

FEBRUARY LG | W1



Bible Story

Jesus Teaches Nicodemus • *John 3:1-21*

Bottom Line

God loves the whole world.

Monthly Memory Verse

"I give you a new command. Love one another. You must love one another, just as I have loved you." • John 13:34 NIV

5 min

Large Group Opener

5 min

OPENER

What You Need

No supplies needed

HOST: "Hey, everyone! I'm so excited that you're here today. We're diving into a brand-new series about how much God loves us, and how we can share that love with everyone we meet. It's called 'Like and Subscribe'—because when you come across a really cool channel or video, you don't want to miss it ... and you want to let other people know all about it too!

"Now, if you watch something online with your mom or dad, one way to let the creator know you like their video is with one of these.

SLIDE: Thumbs Up Emoji

"Do you all know what this is?"

Get a response from the audience.

"Yup! It's a thumbs-up emoji. (Do a thumbs up.) It means you like something. But emojis can express a whole lot of other things too. In fact, there are nearly 4,000 official emojis! So right now, we're going to play a game to test your emoji expertise and how well you know a few Bible stories too. It's time to play 'Scripture Symbols.'

SLIDE: Scripture Symbols Title

"Who's ready? Great. We're going to see a set of emojis that represent a Bible Story. If you think you know it, raise your hand in the air, and I'll call on you. Everyone ready? Great. Let's see our first set of Scripture Symbols!

SLIDE: Scripture Symbols 1 (six days of Creation)

"Who thinks they know what these emojis stand for?"

Pick someone to answer. If they get it wrong, give someone else a chance. When someone gets the right answer, show the answer slide.

SLIDE: Scripture Symbols 2 (Creation)

"Yes! You got it. These emojis represent Creation! First, God made light. Then God separated the water from the sky and the water from the land. After that, God created the sun and stars and plants and fish and birds and animals and finally, people! And then God rested. Who wants to try another one?"

SLIDE: Scripture Symbols 3 (woman, man, snake, apple)

"Can anyone guess what this is?"

Listen for the kids' response.

"That's right! It's Adam and Eve!"

SLIDE: Scripture Symbols 4 (Adam and Eve)

Continue with as many of the remaining emoji challenges as you have time for. Briefly explain each one when someone guesses the correct answer.

The remaining emojis are:

SLIDE: Scripture Symbols 5 (boat, rain, dove, rainbow)

SLIDE: Scripture Symbols 6 (Noah)

SLIDE: Scripture Symbols 7 (basket, baby, water)

13 min

Worship

3 min

Worship | This is Living

What You Need

No supplies needed

3 min

WORSHIP | This is Our God

What You Need

No supplies needed

SLIDE: Scripture Symbols 8 (Baby Moses)

SLIDE: Scripture Symbols 9 (praying hands, lion, moon)

SLIDE: Scripture Symbols 10 (Daniel)

SLIDE: Scripture Symbols 11 (star, camel, crown)

SLIDE: Scripture Symbols 12 (Wise Men)

SLIDE: Scripture Symbols 13 (loaf of bread, fish)

SLIDE: Scripture Symbols 14 (Jesus feeding the crowd)

"Great job, everyone!!! You all know your Bible stories and your emojis!"

WORSHIP LEADER (walks on with energy):

"Hey everyone! I love how you jumped into that game earlier — you were *all in*.

We're starting a brand-new series today called *Like and Subscribe*, and it's all about something even better than your favorite channel or video.

This month, we're talking about **how much God loves us** — and how we get to share that love with others.

So let's start by celebrating the life we have because of Jesus. Everybody on your feet — let's sing **This Is Living!**"

WORSHIP LEADER:

"Awesome job! You guys sounded amazing — thank you for bringing that energy!

That song reminds us that life with Jesus is full, real, and joyful. But here's the big question we're answering today: *Why can we trust that kind of life?* Why does Jesus matter so much?

Today, we're learning about **who God really is** — straight from a conversation Jesus had with a man named Nicodemus. So this next song might be **new for some of you**, but we're really excited about it.

5 min

Memory Verse

What You Need

No supplies needed

As we sing, listen for the words that tell us what God is like — loving, kind, and close.

Let's learn this together. This song is called **This Is Our God.**"

WORSHIP LEADER:

"You did such a great job learning that song — seriously, well done!

Here's what I love about today:

Jesus didn't just *talk* about God's love — He **showed** it. And that's exactly what our memory verse is about.

Jesus said that loving others the way *He* loves us is how people see what God is like.

So let's stand strong, use our voices, and say the verse Jesus gave us together."

(Transition directly into Memory Verse: John 13:34)

SLIDE: Memory Verse

WORSHIP LEADER: "John 13:34 says: 'I give you a new command. Love one another. You must love one another, just as I have loved you.'

"Now, repeat after me!

"I give you a new command."

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: *"I give you a new command."*

WORSHIP LEADER: *"Love one another."*

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: *"Love one another."*

WORSHIP LEADER: *"You must love one another,"*

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: *"You must love one another,"*

WORSHIP LEADER: *"just as I have loved you."*

KIDS AND WORSHIP LEADER: *"just as I have loved you."*

2 min

Worship Closer

What You Need

No supplies needed

38 min

Bible Story (Live)

3 min

INTRODUCTION

What You Need

-  Bible 1
-  Table 1

5 min

GOD'S BIG STORY OPENER (OPTIONAL)

What You Need

No supplies needed

WORSHIP LEADER: "John 13:34!"

WORSHIP LEADER AND KIDS: "John 13:34!"

WORSHIP LEADER: "You guys! God loves you so very much! It's the greatest love of all! And He wants you to love others, so they know what it's like to see God's love."

STORYTELLER: "Yay! It's a new month! And I get to spend some time with you guys learning about the greatest love of all—God's love!"

"This month, we're starting a brand-new series about how much God loves us, and how we can share that love with everyone! This new series is called 'Like and Subscribe'—because when you come across a channel or video that's really awesome, you don't want to miss it ... and you want to let other people know all about it too! God's love is the coolest, most amazing thing of all! It's something you'll want to live in and share with everyone!"

"Today we're going to learn more about God's great love from a conversation Jesus Himself had! But before we dive into that part of the Bible, let me tell you about something amazing we're doing this year. We're going through key stories in the Bible from cover to cover!"

"But are we going through the Bible just so we'll learn the awesome stories in the Bible? Not exactly! One of the reasons God gave us the Bible is so that we can get to know Him. He wants us to be His friends! So as we go through the Bible this year, our hope is that we learn about Him."

STORYTELLER: "We're going to go through God's Big Story in the Bible together so we can learn about God! (*Gesture to slide.*)"

SLIDE: God's Big Story

"Let me catch you up on where we've been in God's Big Story so far!"

"You might remember that, in the beginning, God created everything. He made the world, the animals, people ... everything! God made the first people for the same reason He made all people—to be His close, close friends. But sadly, the first people God made chose to turn away from

Him and sin. God wanted people to be close to Him, but they couldn't anymore. Pain, sickness, and death entered the world too.

"But God didn't want to leave things that way. So He put His rescue plan in motion right from the start!

"God was going to rescue everything through a family! God chose a man named Abraham and promised that his family would bless the whole world. Abraham had a great-grandson named Joseph, who became a leader in Egypt and saved his family—God's people. Over time, God's people grew but were enslaved by a new Pharaoh. 'Help us!' they cried out to God. God freed His people and brought them to the super-nice home He had designed for them, the Promised Land.

"Some time after God's people were settled in the Promised Land, they asked for a king like the other nations around them. God gave them a king, and then many more kings (and one queen) followed. Sadly, after a long time of turning away from Him, God allowed His nation to be split in two—into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Prophets spoke for God saying, 'Come back to Me!' But the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed, and the southern kingdom of Judah was taken captive. Oh no! After years in exile, some of God's people returned to rebuild their homeland, while others stayed in foreign lands.

"During that sad time, God kept sending messages to His people about the Rescuer He had promised long ago. 'God's Rescuer is going to come like this!' the prophets said. But for years and years, nothing happened.

"And then it did! God sent Jesus, the Rescuer we needed, just like He promised! While Jesus was on earth, He showed us who God is because He is God!

"And that's where we are in God's Big Story!"

Make sure the table is set on stage so the Storyteller can place their Bible on it and read from it.

STORYTELLER: "Today, we're at the part of the Bible that tells about the time when Jesus was on earth. Jesus came to earth to show us who God is! This conversation Jesus had that we're going to read about today takes place in a part of the Bible called the New Testament. (*Hold up Bible.*) The first four books of the New Testament tell us about the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. When we listen to what Jesus said and see how He treated others, we discover how big God loves us.

"Now, since you all did such a great job with the emojis in our game, we're going to use emojis to help tell the story too! As I tell the story, we're going to see some emoji faces pop up to show how the person in our story might have felt. When you see an emoji, I want you to make the expression too! Let's practice.

SLIDE: Teaching 1 (Smiley Face Emoji)

5 min

SETTING UP THE STORY

What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

NICODEMUS VISITS JESUS

What You Need

No supplies needed

"I think we all know this one. Make your best smiley face.

Smile big. Acknowledge as the kids do the same.

"Okay, that just makes me happy, seeing all of our grins. I think we're ready. So here goes!"

STORYTELLER: "When Jesus was about thirty years old, He began to travel and teach and heal. People quickly took notice. Many religious leaders felt threatened, while others were simply puzzled.

"One of these religious leaders was a man named Nicodemus. He was a Pharisee—a part of a group who believed it was so important to keep God's rules that they followed a lot of extra rules just to be safe.

"Nicodemus was very curious about Jesus. But he was also worried about what people would think if they saw him talking with Jesus.

SLIDE: Teaching 2 (Scared Face Emoji)

Make a scared face. Acknowledge as the other kids make scared faces too.

"Oof. You all look so scared! Nicodemus was so worried about what people might think that he arranged to visit Jesus at night! He told Jesus—

Open the Bible to John 3:2 (NirV) and read.

"Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. We know that God is with you. If he weren't, you couldn't do the signs you are doing."

"Nicodemus wanted to check up on Jesus and find out if He was the real deal. But Jesus flipped the spotlight back on Nicodemus.

Open the Bible to John 3:3-4 (NirV) and read.

Jesus replied, "What I'm about to tell you is true. No one can see God's kingdom unless they are born again."

"How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "They can't go back inside their mother! They can't be born a second time!"

"Nicodemus was so confused by what Jesus said!

SLIDE: Teaching 3 (Confused Face Emoji)

"Let's see your best confused face.

Make a confused face. Acknowledge as the kids make confused faces.

"It's easy to understand why Nicodemus was puzzled. Being born a second time sounds, honestly, kind of impossible. But Jesus meant this as a word picture.

Open the Bible to John 3:5-8 (NIRV) and read.

Jesus answered, "What I'm about to tell you is true. No one can enter God's kingdom unless they are born with water and the Holy Spirit. People give birth to people. But the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised when I say, 'You must all be born again.' The wind blows where it wants to. You hear the sound it makes. But you can't tell where it comes from or where it is going. It is the same with everyone who is born with the Spirit."

"See, God's Spirit actually makes us brand-new inside, as if we were being 'born again'—a second time. Jesus explained that we can't see the Spirit with our eyes, but we can see what happens when we allow the Spirit to change us and work through us.

"That's a lot for us to think about. And it was a lot for Nicodemus too. I think his mind was blown.

SLIDE: Teaching 4 (Mind-Blown Face Emoji)

"Let's see what it looks like when you hear something so amazing it blows your mind.

Make an amazed face and mind-blown gesture with your hand. Acknowledge as the kids do the same.

"Yeah, I think that's exactly what Nicodemus felt like!

Open the Bible to John 3:9-13 (NIRV) and read.

"How can this be?" Nicodemus asked.

"You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus. "Don't you understand these things? What I'm about to tell you is true. We speak about what we know. We are witnesses about what we have seen. But still you people do not accept what we say. I have spoken to you about earthly things, and you do not believe. So how will you believe if I speak about heavenly things? No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven. He is the Son of Man."

"Jesus was saying that He was teaching about heavenly things. He had come from heaven, and He would know!

"And what was up with all of that 'Son of Man' language? Why did Jesus call Himself that? Jesus often called Himself 'the Son of Man,' because even though He is God's Son, He also chose to be completely human, like us. The prophet Daniel used the title 'Son of Man' to tell about the coming Messiah. So, every time Jesus used the title 'Son of Man,' Jesus was saying: 'That's Me. I'm the Messiah.'"

5 min

GOD SO LOVES THE WORLD

What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

LIVE IN THE LIGHT

STORYTELLER: "Nicodemus would have been very familiar with Daniel, the lions' den guy, and he would have also been very familiar with the thing Jesus shared next that had happened to God's people ...

Open the Bible to John 3:14-15 (NirV) and read.

"Moses lifted up the snake in the desert. In the same way, the Son of Man must also be lifted up. Then everyone who believes may have eternal life in him."

"What? Timeout! Snake in the desert?"

SLIDE: Teaching 5 (Snake Emoji)

"Okay, let's hear those snake hisses! Ssssssssssss!

Hiss like a snake. Acknowledge as the kids do the same.

"Whew. That's a little too real. But let's talk about this wild snake story. See, while God's people were in the wilderness, which is recorded in the book of Numbers in the Bible, poisonous snakes invaded the camp and began to bite people! God told Moses to make a bronze snake and hold it up on a pole. Anyone who looked at it would live.

"Jesus was giving Nicodemus a picture of what was coming. In the next year or two, Jesus would give up His life and be nailed to a cross, out of love for us. His death and resurrection would bring life to everyone who looks to Him and chooses Him.

"When Jesus' friend John recorded the story, he put it this way:

Open the Bible to John 3:16-17 (NirV) and read.

God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world. He sent his Son to save the world through him.

"You might have heard these verses before. But even though they may be familiar, don't miss this: God loves the *whole world*. God loves everyone who has ever lived or is living now, or will be born.

SLIDE: Teaching 6 (World Emoji with Heart Emoji)

"All right, everyone. Hold out your arms wide, like this ... like you're hugging the whole entire world!

Gesture like you're hugging a giant globe. Acknowledge as the kids do the same.

"I can definitely feel the love."

STORYTELLER: "Now, you have to remember: Every single one of us has done things that go against God and His ways. We've all sinned. But

What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

What You Need

No supplies needed

God loves us so much that God sent Jesus. Anyone who looks to Jesus, to what Jesus did while He was up on the cross, and chooses to follow Him will be able to live forever with God. John finished the story this way ...

Open the Bible to John 3:19a-21a (NirV) and read.

Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light. They loved darkness because what they did was evil. Everyone who does evil deeds hates the light. They will not come into the light. They are afraid that what they do will be seen. But anyone who lives by the truth comes into the light. They live by the truth with God's help.

SLIDE: Teaching 7 (Candle Emoji)

"Okay, everyone. Pretend to hold a candle up high, where we can see it.

Hold up a pretend candle, lifting it high. Acknowledge as the kids do the same

"God's love and truth are like brilliant lights that chase away the darkness.

"See, we can never be 'good enough' on our own. We can only live by the truth with God's help. God loves the whole world, and showed His great love for the entire world by sending Jesus. When we live in God's love, we don't have to hide anything out of fear or shame. We get to live in the light.

"As for Nicodemus, we don't know exactly how he responded to this. We do know that later he defended Jesus to a group of Pharisees. And after Jesus was crucified, Nicodemus helped to prepare His body and place it in a tomb.

STORYTELLER: "Nicodemus was scared and confused and didn't always get it right. But the most important thing we know about Nicodemus is this: that God loved Him deeply. God loved Nicodemus, no matter what. God loves you no matter what. In fact ...

SLIDE: Bottom Line

[Bottom Line] "God loves the whole world. Say that with me."

Host enters and joins in.

KIDS, STORYTELLER AND HOST: **[Bottom Line]** "God loves the whole world."

HOST: "Let's take a look at the progress we made in God's Big Story this week!

5 min

GOD'S BIG STORY CLOSER (OPTIONAL)

What You Need

No supplies needed

8 min

Closing

5 min

WHAT'S OUR PART IN THE STORY?

What You Need

No supplies needed

SLIDE: God's Big Story

"This week, we're up here in the part of this picture of God's Big Story—the picture that says, 'Jesus' Life.' Jesus Himself came to teach us about God's great love! God loves us so, so much!

"This week, we talked about a conversation Jesus had at night with a man named Nicodemus! Nicodemus had big, big questions about God, and that's exactly why Jesus came—to teach us who God is. When Jesus lived on Earth, He did just what God would do, and He said exactly what God would say, because He is God. That's one of the reasons why God spent years and years and years working on His plan to send Jesus! This entire timeline of God's Big Story shows how God faithfully worked over thousands of years to send Jesus! (*Gesture to timeline.*) Jesus was the key point of God's Big Story. And as Jesus went around showing us what God is like, He lived a completely perfect life. He never sinned. Then Jesus gave up that perfect, sinless life to pay for our sins and break the curse we were under so we could be close to God again. Jesus, the Rescuer—because of His great, great love—gave His life to rescue us all!

"Let's put the next image on our timeline!

SLIDE: Week 1 Timeline Image

If you're making a timeline of printed images on your wall, take this moment to place today's Timeline Image on the clothesline.

"This week we learned about Jesus and His conversation with Nicodemus

HOST: "So what's our part in all of this? Well, the most important thing is to accept God's love for you! God loves you so much, and He made you to be His close friend. That's the entire reason why God made you—He wants to be your close friend forever!

"And even though sin put everyone under that curse back in the Garden of Eden, God loves us so much that He made a way for us to be restored—Jesus gave up His life to pay for sin. When you choose to accept what Jesus did for you by paying for your sin and by following Him, you get to be friends with God!

"And as you grow closer and closer to Jesus, you'll see how God's great love begins changing you from the inside out—to make you more like Jesus.

3 min

PRAYER

What You Need

No supplies needed

"Not only does God love you more than you can imagine, but God loves the whole world! God loves your family. Your friends. Your neighbors—both close by and the ones who live all around the world.

"God loves people who are different from you. And God even loves people who do wrong things.

"Every single person you will ever meet is loved by God. So as you receive God's love, ask the Holy Spirit to help you pass that love on to the people around you. God loves you, and He can help you show His love to them!

"When you're following Jesus and growing closer to God, then God's love can flow through you, and more and more people will come to know God's love for them."

STORYTELLER or HOST: "Let's talk to God together now. Bow your heads and close your eyes.

"Dear God, thank You for loving us so much that You sent Your own Son, Jesus, to live with us and to give His life to rescue us. Thank You for the way that Jesus showed us Your love for the whole world. Please help us to remember Your love every single day, and help us to pass that love on to the people around us. We love You, and in Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Dismiss kids to their small groups.

Supplies

INTRODUCTION

Quantity

1.	Bible	1
2.	Table	1