



Lesson 1

God Gave Us His Best Gift!

Large Group Lesson & Games

<p>Bible Story</p> <p>Jesus and Nicodemus</p> <p><i>John 3:1-17</i></p>	<p>Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A photograph or painting• A fidget toy or a puzzle• A pair of earbuds• Music and a device to play it• A prize, such as a small toy or a candy bar• Wrapping paper, two or three rolls with different designs• Gift tape• A pair of scissors
<p>Bible Verse</p> <p>“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”</p> <p><i>John 3:16, New Living Translation</i></p>	
<p>Key Teaching Point</p> <p>Jesus is the great gift we receive from God.</p>	



Large Group Lesson

(15 Minutes)

Ask for three children volunteers. Invite them to stand up front with you. One child will wear a blindfold over their eyes, one child will hold their hands behind their back, and one child will cover their ears.

Give each one of them the following “gifts.” As you do, pause for dramatic effect.

- To the one who cannot see, give them a photograph or a painting.
- To the one who cannot use their hands, give them a fidget toy, a puzzle, or something that would require the use of their hands. You’ll have to set the gift on the ground in front of them!
- To the one who cannot hear, give them a pair of earbuds.

What do you think about these gifts?

Give the volunteers a chance to respond to the gift they’ve been given. Then invite the volunteers to sit back down with the large group.

This year at Crossroads, we’re going to be talking about the gifts that we can receive from God, our heavenly Father, the one who created us and the heavens and the earth.

Today, we’re going to talk about the greatest gift we can receive from God. But first, tell me, what is the best gift you’ve ever received?

Take student responses.

Wow, you’ve all received some really great gifts! I can’t wait to tell you about the greatest gift we’ll ever receive in this life: Jesus! Jesus is the greatest gift we can receive from God!

Introduce the [“Who is Jesus?” Call and Response](#).

If we believe all that Jesus has done for us, we are able to receive so many good gifts God wants to give us: peace, joy, forgiveness, the gift of God’s Spirit. We’ll explore those later. Today, we’re going to talk about the gift of Jesus and the life he offers us.

Divide the room into two sides: one side will be the “Exclamation Points,” and the other side will be the “Question Marks.”

- a. Choose one representative for each side to read as the NARRATOR. You may want to choose an older fourth or fifth grade student. You could also choose an adult leader.
- b. The children on the “exclamation point” side: One person rolls into a ball, the other stands up straight and reaches both hands up to the sky. (Children must find a new partner each time the !NARRATOR! speaks.)
- c. The children on the “question mark” side: One person rolls into a ball, the other person stands up straight, raising their right hand above and over their head. (Children must find a new partner each time the ? NARRATOR ? speaks.)

! NARRATOR !: After dark one evening, a man named Nicodemus came to speak with Jesus. Nicodemus didn’t want anyone else to know he was there because the people Nicodemus hung around with didn’t like Jesus very much. “Teacher, we all know that God has sent you to teach us, for the miracles you have performed are evidence that God is with you.”

? NARRATOR ?: Jesus replied, “If you’d like to see the Kingdom of God, you must be born again.” “What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man like me become a baby again? I can’t force myself to be born, that’s out of my control! How could someone be born twice– that’s not possible!” Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without God’s Spirit who gives you spiritual life!”

! NARRATOR !: “Humans can only create physical life, but the God’s Spirit, the Holy Spirit creates spiritual life. So don’t be surprised when I say, ‘You must be re-created, born again by the Holy Spirit and become a new person! Your spiritual life must come from God himself, and not from yourselves!’” Now this was surprising for Nicodemus to hear, because he had worked hard to try and know God.

? NARRATOR ?: “It’s kind of like this,” said Jesus, “The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can’t tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can’t explain how people are born of God’s Spirit and receive spiritual life from God.” “How are these things possible?” Nicodemus asked.

? NARRATOR ?: Jesus replied, “You’ve spent years in God’s house, studying the Word of God, and yet you don’t understand these things? I tell you the truth, I tell you what I know and have seen, and yet you won’t believe me.



But if you don't believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how can you possibly believe me if I tell you about heavenly things?

! NARRATOR !: No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man has come down from heaven. The Son of Man must be lifted up (Jesus was speaking about the kind of death he was going to die, his death on a cross), so that everyone who receives him will receive this spiritual life I've been talking about. For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal (never-ending) spiritual life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him."

Ask, "What things surprised you in this conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus?"

Take student responses.

Ask, "What things confused you?"

Take student responses.

There were a lot of surprising and confusing things in today's story, weren't there? Do any of you feel like our three volunteers at the beginning? Like there's a gift God wants to give you that you can't fully receive yet? That's okay! Jesus was reminding Nicodemus that without God's help, we cannot receive this gift that is Jesus, nor the spiritual life he offers us. Let's ask God to help us now!

If you'd like to receive spiritual life, you can hold out your hands as if you're receiving a gift. Let's pray together.

Father God, You alone are the one who can give each one in this room a never-ending spiritual life. You alone are the one who can give these children eyes to see who you are and what you and your Kingdom is like. You alone are the one who can give these children ears to hear you and what you are speaking to them. You alone are the one who can give these children your precious Holy Spirit, so that they might receive Jesus, your Son, and the spiritual life he offers to them. You alone are the one who can give these children hands and feet that obey you and walk in your ways. Thank you for the precious gift of your Son that makes all these gifts possible. Amen.

We'll talk about what it looks like to truly receive the gift of Jesus and the spiritual life he offers us in our small groups today!

Dismiss children to their small groups.



Large Group Games

(25 Minutes)

“WRAPPED” RELAY

Preparation: Place a slip of paper with the Bible Verse: “For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16, NLT) inside two different boxes and wrap them with gift wrap.

Divide children into two teams (or more for larger groups). Instruct the teams to line up parallel to the other team(s). Provide the first child in line with a wrapped gift (one per team). When you say “Go,” the first person in line will pass it underneath their legs to the next child in line and say, “God gives.” The child who receives the gift from the passer will say, “We receive.” Then that child will pass it above their head to the person behind them and say, “God gives,” while the receiver takes the gift and replies with, “We receive.” Teams will continue to pass the gift from person to person, alternating between passing the gift under their legs and over their head. Each time the gift is passed, the giver will say, “God gives” and the receiver will say, “We receive.” When the gift makes it to the last child in the team’s line, they will unwrap the gift, open it and read the slip of paper inside: “The greatest gift we can receive from God is Jesus!” The first team to read this aloud is the winner!

MUSICAL UNWRAPPING

Preparation: Wrap a small prize (a small toy or candy bar) in eight to ten layers of wrapping paper.

Children stand in a circle and pass a well-wrapped gift around the circle as music is played. When the music stops, whoever is holding the gift gets to unwrap the gift. When the music begins again, the gift must continue to be passed around the circle. Whoever opens the last layer gets to keep the prize inside.

