



Jesus' Ministry Begins

KEY VERSE

John 1:14



Lesson Overview (TEACHER)

TRANSITION

Lesson 2 narrated the angelic announcements, Jesus' humble birth, and John the Baptist's preparatory ministry of repentance and baptism. Lesson 3 turns to John's Gospel, which reveals Jesus as the eternal Word made flesh and records the beginning of His public ministry.

CENTRAL TRUTH

Jesus is the eternal God incarnate.

KEY TEXTS

John 1:1–14, 35–3:21; 4:1–42

SPOTLIGHT ON THE GOSPEL

All people are sinners facing eternal judgment. But God sent His eternal Son, the Word, to become flesh and die for sinners. Believe in Jesus, lifted up on the cross, and receive eternal life through Him alone.



Family Devotional (PARENT)

This section explains what the Family Devotional covers for parents to use with their children each day of the week. Each devotional reinforces the lesson taught in Sunday School.

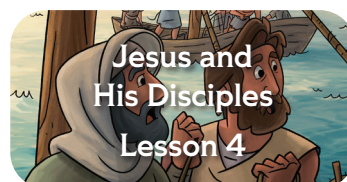
DAILY DEVOTIONS

- Day 1 **Jesus' Ministry Begins** (Sunday School review)
John 1:1–14, 35–3:21; 4:1–42
- Day 2 **The Word Made Flesh**
John 1:1–14
- Day 3 **Jesus Calls His First Disciples**
John 1:35–51
- Day 4 **Jesus' First Miracle in Cana**
John 2:1–12
- Day 5 **Jesus' First Cleansing of the Temple in Jerusalem**
John 2:13–25
- Day 6 **Jesus Teaches Nicodemus About the New Birth**
John 3:1–21
- Day 7 **The Samaritan Woman at the Well**
John 4:1–42

LAST WEEK



NEXT WEEK



Jesus' Ministry Begins

THE WORD MADE FLESH

NOTE: Do not read this commentary aloud to the children. The commentary is designed to help educate and prepare the teacher for the lesson. The teacher's goal in studying the commentary is to better understand the lesson.

The apostle John does not begin his narrative with Jesus' birth, but with "In the beginning" (John 1:1a)—the beginning of time when "God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1). "The Word" was a title specific to the Son, and therefore, before creation there "was the Word" (John 1:1b). He was "with God" and "was God" (v1c). Because God is a Trinity made of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the "Son" was God, and He was "with" the Father. John revealed that "the Word" created all things and gave life to all living things (vv3–4; see Col 1:16; Heb 1:2). *John made the astounding revelation that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).* The Word who was present at "the beginning" was born as a baby in Bethlehem—"the Word" who was God, and never ceased to be God in any way, became man incarnate (see Phil 2:6–8; 1 Tim 3:16).

JESUS' MINISTRY BEGINS

When John the Baptist called Jesus "the Lamb of God," two of his disciples heard him (John 1:35–36); one was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter (v40). The two walked after Jesus (v37), and He invited them to come with Him (vv38–39). Andrew found his brother and told him they had found the Messiah (v41). When Jesus met Simon Peter, he changed his name to "Cephas" (Peter) (v42); this was a sign to Peter that his life was about to change. The next day, Jesus saw Philip and said, "Follow me" (v43). Philip told Nathanael that they had found the Messiah promised by Moses and the prophets (vv44–45). Nathanael was skeptical (v46), but when Jesus addressed him, Nathanael was convinced (vv47–48a) because Jesus told him that He had seen him under a fig tree (v48b). This display of omniscience caused Nathanael to declare that Jesus was "the Son of God" and "the King of Israel" (v49). Jesus told Nathanael that He would see greater things (vv50–51). *In this brief narrative, John affirmed his belief that Jesus was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, the Son of God, the Messiah, and the Son of Man (see Dan 7:13).*

Jesus and His disciples were invited to a wedding in Cana in Galilee (John 2:1–2). A problem arose when the wine ran out (v3a); Jesus' mother informed Him of this and expected Him to help (v3b). Jesus attempted to dissuade her (v4); nevertheless, she told the servants to do whatever Jesus asked (v5). Jesus had the servants fill six large stone jars with water and serve the drink to the "master of the feast" (vv6–8). When the master tasted it, the water had changed into wine of exceptional quality, and he praised the bridegroom for its excellence (vv9–10). John commented that this was the first "sign" or miracle that Jesus performed so that He might manifest His glory and demonstrate He was the Messiah (v11a). After this first miracle, His disciples believed in Him (v11b). (John recorded seven signs in his gospel that proved Jesus was the Messiah: turning water into wine, 2:1–11; later healing a royal official's son, 4:46–54; healing a paralytic at the pool of Bethesda, 5:1–15; feeding the 5,000, 6:5–14; walking on water, 6:16–21; healing a man born blind, 9:1–7; and climatically raising Lazarus from the dead, 11:1–44.)

On the first of three trips to Jerusalem for Passover (v13; see 6:4; 11:55), Jesus went to the temple and found people selling animals for sacrifice and exchanging money for offerings (2:13–14). The temple officials required worshipers to buy their animals for sacrifice, and only accepted Jewish currency for offerings, so traveling worshipers had to exchange money from their home countries for the correct currency. Jesus indicted them for turning temple worship into a business (v16); He drove the merchants

and money-changers out of the temple (v15) and rebuked them (v16). His disciples saw this act of righteous zeal, and it reminded them of the zeal that David had for the temple (v17; see Ps 69:9). The Jewish leaders questioned Jesus over this dramatic display and wanted Him to justify His actions and prove Himself (John 2:18). Jesus' response to this inquiry was cryptic but prophetic: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (v19). The Jews were incredulous because the temple had taken many years to build, and they thought He meant the physical temple (v20). John explained that Jesus was referring not to the physical temple, but to His body (v21). Through this, Jesus meant that His death and resurrection (v22a) would be the justification of His actions and proof of His person. John recorded that after His death, the disciples remembered this and believed in the Scriptures and Jesus' word (v22b).

JESUS MET A PHARISEE AND SAMARITAN WOMAN

John recorded an encounter between Jesus and a man named Nicodemus, who was a Pharisee—a member of the ruling council, the Sanhedrin (3:1). Nicodemus trusted Jesus' teaching (v2); however, Jesus told Nicodemus that his spiritual state was deficient. *Nicodemus needed to be "born again" to "see the kingdom of God" and be saved (v3).* Nicodemus did not understand what Jesus meant by "born again" (v4); Jesus explained that one needed to be reborn by the Spirit (vv5–7); to be reborn is to be given a new regenerative heart and new spirit (see Ezek 36:26) and made a new creation (2 Cor 5:17) by the Spirit (see Titus 3:5; 1 Pet 1:3). Jesus explained to Nicodemus that this work of the Spirit is seen only in its effects—it is like the wind (John 3:7–8). Nicodemus still did not understand (v9). Jesus explained that He was speaking of heavenly things (vv10–13) and that Nicodemus must look to Him, the Son of Man, and believe in Him as those who looked at the bronze serpent in the wilderness (see Num 21:4–9) and lived (John 3:14–15). John then commented on Jesus' mission as the Son, the Father's plan, and the necessity to believe in the Son (vv16–21).

John recorded a conversation between Jesus and a woman from Samaria (4:7a). Jesus and His disciples (see vv1–6,8) were traveling to Galilee through Samaria. Jesus was resting near a well when a woman came to draw water; Jesus asked her to give Him a drink (v7). The woman was surprised since Jews and Samaritans normally had "no dealings" (v9). Jesus informed her that if she knew who He was, she would have asked Him for a drink of "living water" (v10). The woman was skeptical (v11–12), so Jesus explained that physical water satisfied only for a short time, but the water that He gave would be "a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (vv13–14). Jesus was speaking of the water of eternal life that only He could give (see 7:37–39), while the woman was still thinking of physical water (v15). In response, Jesus asked her to call her husband (v16), which exposed the woman's sinful past (vv17–18). She tried to deflect the conversation and asked about the difference between Samaritan and Jewish worship (vv19–20). Jesus explained that the difference was true worship versus false (vv21–24) and brought the conversation back to the subject of salvation (v22b). The woman understood that she was in the presence of someone with a unique understanding of spiritual matters and affirmed her belief that the Messiah was coming to teach about such things (v25); Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he", claiming He was the Messiah (v26). The woman returned to her village and told them that she had met the Messiah (vv27–30). Many Samaritans from her village came to the well and believed for themselves (vv39–42).

LESSON SUMMARY

John 1:1–14 declares Jesus as the eternal Word who was with God, was God, and became flesh. Jesus called His first disciples, who recognized Him as the Messiah and Son of God. In Cana, He performed His first sign and revealed His glory and power. He cleansed the temple and prophesied His resurrection. Jesus taught Nicodemus about being born again and God's love in sending His Son. Jesus openly declared Himself the Messiah.



The following section is provided for you to use as a devotional. This will help you prepare for your upcoming Generations of Grace lesson time. *Check off your progress as you go.*

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Teaching Outline

This section is designed to be used as a clean copy of your notes for teaching the lesson. Follow the teaching outline below as a step-by-step guide during your Sunday School lesson.

- ☐ **PRAY** with your class that the children would understand the central truth and gospel message, and that you would teach the children effectively.
- ☐ **REVIEW** last week's lesson and the central truth to begin your lesson.
- ☐ **INTRODUCE** this week's lesson and the central truth using the selected introduction, illustration, or application from our additional resources page.



- ☐ **READ** the key texts from Scripture you selected that connect to the central truth.

- ☐ **TEACH** your class using your summarized notes and questions from the **LESSON OUTLINE**. The points provided are the main headers from the commentary. Use the visual aid you selected and always connect your lesson back to the central truth.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. THE WORD MADE FLESH (JOHN 1:1-14)

- Who is called “the Word,” and what amazing thing happened when the Word came to live on earth?

2. JESUS' MINISTRY BEGINS (JOHN 1:35-2:25)

- What was the very first miracle Jesus did at the wedding?

3. JESUS MET A PHARISEE AND SAMARITAN WOMAN (JOHN 3:1-21; 4:1-30, 39-42)

- What does the “living water” represent?

- ☐ **CONCLUDE** this week's lesson with the spotlight on the gospel and tie it into the central truth and the lesson you just taught.

- ☐ **PRAY** for the children hearing this lesson that they would be saved and follow the LORD.