

Week 1 – Sunday 22 February - Jesus is tested in the wilderness.

Week 2 – **Sunday 1 March - Jesus Teaches Nicodemus**

Week 3 – Sunday 8 March - The Samaritan woman

Week 4 – Sunday 15 March - Jesus heals a man born blind.

Week 5 – Sunday 22 March - The Death of Lazarus

Week 6 – Sunday 29 March *Palm Sunday* - The betrayal, judgement and death of Jesus

Holy Week: (Monday 30 March to Saturday 4 April)

Week 2 – Sunday 1 March

HOME GROUPS AND CLASSES GUIDE:

1. Open in Worship and Prayer: this is to invite God into the meeting. For example, you can light a candle, sing together, or use a YouTube Hymn or song.
2. Open your Bibles and read the Bible verses for this week (take turns?) see below.
3. Reflect on the Bible verses and the reflection written by a Minister or Lay Preacher.
4. Connect with each other and take the reflection deeper by answering the Questions.
5. Works out: What have we learned that we can apply in our lives in this session? Keep each other accountable for promises made or important steps taken. Pray for and over each other (after taking prayer requests).

WORSHIP SONG:

For God so loved the world – Hillsong: <https://youtu.be/E7i6c54KEfc?si=Q6NVuZ9qRpCzTTWc&t=8>

BIBLE READINGS:

First reading	Psalm	Second reading	Gospel
Genesis 12:1-4a	Psalm 121	Romans 4:1-5, 13-17	John 3:1-17

Jesus Teaches Nicodemus

John 3:1-17 New International Version

³ Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. ² He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.” ³ Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again. ⁴ “How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!” ⁵ Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. ⁷ You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You^[c] must be born again.’ ⁸ The wind blows wherever it

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pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So, it is with everyone born of the Spirit.” ⁹“How can this be?” Nicodemus asked. ¹⁰“You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things?” ¹¹Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still, you people do not accept our testimony. ¹²I have spoken to you of earthly things, and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? ¹³No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. ¹⁴Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.” ¹⁶For 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. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:

Written by: TONY MATHEE – LOCAL PREACHER

This passage of Scripture is well known but not always well understood. Nicodemus was a man who had reached the pinnacle of his career. He was a Pharisee but also a member of the Sanhedrin which was an elite body of the religious Jewish faith. He could go no further other than becoming the High Priest, which was his next step, but as a member of the Sanhedrin he had great power, prestige, popularity and even money. There was no Jewish government or king in the time of Jesus, so these religious leaders commanded the respect of all the people. So, here was Nicodemus, known by everyone, respected by everyone, having all the worldly comforts his heart desired, coming to Jesus at night. Does that not suggest that he was still missing something. Perhaps we can also learn that all the things that people chase after in this life do not satisfy that conscious/unconscious desire to have meaning and purpose in life.

John’s narrative does not tell us exactly what Nicodemus’ question to Jesus was. But Nicodemus demonstrated that he had an unbiased view of facts. He acknowledged that nobody could perform the miraculous signs Jesus was doing unless God was with him. All those who eventually had Jesus put to death could not see that. But Jesus cuts through all the words of Nicodemus with the foundational truth that what Nicodemus stood for, religious observance and intellectual knowledge, would not gain him access into the kingdom of God – only being born again! Head knowledge had to be converted into heart knowledge. A right standing with God does not come through correct beliefs or correct moral conduct, but through a new heart!!

But what exactly does the expression “born again” mean? You must believe in me Jesus tells Nicodemus. You have to start a new life and live that life as God would have you live it and not as you would like to live it. This means facing the fact that God so loved the world that he gave his only Son to die for the sins of the whole world. Jesus died that my sin could be forgiven. To gain eternal life (verse 16), therefore, I have to admit that I am a sinner, that Jesus died in my place for my sin, and that I need to ask him for forgiveness. I then begin a NEW life with Jesus as my Lord and Saviour, living to please and serve him alone, placing his will above my own. All this is possible because when we make this all-important decision the Holy Spirit enters us and among many other functions, gives us the will and the strength to live that new life.

It is only in John’s Gospel that we read about Nicodemus and the next time he is mentioned is in Chapter 7. The chief priests and pharisees had sent temple guards to arrest Jesus (vs 32), but it seems that they listened to Jesus before arresting him. In listening to Jesus, they decided not to arrest him, but came back saying, “No-one ever spoke the way this man does.” (vs 46). After the pharisees reprimanded the guards, it is Nicodemus who speaks up for Jesus and says, “Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he is doing?” Obviously, Nicodemus must have believed in Jesus to support him among his peers who were viciously antagonistic toward Jesus.

The final mention of Nicodemus is in Chapter 19. Joseph of Arimathea had asked for the body of Jesus after the crucifixion and when he came to take it away, he was accompanied by Nicodemus. Now we see Nicodemus not only believing in Jesus, but by being totally COMMITTED to him. It appears as if he couldn’t care less what his peers and everyone else thought of him. He was now a follower of Jesus and showed that by buying 34 kg of myrrh and aloes to embalm the body of Jesus. Now that amount is a lot of spices, but it did not concern him what people thought. He was identifying with Jesus not only in word of mouth but also

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in ACTION. Perhaps he remembered the words of Jesus on that memorable night, “*Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.*” (John 3: 14 – 15). May we all emulate Nicodemus who moved from being a searcher after meaning and truth, to becoming a believer, and then, following that, becoming totally committed.

GROUP QUESTIONS :

1. Nicodemus came to Jesus alone and at night. Considering that he could have sent anyone else to Jesus who would then report to him, what do you think drove Nicodemus to do what he did?
2. What do you think Jesus’ words, “*No-one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit*” means?
3. Jesus also says, “*The wind blows wherever it pleases..... So is everyone born of the Spirit.*” What do you think Jesus meant by these words?
4. Did Jesus speak of “*Heavenly things*” in his earthly ministry? Discuss those you can remember.
5. Discuss why you think John 3:16 is the Gospel in a nutshell.

DAILY MEMORY VERSE AND PRAYER

MONDAY, MARCH 02 Psalm 128; Numbers 21:4–9; Hebrews 3:1–6

Memory Verse: “*Christ, however, was faithful over God’s house as a son, and we are his house if we hold firm.*” — Hebrews 3:6

Prayer: Faithful God, forgive my complaining and wandering heart. Help me trust Your leading and remain steadfast in Christ.

TUESDAY, MARCH 03 Psalm 128; Isaiah 65:17–25; Romans 4:6–13

Memory Verse: “*Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.*” — Romans 4:7

Prayer: Gracious Lord, thank You for the promise of new life and restoration. Teach me to live by faith, resting in Your mercy.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 04 Psalm 128; Ezekiel 36:22–32; John 7:53–8:11

Memory Verse: “*I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you.*” — Ezekiel 36:26

Prayer: Holy God, cleanse me and renew my heart by Your Spirit. Help me walk in gratitude for the grace You freely give.

THURSDAY, MARCH 05 Psalm 95; Exodus 16:1–8; Colossians 1:15–23

Memory Verse: “*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.*” — Colossians 1:15

Prayer: Lord Jesus, You are supreme over all things and my daily needs. Teach me to trust You instead of grumbling when life is uncertain.

FRIDAY, MARCH 06 Psalm 95; Exodus 16:9–21; Ephesians 2:11–22

Memory Verse: “*So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but members of the household of God.*” — Ephesians 2:19

Prayer: God of peace, thank You for drawing me into Your family. Help me live in unity and gratitude for Your provision.

SATURDAY, MARCH 07 Psalm 95; Exodus 16:27–35; John 4:1–6


Memory Verse: *Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord*” – Psalm 95:1

Prayer: Living God, you know my deepest hunger and weariness. Lead me to You to find true joy in you the true source of lasting life.

FAMILY TIME BY LOLO NTSHIQA

Week 2 — Sunday 1, March: Jesus Teaches Nicodemus

God Changes Us from the Inside Out

 **Scripture:** John 3:1-8; 16 ICB

Opening Thought

Have you ever helped your Mom or Dad wash their car on the outside, but felt overwhelmed when you noticed that you needed to clean the inside too? Sometimes, things look easy to change on the outside, but the real work happens inside. In today's Bible story, Jesus talks about how God doesn't just want to help us look good on the outside—He wants to help our hearts on the inside. That's what it means when Jesus talks about being made new, or "born again."

Scripture Reading: John 3:1-8; 16 ICB

There was a man named Nicodemus who was one of the Pharisees. He was an important Jewish leader. ²One night, Nicodemus came to Jesus. He said, "Teacher, we know that you are a teacher sent from God. No one can do the miracles you do, unless God is with him." ³Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth. Unless you are born again, you cannot be in God's kingdom." ⁴Nicodemus said, "But if a man is already old, how can he be born again? He cannot enter his mother's body again. So how can he be born a second time?" ⁵But Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth. Unless you are born from water and the Spirit, you cannot enter God's kingdom. ⁶A person's body is born from his human parents. But a person's spiritual life is born from the Spirit. ⁷Don't be surprised when I tell you, 'You must all be born again.' ⁸The wind blows where it wants to go. You hear the wind blow. But you don't know where the wind comes from or where it is going. It is the same with every person who is born from the Spirit."

¹⁶ "For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son. God gave his Son so that whoever believes in him may not be lost, but have eternal life."

Reflecting Together

In this story, Nicodemus was a clever man who knew a lot of things, but Jesus explained that following God isn't just about what we know or how we act on the outside. God wants to change our hearts on the inside first. Jesus called this being "born again," which means God gives us a brand-new start on the inside. Think of it like this: when you take a bath in the morning, your body gets clean on the outside, but the soap doesn't touch your heart. You need a special touch from God to clean your heart on the inside.

When we ask God to help us, He makes us more loving, kind, patient, and forgiving. That shows us that His power is working in us. We don't always see God cleaning our hearts, just like we can't see the wind. But after some time, we can see the results of it—like when we choose to tell the truth, share food with our friends or siblings, or say "I'm sorry" when we have hurt others. Those are signs God is helping us grow from the inside out. John 3:16 reminds us why God makes us born again. He does it because He loves us so much. God sent Jesus to help us live new, better lives, starting in our hearts and showing up in how we treat others every day.

Discussion Questions for Teenagers (Ages 12–18)

1. Nicodemus knew a lot about God. Why do you think he still felt the need to talk to Jesus?
2. Jesus talks about being changed on the inside, not just following rules. What does that look like in real life at school, online, or with friends?
3. Can you think of a time when your actions changed because your attitude or heart changed first?
4. Jesus says God didn't send Him to condemn the world. Why is that important for how we see ourselves when we mess up?
5. What's one area of your life where you'd like God to help you grow from the inside out right now?

Discussion Questions for Younger Children (Ages 4–11)

1. What do you think it means when Jesus says God makes us new on the inside?
2. Can you name some "inside" things God helps us with (like kindness, honesty, or patience)?
3. When you feel angry, sad, or scared, what is one thing you can do to let God help your heart? (Examples: pray, take deep breaths, tell a grown-up, or say "I'm sorry.")
4. Can you show or act out one kind thing you could do this week? (Try pretending to share a toy, help set the table, or say something nice.)
5. Who could you show God's love to this week, and how could you show it? (Ideas: draw a picture, give a hug, share a snack, or invite someone to play.)

Family Activity or Symbolic Action

Activity: God's Love Cleans Our Hearts

What You Need:

- A clear jar or glass (represents our heart/body)
- A bucket to place the jar or glass inside (to avoid spilling water everywhere)
- Water (represents God's love)
- Cocoa powder or soil (represents things that make our hearts "dirty" like anger, lying, selfishness, jealousy)
- A jug of clean water

Steps:

1. Fill the jar partly with water and explain: "This water is like God's love already in our hearts."
2. Add a little cocoa powder or soil and stir. Say: "Sometimes our hearts get messy inside like when we are angry, lie, or don't share. This makes the inside of our hearts dirty, just like this water."
3. Pour clean water from the jug into the jar so it overflows. Explain: "When we let God's love fill our hearts, it washes out the messy feelings and makes us feel better inside. The more we let His love in, the cleaner our hearts become!"

Discussion Questions:

- What does the "dirty water" remind you of in your own heart?
- How can we let God's love clean our hearts every day? (Praying, being kind, saying sorry, helping others)

Takeaway Message:

The more we allow God's love to fill and overflow in our hearts, the better we feel inside, and it shows in how we act towards others.

Prayer

Dear God,

Thank You for loving each of us so much that You sent Jesus to show us the way to new life. Thank You that You don't just want us to be good on the outside, but that You want to change our hearts from the inside out. Help us to let Your Spirit guide our thoughts, our words, and our actions every day. Teach us to be kind when it's hard, patient when we're frustrated, and forgiving when someone hurts us. Help us notice the ways You are at work in our hearts, even when we can't see You.

We ask all of this in Jesus' name.

Amen.