DISCUSSION QUESTIONS · MIDDLE SCHOOL

You Must Be Born Again

The Gospel of John: Why Should I Believe? · Week 09 · November 8, 2026

LEADER SNAPSHOT

Big idea: Nicodemus had the résumé: Pharisee, ruler, "the teacher of Israel." Jesus told him none of it was enough: "You must be born again." New life is God's work, and it comes by looking to Jesus, lifted up like the serpent in the wilderness.

Read together: John 2:23–3:15 · Ezekiel 36:25–27 · Numbers 21:4–9. Memory verse: John 3:3.

Time: 20–25 minutes. Question 7 is the one that lands.

WARM UP

1. **Pastor Jeff asked, "How different is the person sitting in church from the person you are when nobody else is around?" Why do we all have a "public version" of ourselves?**
   John 2:25: Jesus "knew what was in man." He sees past the mask.

THE CONVERSATION

2. **Nicodemus came at night and opened with a compliment. Why do you think Jesus skipped the small talk and went straight to "You must be born again"?**
   Jesus knew what was really going on in Nicodemus' heart and went to the main issue.
3. **The Pharisees built "fences": extra rules so they would never break God's laws. What's wrong with trying to get right with God that way?**
4. **Nicodemus thought Jesus meant being physically born again. Read Ezekiel 36:25–27. What did Jesus mean?**
   God's cleansing, a new heart, and His Spirit within. It's not self-improvement. It's a heart transplant.

LOOK AND LIVE

5. **Read Numbers 21:8–9. Why might some people have refused to just look at the bronze serpent?**
6. **Jesus said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up" (3:14). What was He predicting?**
   His death on the cross. Whoever looks to Him in faith has eternal life.

SO WHAT

7. **Pastor Jeff asked, "Are you trusting in what Jesus has done for you, or what you've done for Jesus?" What are some things students trust to make them right with God? Which one is closest to you?**
   Don't push for the right answer. The goal is honesty about what they are leaning on.

THIS WEEK

Memorize John 3:3, and write down one thing you've been trusting to make you right with God instead of Jesus. Then cross it out and pray, "Jesus, I look to You." Next week: Week 10 · The Love That Saves · John 3:16–21 · November 15, 2026