Jesus said, “Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.” Jesus was talking about the future when He would be lifted up on a cross, and everyone who trusts in Him would be saved from their sins.

Jesus continued, “God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him would not die but have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to punish the world, but to save the world. Anyone who believes in him will not be condemned. But everyone who does not believe in the Son of God will be punished for their sin.”

CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus showed His desire to honor God by cleansing the temple of sinful practices. All sin offends God’s glory and will be punished. Jesus took the punishment our sin deserves so that anyone who trusts in Him will be cleansed of sin.

SMALL GROUPS

OUR GOAL

To create opportunities that invite preteens to discover for themselves what it means to own and live out their faith.

DISCUSSION / APPLICATION

- 1) Can only good people enter the kingdom of God? Why not?
- 2) What requirement do we have to meet in order to enter the kingdom of God? Is there another way?
- 3) How does Jesus' death display God's love for us?
- 4) What does it mean to be born again?
- 5) When someone is born again, what changes do you start to see in them?

PICK UP

After small group, kids can play in the game room, large group room, or the balcony area. They can go between the areas as they want until they are picked up. Leaders should be spread out in these areas to watch kids. Use this time to interact with kids and follow up on any questions or discussions from small group time.

As parents arrive upstairs, direct them to the game room, large group room, or balcony to pick their kids up. Make sure to match their security code with their kid's name tag and remove the name tag before they leave!

CLEAN UP

- Put away any supplies used during small group.
- Turn off TVs and lights in the small group rooms.
- Turn off both air hockey tables and put away extra pucks or paddles.
- Gather any balls or other items left out in the game room and put them away in the correct bins.
- Put away any games, books, or supplies in the balcony area.
- Check for any items left behind by kids and put them in the lost and found.

THANK YOU FOR SERVING!