

John 3:1-18

Born Again

Scripture: John 3:1-18

Memory Verse: John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life."*

Lesson Focus: We will study the passage leading up to the most famous verse in the whole Bible (John 3:16). We hope the kids will understand the simplicity of the gospel invitation and that many of them will respond and be saved!

Activities and Crafts: Coloring Picture of Memory Verse, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Bring it Home Discussion for 3rd - 5th.
Craft for 1st & 2nd: God So Loved the World Craft

Starter Activity: Top Three Lists

Consider starting off the lesson having some lively discussion over top-three lists of various topics. Most kids like talking about their favorite things! Perhaps even draw a podium on the whiteboard and fill in the answers as you collect feedback from the kids. Below are a few items you can ask kids for their "top three". Call out some options and have kids respond by a show of hands or simply collect some individual answers. *

Restaurants: (McDonalds, Chick-Fil-A, Mod, Wendy's, Cane's, In 'n' Out, Olive Garden)

Ice Cream Flavors: (Chocolate, Vanilla, Strawberry, Cookie Dough, Cookies & Cream, Mint)

Pro Sports: (Baseball, Football, Hockey, Basketball, Soccer)

Disney Movies: (Frozen, Moana, Aladdin, Toy Story, Tangled, Cinderella, Robin Hood)

Pizza Toppings: (Pepperoni, Sausage, Extra Cheese, Pineapple, Ham, Mushrooms)

Wrap up this activity with a similar discussion of top-three Bible verses. Most kids may not have Bible verses memorized so consider mentioning some of your own favorites and why you like them. * However, whether it is your favorite or not, transition into the lesson mentioning what is perhaps the most famous verse in the whole Bible: **John 3:16**.

Let's open our Bibles now and see why this verse is so famous and on so many "top-three" lists.

Bible Study:

John 3:1-2: The last two weeks we have been learning how Jesus has begun to do signs and wonders to draw people to Himself. * One person who appears to be particularly fascinated is Nicodemus, a Pharisee.

Q: Who were the Pharisees? A: The Jewish religious leaders (who did not like Jesus)!

"Nick" came to meet with Jesus privately by night. *

Q: Why do you think he came by night? A: Probably because, as a religious leader, he was embarrassed to be seen with Jesus. But he couldn't deny that there was something extraordinary about Him so he was willing to take the risk!

John 3:3-4: Jesus says something to "Nick" that sounds crazy to him: that one must be "born again" to be restored to God and have a place in His kingdom.

Q: What did "Nick" think Jesus meant? A: That he was to climb back into his mother's belly and be birthed again! Do you think that is what Jesus meant? NO!

John 3:5-7: Jesus "doubles down" and describes how a person must become a new creation. The Bible elsewhere describes people as "dead" in their sin and only when a person is "born again" through faith and trust in Jesus do they become alive/saved. *

Q: How many of you know where butterflies come from? A: Caterpillars! (Teachers: Consider bringing a few pictures of caterpillars and butterflies to sharpen this point) This is a lot like what happens when a person trusts in Jesus. They become a new (and better) creation. And just like the butterfly never goes back to being a little caterpillar, the believer never goes back to the old life of sin! (see **2 Cor. 5:17**)

Q: Have any of you been baptized? Baptism is a picture of this! In baptism, going down into the water represents our death to sin and our OLD "caterpillar" life while coming out of the water represents our NEW "butterfly" life as followers of Jesus!

John 3:8: This is the work of God the Spirit and Jesus's point here is that just like you cannot control the wind, but can see its effects, so it is with the Holy Spirit. *

John 3:9-10: "Nick" was perhaps among the "top three" of religious leaders in Israel and yet he was confused. He was perhaps blinded by the popular view that he had to be a good person, keep the law, and earn his way into God's kingdom. Instead, Jesus is saying that people need God to INVADE so that they can be RE-MADE. *

John 3:11-12: While Jesus is patient with "Nick", he is also challenging him to rethink things. If "Nick" can't believe these simpler things about surrendering in faith and becoming a new creation, he has no hope of understanding anything else! *

John 3:13-14: Jesus now refers back to this strange story in the OT where Moses lifts a snake up onto a pole in the wilderness. What is that all about? Let's find out!

Read Numbers 21:7-9: God's people were being very bad and God punished them by sending them poisonous snakes. When the people confessed their sin to God, He received their prayer of repentance and gave them a solution. But it was only those who responded in faith to God's gracious provision who were healed and saved!

John 3:15: In the same way, God has provided His Son as the antidote to the poison of our sin. For Jesus was lifted up and nailed to the cross for our sin. This is God's solution to the problem of our sin and we must look to Him in faith to be healed and saved!

If the people of Israel chose not to look to the snake that God provided, they would die. In the same way, if people today do not look to the Lamb of God that God provided to take away our sin they will also perish, forever away from God in hell! *

Q: But why did God give up His only Son to do this for us? (see the next verse!)

John 3:16: This is the answer! Because God loves people! This is why this verse is in everyone's "top three" list. It tells us not only how great God's love for people is, but how simple it is to be rescued and saved from the punishment we deserve for our sin! This is the gospel, the good news, in all its magnificence in one simple verse! *

John 3:17: Jesus came so that people could be saved and not condemned!

Q: What does it mean to be condemned? A: Punishment and doom: In a word, hell. This is where people get what they deserve for each and every sin they have done.

Q: What is sin? A: Saying, thinking, or doing anything that disobeys God.

Condemnation is bad news. The Bible is clear that we all are deserving of this punishment before the Holy God of the universe, because we all have sinned. We all are guilty. It doesn't matter if you have sinned a lot or a little, you still have this problem!

Once you accept that this bad news is true, then you understand why this is called the gospel, or the "good news". First, you must understand and accept this bad news, then you gladly receive the good news and believe in Jesus Christ to be rescued and saved. *

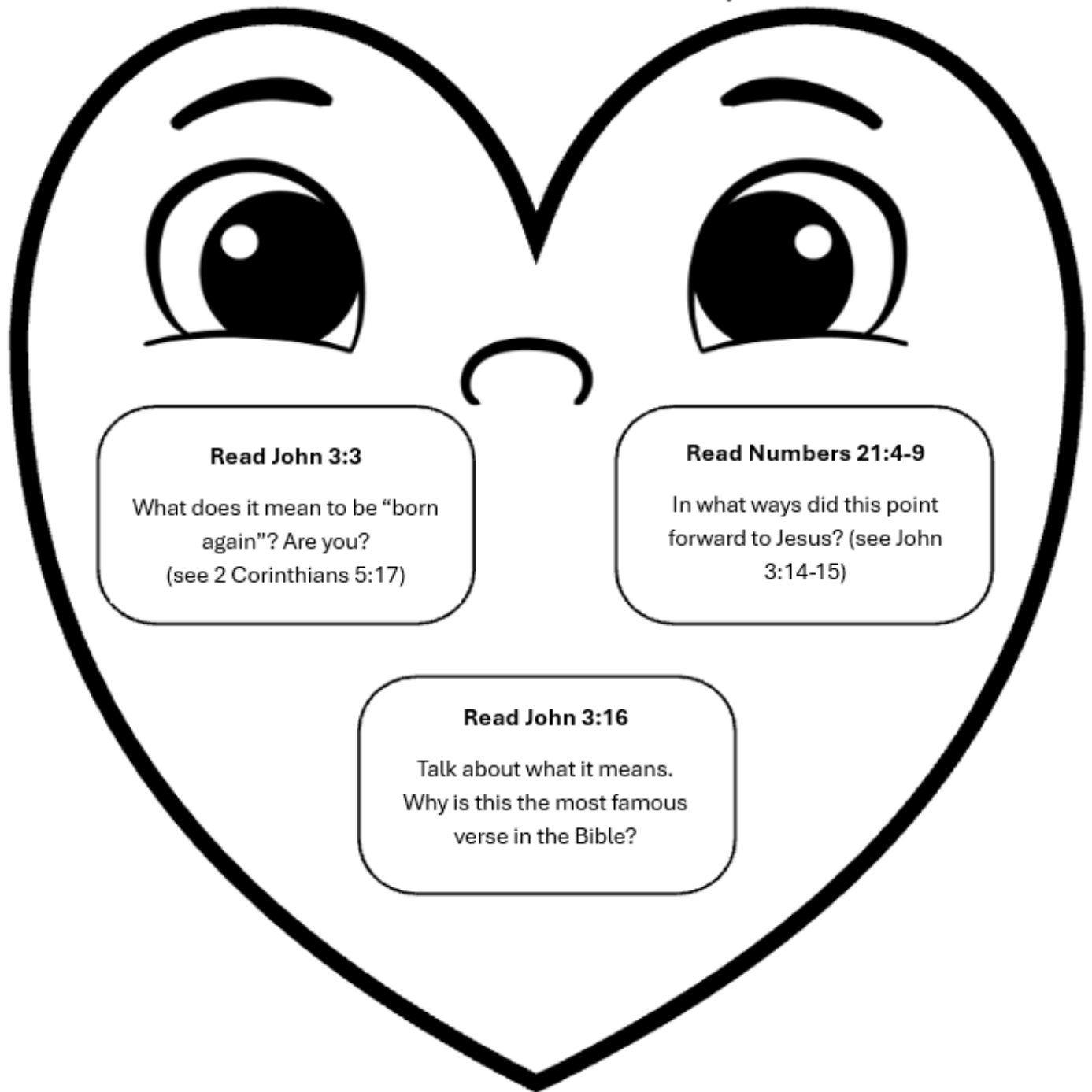
John 3:18: Again, you either accept the antidote that God has provided (looking to Jesus in faith) or you accept the consequences of your sin against God (condemnation or punishment in hell).

Key Point: What did Jesus teach Nicodemus? That one must be born-again! That is what happens when we come to Jesus in faith, admitting we have sinned, and recognizing He is our only hope. Then the Holy Spirit INVADES us so that we can be RE-MADE!

I hope you see why **John 3:16** is on so many "top-three" lists. But more importantly I hope you see the choice before you. If you haven't already, come to Jesus in faith, believe on Him, and become a new creation, a child of God!

BRING IT HOME

BEHOLD what manner of **LOVE** the Father has
bestowed on us,



that we should be called children of God!