


Jesus Explains Eternal Life to Nicodemus

John 3:1-17

Preschoolers are starting to make sense out of their concrete, everyday world, but they don't think much beyond today. Heaven, forever, and being born again are huge new concepts. Like Nicodemus, your children have many questions about the world, Jesus, and God, and a new fascination with heaven. Jesus took the time to explain the truth to this earnest seeker. Use this lesson to explain the truth in simple ways to your little ones and model Jesus' love to each child!



► Bible Point
Jesus gives us life in heaven.


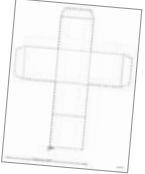

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started <i>about 5 min.</i>	Welcome and Celebrate Welcome each other, and praise God through music.	CD player Teacher Pack: CD	
2 Key Verse Activity <i>about 10 min.</i>	Heavenly Haven Travel into "heaven" with "Jesus."	Bible, large marker, poster board, tape, chair Teacher Pack: "God's Kingdom" picture 	Draw a cross on poster board. Tape the "God's Kingdom" picture to a chair at one end of your room.
3 Bible Exploration <i>about 15 min.</i>	Puppy Pointers Learn with Theo about how people go to heaven.	CD player, Theo puppet, cross, tape, Teacher Pack: CD	Tape the cross to Theo's paw.

Key Verse
"For 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" (John 3:16).

Weaving Faith Into Life
Children will thank Jesus for coming to give them life in heaven.





LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
<p>3</p> <p>Bible Exploration <i>(continued)</i></p>	<p>Bible Time: Night to Light Watch puppets re-enact what happened with Nicodemus.</p>	<p>Bible, 11 paper fasteners, thin string (such as dental floss), scissors, tape, index card, toothpicks Teacher Pack: marionette</p> 	<p>Cut out and assemble the marionette. Tie the marionette strings to toothpicks, and poke the toothpicks through an index card so you have more control of the strings. Practice holding the card and pulling on one string at a time.</p>
	<p>Center 1: Life in Heaven Make thumbprints in "heaven" for everyone they know who believes in Jesus.</p>	<p>My Bible Hugs, ink pads, wet wipes</p>	<p>Remove the Lesson 3 pages from each My Bible Hugs student book, and write children's names on them.</p>
<p>4</p> <p>Weaving Faith Into Life <i>about 20 min.</i> <i>(Choose 2 centers.)</i></p>	<p>Center 2: Newborn Food Eat like babies as they learn about being born again.</p>	<p>jars of baby food, spoons, antibacterial gel (optional)</p>	
	<p>Center 3: Heavenly Birth Make "baby footprints."</p>	<p>pen, ink pads, wet wipes Teacher Pack: 1 copy per child of the "Heavenly Birth Certificate"</p>	
	<p>Center 4: A Gift From God Decorate a T-shape, and fold it to become a gift.</p>	<p>scissors, crayons or markers, tape Teacher Pack: "Jesus" stickers, "Foldable Cube" page</p>	<p>Copy and cut out 1 "Foldable Cube" per child.</p> 
<p>5</p> <p>Lasting Impressions <i>about 10 min.</i></p>	<p>Daily Challenges Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word.</p>	<p>My Bible Hugs</p>	
	<p>Action Prayer Sing a simple song asking God to give them life in heaven.</p>	<p>tape CD player Teacher Pack: CD, "Jesus and Nicodemus" poster (from the Big Bible Poster Pack)</p>	
	<p>Weaving Faith at Home Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.</p>		





Welcome and Celebrate Supplies

CD player

Teacher Pack

CD: "Welcome, friends!" (track 21), "When You're Scared or Afraid" (track 22)

1 GETTING STARTED

Welcome and Celebrate

Tip Consistently use the same signal to announce a transition to the next activity. You could flip the lights off and on, use a train whistle, have a puppet rustling inside a bag, or sing cleanup songs. Keep it simple, consistent, and fun.

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

As the children arrive, greet each one with a smile. When it's time to begin, use your signal to gather the children together in a circle.

Lead children in singing "Welcome, Friends!" (track 21 on the CD) to the tune of "Are You Sleeping?" Encourage children to follow the motions in parentheses.

♪ Welcome, friends! Welcome, friends! (*motion "come" twice*)
To God's house, to God's house. (*put hands together above head to make a house*)
We will learn from God above (*point up*)
How Jesus came to share his love. (*hug self*)
Join the fun! Join the fun! (*jump up and down*)
 (*Repeat.*)

Say: **Welcome, everyone! Let's sing another song about faith.**

Begin the CD and sing "When You're Scared or Afraid" (track 22 on the CD) to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It." Encourage children to follow the motions in parentheses.

♪ When you're scared or afraid, have faith! (*cover eyes; then make praying hands*)
When you're scared or afraid, have faith! (*cover eyes; then make praying hands*)
When you're scared or afraid, have faith in Jesus Christ! (*cover eyes; then stretch hands up to God*)
When you're scared or afraid, have faith! (*cover eyes; then make praying hands*)

When it's raining or dark, have faith! (*cover eyes; then make praying hands*)
When it's raining or dark, have faith! (*cover eyes; then make praying hands*)
When it's raining or dark, have faith in Jesus Christ! (*cover eyes; then stretch hands up to God*)
When it's raining or dark, have faith! (*cover eyes; then make praying hands*)

When you're sad or alone, have faith! (*cover eyes; then make praying hands*)
When you're sad or alone, have faith! (*cover eyes; then make praying hands*)



When you're sad or alone, have faith in Jesus Christ! (cover eyes; then stretch hands up to God.)

When you're sad or alone, have faith! (cover eyes; then make praying hands)

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Say: We never have to be scared or afraid because Jesus is always here with us. When we believe in him, we can live with him forever! Let's learn about how
▶ **JESUS GIVES US LIFE IN HEAVEN.**



2

**KEY VERSE
ACTIVITY**

Heavenly Haven

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Have the children form a circle and sit down opposite the chair with the "God's Kingdom" picture taped to it. Open your Bible to John 3:16, and show children the words.

Say: **Our Key Verse from the Bible says, "For 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." That means that God loved the world so much that he gave his Son, Jesus, so we can live forever in heaven. Let's say the verse together.** Lead the children in repeating the simplified Key Verse after you: **God loved the world so much that he gave his Son, Jesus, so we can live forever in heaven (John 3:16).**

Say: ▶ **JESUS GIVES US LIFE IN HEAVEN** when we believe in him. **Someday Jesus will take us to heaven to live forever and ever with him. Heaven is a wonderful place, full of light and angels and other people who believe in Jesus.** Point to the "God's Kingdom" picture on the other side of the room, and call it "heaven." **Let's play a fun game that'll help us understand why we can live forever with Jesus in heaven.**

Choose two children to stand in "heaven" (near the poster on the chair), and have the rest of the group line up as if for a relay, about 5 to 10 feet away. Give the poster board with the cross drawn on it to the children in heaven to hold up. Then have the children act out the following paraphrase of the Key Verse.

Say: **Because God loved the world** (Have the "heaven" children take the cross and lay it down in front of the line of kids and wait.)

...he gave his Son, Jesus. (Have the first child in line lie down on the poster board and pretend to be Jesus with his or her arms stretched out on the cross.)

If we believe in him (Have the next child in line show his or her belief in Jesus by kneeling down near the foot of the cross.)

Heavenly Haven Supplies

- Bible
- large marker
- poster board
- tape
- chair

Teacher Pack

- "God's Kingdom" picture

Heavenly Haven Easy Prep

Draw a cross on poster board. Tape the "God's Kingdom" picture to a chair at one end of your room.





...we can live forever in heaven. (Have the “heaven” children pull the poster board across the floor to heaven and then join the back of the line of kids. The kneeling child will walk to heaven following the cross and Jesus. These two children are now the “heaven” children and will pull the poster board the next round.)

Continue repeating the words and having the children act out the words until all the children have a chance to participate.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- What do you think heaven will be like?
- Why do you want to go to heaven?

Say: **God loved the world so much that he gave his Son, Jesus, so we can live forever in heaven. Jesus is the only one who gives us life in heaven. I’m glad that God loved us enough to send us his Son, Jesus, and that ► JESUS GIVES US LIFE IN HEAVEN.**

3 BIBLE EXPLORATION

Puppy Pointers

What You’ll Do ■■■■

Say: **Listen everyone, Theo’s coming! He has something to show us. Let’s find out what it is.** Play “Here, Theo” (track 4 on the CD), and bring out Theophilus the FaithRetriever.

Theo: Hi, everybody!

Teacher: Hello, Theo! It’s so good to see you at church with us today. What did you bring with you?

Theo: I brought this cross.

Teacher: Why did you bring a cross?

Theo: Because I thought it might help you all get to heaven some day.

Teacher: Theo, a little cross won’t get us into heaven. It’s only believing that Jesus, God’s Son, died on the cross for our sins that gets us to heaven. Friends, can you tell Theo what you know about heaven? *(Pause for children to help Theo.)*

Teacher: Let’s tell Theo our Bible Point for today.

(Lead children in saying the Bible Point for Theo: ► JESUS GIVES US LIFE IN HEAVEN.)

Theo: I get it now! Thank you for helping me. I’m going to run and put this cross back in my house.

Teacher: That’s good. Friends, let’s say goodbye to Theo!

Puppy Pointers Supplies

CD player
Theo puppet
cross
tape

Teacher Pack

CD: “Here, Theo”
(track 4)

Puppy Pointers Easy Prep

Tape the cross to Theo’s
paw.



Encourage the children to wave or say goodbye to Theo. Then put Theo away in a safe place for next week's use.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Say: **Theo was confused about what it takes to get into heaven.**

Ask:

- **What questions do you have about heaven?**
- **What questions do you have about getting into heaven?**

Say: ► **JESUS GIVES US LIFE IN HEAVEN.** It may seem confusing to some people, but it's actually pretty simple. If we believe in Jesus, then we can live in heaven with him. The Bible tells us about a man who was wondering how to get to heaven, too. Let's see what he found out.

Bible Time: Night to Light

What You'll Do ■■■■

Have the children sit in a large semicircle so all the children can see. Open your Bible to John 3:1-17, and show children the words. Tell children that the Bible is God's special book.

Say: **How do you act when you're afraid to meet someone?** Allow time. **There was once a very important man named Nicodemus who was afraid to meet Jesus.** Bring out the marionette. **Let's pretend that our marionette puppet is Nicodemus. Well, Nicodemus had heard about a man named Jesus who could walk on water, heal people, and do all kinds of amazing things!**

Use a sophisticated but humble voice for Nicodemus. Say: **"Is it true? Could Jesus really be the one sent by God to save us? Maybe..."** Nicodemus thought about it. Bring Nicodemus' hand up and rub his head. **"Maybe...just maybe...Jesus can tell me how I can have life in heaven."** Have Nicodemus point up.

Say: **Nicodemus might have said to himself, "I'm afraid someone will see me and make fun of me if I talk to Jesus! I don't want anyone to see me."** Move Nicodemus' head side to side. **"Hmm, what can I do so no one will see me?" What do you do when you want to hide from people?** Allow time.

Say: **"Aha! I know!"** Pull Nicodemus' hand up to touch his head. **"I'll go out at night so no one will know it's me." So late one night, Nicodemus waited until everyone was asleep. He tiptoed into the darkness.** Walk Nicodemus back and forth.

Say: **When Nicodemus found Jesus, he told him, "I know you've come from God. You've done such amazing things!" Jesus said, "Nicodemus, you need to be born again if you want to see God's kingdom. Only God's Spirit can give you life in**



Bible Time: Night to Light Supplies

- Bible
- 11 paper fasteners
- thin string (such as dental floss)
- scissors
- tape
- index card
- toothpicks
- Teacher Pack**
- marionette

Bible Time: Night to Light Easy Prep

Cut out and assemble the marionette. Tie the marionette strings to toothpicks, and poke the toothpicks through an index card so you have more control of the strings. Practice holding the card and pulling on one string at a time.





heaven.” **But Nicodemus didn’t understand.** Lift Nicodemus’ hand up. **“What? How can a grown man, like me, fit back into my mother to be born...again?”**

Say: **Jesus told Nicodemus that just like the wind moves without us seeing it (have Nicodemus sway back and forth), God’s Spirit moves quietly in us when we believe in his Son. He told Nicodemus that God loves all the people in the world so much that God sent Jesus to earth so that Nicodemus, and everyone else who believes in Jesus, can have life in heaven some day.**

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What do you think about what Jesus said to Nicodemus?**
- **What do you think it means to be born again?**

Say: **Jesus told Nicodemus that he had to be born again to go to heaven—but he didn’t mean he had to be a baby again. He just meant that we had to believe in Jesus because Jesus makes us new, like a baby is new. ► JESUS GIVES US LIFE IN HEAVEN.** Invite the children to say goodbye to Nicodemus. Then put him away.



4 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Choose at least two of the learning centers to help reinforce today’s Bible lesson. Gather the needed materials, and put the supplies in an out-of-sight area until you’re ready for them. Allow the children to choose which center they’d like to explore first. Then circulate among the children as they create and explore. Encourage them to make connections between their activities and the Bible by asking them the questions included with each center’s description.

■ **CENTER 1:**

Life in Heaven

What You’ll Do ■■■■■■

Give each child a Lesson 3 page from My Bible Hugs and show them how to make a thumbprint using the ink pads. Then say: **Life in heaven with Jesus will be a wonderful place filled with your friends and family who believe in Jesus. Make thumbprints next to Jesus in heaven on your paper for every person you know who believes in Jesus.** Allow time. Then have kids clean their hands with wet wipes.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Center 1: Life in Heaven Supplies

My Bible Hugs
ink pads
wet wipes

Center 1: Life in Heaven Easy Prep

Remove the Lesson 3 pages from each My Bible Hugs student book, and write children’s names on them.



Ask:

- Tell about the people you put in heaven.
- What do you hope you can do with these people in heaven?

Say: ► **JESUS GIVES US LIFE IN HEAVEN.** God sent him to earth so he could die for our sins. Everyone who believes in him can live in heaven forever with him. And we can be sure that it'll be the most wonderful place ever. After all, Jesus and God will be there!

■ **CENTER 2:**

Newborn Food

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Have children clean their hands and then sit down for the snack. Serve the children baby food. Say: **Jesus told Nicodemus in our Bible passage that to go to heaven he'd have to be born all over again. Jesus didn't really mean that Nicodemus would have to become a baby again. He just meant that Nicodemus would have to be made new by believing in Jesus.** Choose a child to pray and thank Jesus for providing this fun snack.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Tell kids about what it was like for you when you first believed in Jesus, focusing on things that can be related to a new baby. For example, you could say that just as a baby needs milk, you needed the Bible to grow. Or just as a baby learns to walk, you needed to learn how to walk with Jesus.

Ask:

- What things did you hear that made me seem like a new baby?
- What are some things you can do to be friends with Jesus?

Say: ► **JESUS GIVES US LIFE IN HEAVEN** without having to be a baby again. When we believe in him, he makes us new like a baby. When we believe in him, he forgives the wrong things we do, too.

■ **CENTER 3:**

Heavenly Birth

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Set out ink pads. Say: **Jesus told Nicodemus that to go to heaven, he had to be born again.** Give each child a Heavenly Birth Certificate, and write children's names on their certificates.



Center 2: Newborn Food Supplies

.....
jars of baby food
spoons
antibacterial gel
(optional)



Center 3: Heavenly Birth Supplies

.....
pen
ink pads
wet wipes
Teacher Pack
1 copy per child of
the "Heavenly Birth
Certificate"





Say: **When you were born, the hospital gave you a birth certificate like this. It told your name and some other things about you and your family. The nurses also took your footprint when you were a baby. Let's make baby footprints on these birth certificates.** Show kids how to use the sides of their hands to make footprints with the ink. Then have them use their pinky fingers to add the toes.

Say: **Jesus says that when we believe in him, we're born again. He means that we're made new.** Point to the Key Verse on the Heavenly Birth Certificate. Say: **Our Heavenly Birth Certificates say our Key Verse to remind us of this.** Have kids say the simplified Key Verse along with you: **God loved the world so much that he gave his Son, Jesus, so we can live forever in heaven (John 3:16).** Then say: **When you believe in Jesus, you're made new, like a baby.**

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- What kind of help does a baby need?
- What kind of help do you need from Jesus today?

Say: **Jesus makes us new when we believe in him. He makes us new like babies are new. And Jesus takes care of us the same way our parents took care of us when we were babies. When we believe in him, Jesus forgives us for the wrong things we do and ► JESUS GIVES US LIFE IN HEAVEN.**

■ **CENTER 4:**

A Gift From God

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Say: **► JESUS GIVES US LIFE IN HEAVEN, friends! And that's because God loved the world so much that he gave his Son, Jesus, so we can live forever in heaven. (John 3:16).** Have kids repeat the verse with you, then give each child a Foldable Cube.

Center 4: A Gift From God Supplies

- scissors
- crayons or markers
- tape

Teacher Pack:
"Jesus" stickers
"Foldable Cube" page

Center 4: A Gift From God Easy Prep

Copy and cut out 1 "Foldable Cube" per child.



Encourage kids to put a Jesus sticker on one side and to decorate the other side to look like a gift. Then show the children how to fold the cube. Check that the side decorated as a gift is on the outside of each child's gift. Use tape where needed to help the cube stay folded, but make sure one side stays loose so kids can open it to see the Jesus sticker.

Have children hold their gifts and say together: **Jesus wants to give us life in heaven.**

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What's great about getting a gift?**
- **What's great about the gift of life in heaven that Jesus gives us?**

Say: **God loved us so much that he gave us a special gift, his Son, Jesus. And it's because of Jesus that we're forgiven for our sins. ► JESUS GIVES US LIFE IN HEAVEN.** Tell the children to take their small gifts home to show their parents. Say: **Tell your parents that God loved the world so much that he sent Jesus as a gift for everyone.**



5 LASTING
IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

After the children have cleaned up their centers, bring everyone back to a circle area on the floor. Review the lesson activities and the Bible Point, and then encourage the children to share what they remember about what they learned from the Bible today.

Also use this time to challenge kids in their faith. Encourage them to choose a Daily Challenge for applying today's lesson to their lives this week. Use this challenge for encouraging your children's growing relationships with Jesus.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Say: **Today we learned that ► JESUS GIVES US LIFE IN HEAVEN. I would like each of you to choose a way this week that you can show that you believe in Jesus.**

Read the three Daily Challenge ideas for children to choose from:

- **Color a picture of what you think heaven will look like. Hang this picture in your room to remind you that when you believe in Jesus he gives you life in heaven.**
- **Help your parents make your family's favorite dessert. While you're eating it, talk about how heaven will be even better than eating the dessert.**
- **Have your parents tell you what they think heaven will be like.**

Daily Challenges
Supplies

My Bible Hugs





Action Prayer Supplies

tape
CD player
Teacher Pack
CD: "Life in Heaven"
(track 24)
"Jesus and Nicodemus"
poster (from the Big
Bible Poster Pack)

Have kids each whisper in your ear or tell you which idea they've chosen, and then circle it on each child's My Bible Hugs page. Make sure you tell kids the challenge you choose. Your commitment will inspire children and will give them an opportunity to see God at work in your life as well as in theirs!

Action Prayer

What You'll Do

Have the children sit in a circle as you tape the "Jesus and Nicodemus" to a wall. Point to the poster and say: **Jesus told Nicodemus that if you believe in him, you can go to heaven. Let's sing a song about heaven!** Sing "Life in Heaven" (track 24 on the CD) to the tune of "Oh, Dear! What Can the Matter Be?"

 **Dear God, give us life in heaven!** (*fold hands and bow heads*)

Dear God, give us life in heaven! (*fold hands and bow heads*)

Dear God, give us life in heaven! (*fold hands and bow heads*)

In Jesus' name, amen! (*throw your hands up in the air*)

(Repeat 2x.)

Say: **That was a great prayer! I'm so glad that ► JESUS GIVES US LIFE IN HEAVEN!**

Weaving Faith at Home

Have children take home their My Bible Hugs pages whether they worked on them or not. Have the children tell their parents the challenge they committed to in the "Daily Challenges" activity. Encourage the parents to help their kids fulfill this commitment throughout the week. By working together and focusing on the same goals, you and parents can help children weave faith into their lives!

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families. Available at group.com/digital.

