

John 3:16-36

Step into the Light

Scripture: John 3:16-36

Memory Verse: John 3:36 *"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."*

Lesson Focus: We pick up right where we left off last week with another look at John 3:16 within the context of the second half of the chapter. We hope kids will respond to the simple invitation to repent and believe in Jesus.

Activities and Crafts: Coloring Picture of John 3:16, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Bring it Home Discussion for 3rd - 5th.
Craft for 1st & 2nd: Magic Flashlight

Starter Activity: On The Spot Talent Show

Consider starting off the lesson hosting an "on the spot" talent show. Give a few kids an opportunity to come up before the class and show everyone something fun, interesting, or even unusual that they can do. It could be as simple as dancing, speaking another language, singing, whatever the kid wants (it just has to be quick)!

To make it a little more fun and to better tie the activity into the lesson have a particular spot for each kid to come up. We will provide you with a picture of a bright spotlight hung from a post that can serve as your spotlight. Or consider bringing in a bright light of your own to magnify the effect! (Teachers: See below where we encourage the use of this spotlight throughout the lesson) *

Be sure to have each student take a bow after their performance and have the class encourage each participant with applause. We will also leave you with a mini-whiteboard that you can use to judge each performance (generously of course!). *

Last week the "spotlight" was on **John 3:16**, the most famous verse in the Bible. * We're going to take another look at it today as we study the rest of the chapter. But what we will also see is that God shines His holy spotlight on every one of us and **John 3:16** teaches us how we can stand confidently under that spotlight!

The question that each one of us must answer is what will we do when His spotlight shines on us? Let's open our Bibles and take a look!

Bible Study:

John 3:16: Let's all say this verse together! As we learned last week, this is the good news of the gospel nicely packaged into one verse. The "bad news" is that we **WILL** * perish because of our sin, but God, because of His great love, made a way for rebellious sinners like you and me to be rescued and saved!

Q: How? A: By believing and trusting in Jesus, His death and resurrection for our sins.

John 3:17: To be condemned, sentenced, punished, or found guilty is what we all deserve because of our sin. But Jesus, the Son of God, came so that sinners like you and me could freely receive what we **DON'T** deserve: eternal life and awesomeness!

John 3:18: Notice how simple God made this.

Q: If you believe in Jesus, then what? A: You are not condemned but rather welcomed into God's family as a child of God.

Q: If you don't believe in Jesus, then what? A: You are condemned and will simply receive the punishment you deserve for your sin in hell. It's simple yes, but also serious!

John 3:19: As we learned last week, believing and trusting in Jesus entails becoming "born-again". People must leave the old way of sin, darkness, and self-righteousness behind and come into God's holy light as a new creation.

John 3:20: And that's the rub many people have! People do not want to turn away from their sin, darkness, and self-righteousness. They see God's holy light not as an invitation to live and walk with Him, * but as a spotlight that will uncover and reveal all their pet sins that they do in secret.

Teachers: At this point shift attention back to the spotlight. Stand under there yourself and ask the kids to now imagine this light as God's holy light shining down on us to judge and measure our character and behavior. The class may have given applause for the talent show acts, but what do you think God gives us for the "acts" of our entire lives! NOT applause!! * Read some of these verses to reinforce how guilty we all are before God (**Romans 3:23, James 2:10, 1 John 1:8**). Some people might admit they have committed **SOME** sins but think they aren't **THAT** bad. * They may think their goodness outweighs their badness which will earn them a passing grade under God's holy spotlight. Wrong again! Read **Isaiah 64:6** or **Romans 3:10**. We are utterly incapable of standing before God on our own merits.

This should make us all a little uncomfortable! And that's what God wants! Because it is not until we are made **uncomfortable** by the bad news of our sin and guilt that we will be made **comfortable** by and long for the good news of the gospel!

John 3:21: So instead of hiding in the darkness of our sin, we admit and turn away from our sin, turn to Jesus in faith, and step into His holy light as a new creation!

John 3:22: Notice that the disciples and Jesus are doing life together. This is what happens when you step into the light. You follow Jesus and join Him in His mission!

John 3:23-24: John the Baptist eventually does get thrown into prison after he confronted Herod the King about his sin and darkness!

John 3:25-26: Some of the followers of John the Baptist are troubled because people are leaving him and beginning to follow Jesus instead. John has been the one "in the spotlight" for quite some time, but now Jesus is the one taking center stage.

John 3:27-29: John's response might seem a little surprising.

Q: Is he jealous or mad at Jesus for doing this? A: NO! He reminds them that his time in the spotlight was always just to prepare people for the Lamb of God. Now that Jesus has come, it's time for him to step aside and for Jesus to be in the spotlight ALONE. *

John 3:30: And that is exactly what happens. Jesus's influence and following will grow while John's will decline. Think of it this way: How many followers of John the Baptist are there today? Essentially zero! How about followers of Jesus? Lots and lots! *

John 3:31: John the Baptist gives one very important reason here why Jesus must increase and he must decrease. Jesus is from above! He is God the Son come down to rescue us, while John was just a man. If you're not following Jesus, you're following someone and that someone is just a human. Why not follow the One who is above all!

John 3:32-35: At a wedding celebration, the best man typically gives a little speech or toast to the groom. In the same way, John is giving a final speech about Jesus declaring Him to be the promised One sent by the Father, filled by the Spirit, testifying to God's plan to rescue sinners.

John 3:36: These final words from John the Baptist are a fitting finish to our lesson.

Key Point: John's last words bring us back to where we started. God's holy light shines before us. Everyone must how they respond to it. Again, notice how simple it is!

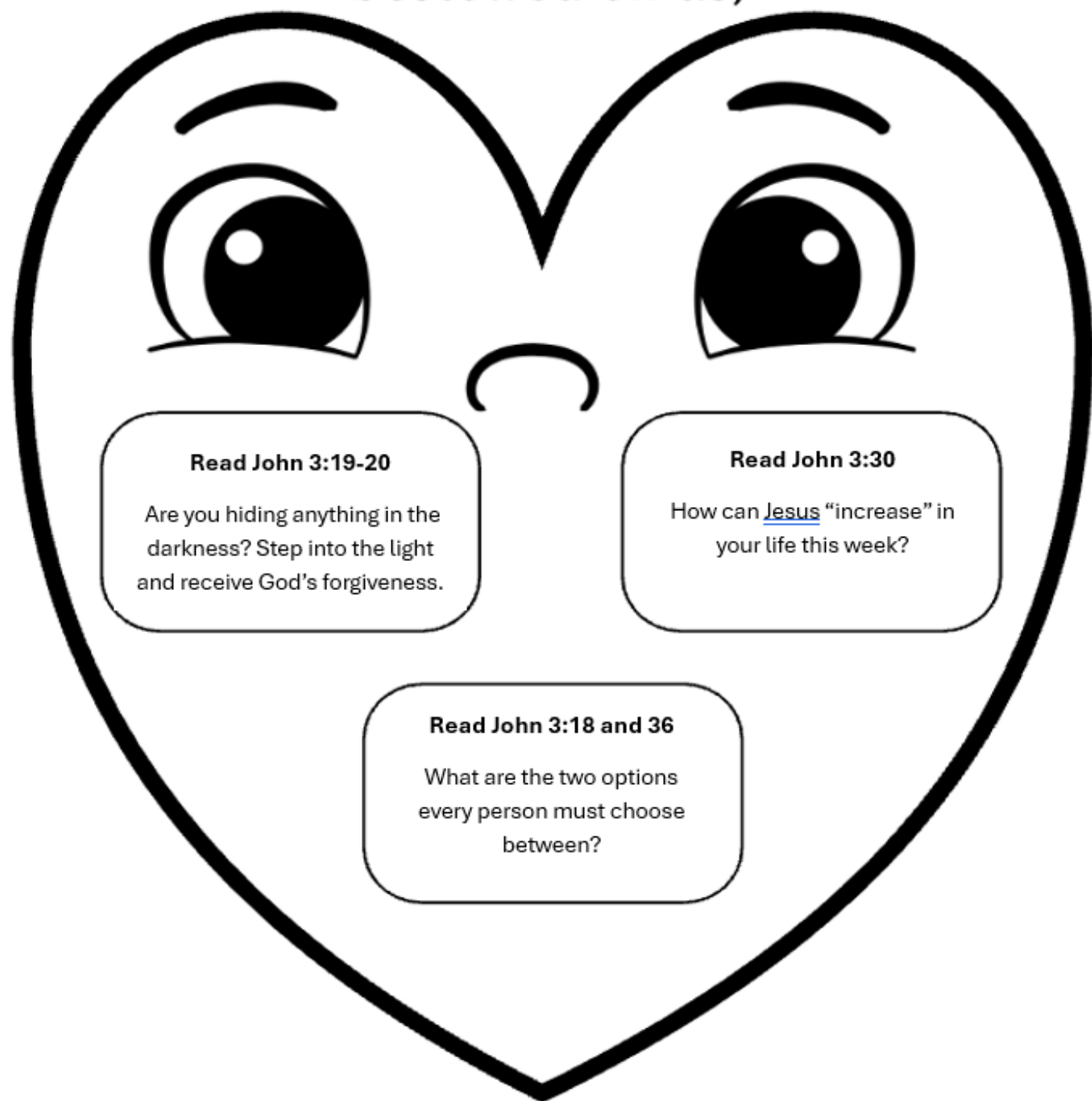
Q: If you believe in Jesus, then what? A: You receive everlasting awesomeness! To believe in Jesus means you turn away from your sin, step into the Light.

Q: If you don't believe in Jesus, then what? No awesomeness. Rather, you get the wrath of God, the punishment you deserve for your sins. You remain in the darkness.

Have you stepped into the light? (**Teachers:** Consider using the spotlight one more time to make this final appeal to the kids) Remember this is God's invitation to be born-again, to do life with Him, to be part of His family and kingdom! *"For God so loved YOU, that He gave His only Son, that if YOU believe in Him YOU will not perish, but have everlasting life!"*

BRING IT HOME

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



that we should be called children of God!