



Date: _____
Series: Signs on Believers' Hwy
Winter Year 4, Lesson 36

Nicodemus Wants to Believe

Take Home Point: *Believe in Jesus and have eternal life. *Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson.

Bible Event: John 2:23-3:21; Numbers 21:4-9

Key Verse: John 3:15, "Then everyone who believes in him will have eternal life."

We will help kids know:

- When Israelites believed and looked to the bronze snake lifted on a pole, they were physically healed.
- When we look to the cross, we are spiritually healed and have eternal life.
- Believing in Jesus as our Savior means we have new life on the inside (born again).




We will help kids feel:

- Excited about eternal life and God changing them because they believe in Jesus.
- Awed because Jesus changes them.

We will help kids do:

- Play a game called "Believe It or Not."
- Talk about their belief in Jesus and their assurance of eternal life.

THIS LESSON'S ROADMAP

DESTINATION	PAGE #	DISCOVERIES ON YOUR JOURNEY	SUPPLIES NEEDED
Small Group Warm-Up (15 minutes) 	3	Children play the game “Believe It or Not.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> drinking straws Post-it notes® (<i>two per child</i>) pencils markers tokens of your choice(<i>example: small fun-shaped erasers or small candies</i>)
Large Group (20-30 minutes) 	4 7 9 10	Overview Puppet Presentation: “Believable Gordy”—Gordy shows Presenter how good he is at playing “Believe It or Not.” Video: <i>The Gospel of John--</i> <i>-John 2:23-3:21</i> Puppet Conclusion: “Believable Gordy”—Gordy learns how Jesus changes a person who believes in him.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gordy orange construction vest construction hat work boots sign on stick—one side has printed “Nick tried to see...” (<i>p. 12</i>) Other side has printed “... but found he only had to believe.” (<i>p.13</i>) two or four chairs cardboard car front video: <i>The Gospel of John</i> by Visual Bible International, 2003.
Small Group Application (20-25 minutes) 	4	Children color a picture with changeable markers to remind them of the change that Jesus brings in their lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crayola® Color Changeables™ markers per group (Can be found at retail stores, www. Amazon.com or www.crayolastore.com) “Believe It and Be Changed”—one per child (<i>p.11</i>)

Small Group Warm-Up: 15 minutes



Purpose: *Get pointed in the right direction!* Build relationships and help guests feel at ease. Do the learning readiness activity that will point your group in the right direction for the lesson.

Supplies: straws, Post-it notes® (two per child), pencils, markers, “tokens” of choice

Have kids write “yes” on one Post-it note® and “no” on the other Post-it note®.

Let’s start today with a game called “Believe It or Not.” In this game, each person will get to share one thing about themselves. It may be true or untrue.

Our topic will be places you have visited. You can tell about a place you really have been to or you can make one up and try to get us to believe you.

For example, I have been to _____ (fill in a place you have been). Do you believe it or not? Attach your answer “yes” or “no” Post-it note to the top of your straw like a flag. Hold it up for all to see.

If you said “yes” you believe it, you get a token because I have been there. If I said I had been to the Statue of Liberty, but I really hadn’t and you believed me, then you wouldn’t get a token.

Each of you will get a turn to either tell the truth about where you have been or make something up and see if we believe it.

Give kids a minute to think of something and then play the game. Let each child have a turn. Give a token to kids each time they got the right answer. Then say:

In the Bible, there was a man name Nicodemus. He had a hard time believing what Jesus told him even though it was the truth. Jesus wants us to believe in him so that we can be changed. Today we will see that **if we believe in Jesus, we will have eternal life.*

Large Group Overview: 20-30 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids observe what the Bible says. Present the Bible event in creative fashion. Help kids begin to interpret what it means.*

Puppet Presentation: “Believable Gordy”—Gordy shows the presenter how good he is at playing “Believe It or Not.”

Video: *The Gospel of John*---John 2:23-3:21

Puppet Conclusion: “Believable Gordy”—Gordy learns how Jesus changes a person who believes in him.

Small Group Application: 20-25 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids map out the meaning of the Bible event in their lives. Use the questions to stimulate discussion but don't feel tied to them. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. Include personal examples from your own faith journey. The example of Christ at work in your life will leave lasting impressions of how Christ can work in the children's lives.*

Use your Bibles! Children need to learn how to look up references and follow along when scripture is read aloud. Allow for quality time of prayer at the close of the lesson.

Observation Questions: What happened?

Have kids refer to John 3:1-21 in their Bibles.

Who was Nicodemus? (*John 3:1. He was a Pharisee.*)

Why did Nicodemus come to Jesus? (*John 3:2. He was curious to know if Jesus was from God.*)

Who is Jesus talking about when he says, “Son of Man, who came from heaven” in verse 13? (*Himself.*)

What does God give to those who believe in him according to John 3:16? (*Eternal life.*)

Interpretation Questions: What does this mean?

Why do you think Nicodemus came to Jesus at night? (*He did not want anyone to see him because he was embarrassed. Pharisees were*

supposed to have all the answers. He didn't want others to know he was talking to Jesus.)

What do you think Jesus meant by saying he must be “born again?”
(Believe and be changed.)

Application Questions: What does this mean to me?

Application Activity:

Supplies: Crayola® Changeables markers, “Believe it and be changed” page

Pass out the “Believe It and Be Changed” page to each child. In the set of markers, one marker has invisible ink that changes the colors of the other markers. Have kids first write their name inside the cross with the invisible ink marker. Then let them color the cross and the rest of the picture with the other markers. The markers cause the color to change so that their name appears.

While kids are coloring say:

Our key verse from John 3:15 says, “*Then everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.*”

What is eternal life? *(Living with Jesus forever in heaven.)*

Later Jesus said to his Father in prayer, “*This is eternal life: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you sent.*” *(John 17:3.)*

After kids have experienced their name changing color, say:

Jesus told Nicodemus he had to change on the inside. He taught him that instead of following all the religious rules to get to heaven, Nicodemus must believe that Jesus was truly God’s Son. If Nicodemus could accept this, he would experience freedom and his life would be changed.

Just like Nicodemus learned, **Jesus wants us to believe so we can have eternal life.* God also wants to change our lives just like the markers changed color.

Think to yourself for a minute about the next questions: Do you know Jesus now? What do you believe about Jesus?

Closing Prayer:

Say:

I want you to be still and silent for a few minutes. Use this time to pray or talk to God. Maybe you didn't know what it meant to believe in Jesus until today and you want to tell him what you are thinking. Maybe you already believe in Jesus but you want to thank God for changing your life through Jesus' death for you. I will let you pray silently for a few minutes.

Close the prayer thanking God that he changes our lives when we believe in Jesus as our Savior. Then we can have the hope of eternal life in heaven with God.

Then let kids know you would be happy to answer any questions they may have.

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Large Group Presentation: 20-30 minutes

Signs Along Believers' Highway Series

The book of John points to miracles as signs and proof that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. The imagery of road construction signs will be used to exemplify the signs that Jesus performed as told in the book of John. The road worked on is referred to as "Believers' Highway" to show we are all on a journey in our faith.

The presenter is dressed in an orange construction vest, hat and work boots and holds a different road sign each week that is fitting with the Bible event. Another important prop is the simulated car set-up with two or four chairs facing the audience and a cardboard car front (See lesson 34). Shepherds and children are both involved as observers on the highway. They are called up to drive the car and answer questions, give feedback and interact with or about the event.

This series uses "The Gospel of John" DVD series as a visual to show the events of the Bible.

Supplies: orange construction vest, hat, work boots, sign on stick—one side has printed "Nick tried to see..." the other side has printed "... but found he only had to _____ (believe)," two or four chairs, cardboard car front

Believable Gordy Puppet Presentation

Presenter: Gordy, how did you like playing the game "Believe It or Not" in small group this morning?

Gordy: I totally rocked! I guessed all of them right and no one was able to guess mine!

Presenter: That must mean you are a pretty believable person.

Gordy: I sure am. Do you want to try the game with me?

Presenter: Okay. Can I ask the kids to help?

Gordy: I think you will need it! I'll tell you my answers and you tell me if it is true or not.

Presenter: Okay. Where have you been?

Gordy: I have been to Paris.

Presenter: Kids, do you think Gordy has been to Paris? (Wait for audience response.) I don't think so Gordy.

Gordy: It's true.

Presenter: You never mentioned to me that you went to France. Do you have any pictures of the Eiffel Tower?

Gordy: Huh? Where's that?

Presenter: That's in Paris, France.

Gordy: No, I've been to Paris, Texas!

Presenter: Oh-h-h, okay. I've got another one. What is something unbelievable that you have eaten?

Gordy: One time I ate monkey. A cup of Chunky Monkeys, in fact.

Presenter: I don't believe it. No. You are making it up. When did you eat a cup of Chunky Monkeys?

Gordy: But it's true. Sorry, you lost! Haven't you ever heard of Chunky Monkey ice cream?

Presenter: Oh, Gordy. How about a famous person you know.

Gordy: Well, I know the President.

Presenter: No way, Gordy. There is no way you know the President!

Gordy: Yes, I do. The president of the PTA. She's my mom! And yes, she is famous. All my teachers know her!

Presenter: Oh, Gordy...

Gordy: What does all this have to do with us today?

Presenter: Sometimes you can't believe everything people say, but you can believe Jesus.

In the book of John, there are many signs that show Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. In fact, there was a sign in the Old Testament before Jesus had even come to earth.

In Numbers, chapter 21, the people criticized God, so he sent poisonous snakes to bite them. After the people repented, Moses prayed for them and God told Moses to put a snake on a pole and raise it up. Anyone who looked at the snake on the pole would be healed and would not die.

Gordy: That's a cool story but what about today's sign?

Presenter: Today's sign has to do with the word "believe."

Gordy: Believe?

Presenter: Believe means to accept that something is true. As you have experienced today, many things may sound true but they aren't. When you listen to what Jesus said is true and you believe, it has the power to make you new on the inside, you can have eternal life.

Gordy: You are going to explain that, I hope, especially the "new on the inside" thing.

Presenter: I will, but first watch this video and, Gordy, you can join the kids in clapping once anytime you hear the word "believe." Let's see who can be the first to clap their hands.

Video

Show *The Gospel of John* DVD—John 2:23-3:21. Start clip when narrator says, "Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover..." and stop with the statement, "...but whoever lives by the truth comes into the light..."

Signs Along Believers' Highway

John 2:23-3:21 – Nicodemus

Presenter: That was very good clapping! I need three volunteers to come up and get in our car. This includes a Shepherd. (Pick volunteers and have them sit in the car, the Shepherd in the back.) On "Believers' Highway," kids can drive just as well as adults because we are all growing in our spiritual journey.

Here are today's questions. Are you ready?

In John 3:14, Jesus said, "*As Moses lifted up the snake on a pole in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up.*" Who can tell me what happened to the people who looked at the bronze snake on the pole Moses lifted up? (*They were healed and would not die.*)

Our next question: how was Jesus lifted up so that when people see him, they will be healed on the inside? John 3:15 says, “*Then everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.*” (He was lifted up on a cross.)

Our last question has to do with our road sign today. Can you fill in the blank? The front says “Nick tried to see...but found he only had to _____. ” (Allow for several tries until someone gets it. Turn the sign around *BELIEVE*.)

Have the volunteers return to their seats.

Believable Gordy

Puppet Conclusion

Gordy: That’s pretty cool. The snake lifted up on the pole is like Jesus on the cross. But why snakes?

Presenter: The snakes represent the curse of sin. When Jesus died on the cross, he took all sin away and made it possible for us to live free from the curse of sin. The people in Moses’ day were dying on the outside, but without Jesus, we would die on the inside.

Gordy: Wow! It’s pretty important what Jesus did!

Presenter: Yes. It is very important. Through Jesus we have eternal life and are changed forever on the inside.

Gordy: I believe in Jesus and I have eternal life.

Presenter: That is so good, Gordy. Would you like to thank Jesus for the important work he did so that you could be changed forever?

Gordy: Sure! Dear God, I am so excited to have eternal life. Thank you so much for loving me enough to send Jesus to die for me on the cross so I can be changed and live with you forever. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

BELIEVE IT

AND

BE

CHANGED

The image features a circular diagram divided into four segments by thick black lines. The segments are arranged in a clockwise cycle. The top-left segment contains the text 'BELIEVE IT' in a bold, black, sans-serif font, curved to follow the top edge of the segment. The top-right segment contains the word 'AND' in a bold, black, sans-serif font, curved to follow the top edge. The bottom-right segment contains the word 'BE' in a bold, black, sans-serif font, curved to follow the bottom edge. The bottom-left segment contains the word 'CHANGED' in a bold, black, sans-serif font, curved to follow the bottom edge. The entire diagram is set against a light gray background.

Nicodemus
tried to see

**But found
he only had
to (*believe*).**