



# Jesus Explains Why God Sent Him

John 3:12-21



### ► Bible Point

Jesus came to show God's love.


### Key Verse

“And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:11).

### Weaving Faith Into Life

Children will celebrate that Jesus came to show God's love.

Many 5- and 6-year-olds enjoy expressing their love. One of the ways they often show love is through hugs—sometimes at the most unexpected times! While kids can't physically hug Jesus, they can understand that God sent him to show God's love to us. Kids love to feel loved—introduce them to the One who loves them beyond human ability. This lesson will explore ways that Jesus loves everyone and the ways Jesus shows God's love to us. Help children understand that Jesus died on the cross to show God's love for us.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
<b>1</b> Getting Started <i>about 10 min.</i>	<b>Welcoming Song</b> Sing or listen to praises for God.	CD player <b>Teacher Pack:</b> CD	
<b>2</b> Key Verse Activity <i>about 10 min.</i>	<b>Crown Around the World</b> Sing the Key Verse while moving in a circle.	Bible	
<b>3</b> Bible Exploration <i>about 15 min.</i>	<b>Theo's News</b> Find out what a picture of the earth and flashlight have to do with the Bible.	Surprise Box (any box will do), CD player, Theo puppet, picture of the earth, flashlight <b>Teacher Pack:</b> CD	Put the flashlight and picture inside the Surprise Box, and hide the box where it's easily accessible.
	<b>Bible Time: God Sent Jesus</b> Hear about God's love for them.	Bible, CD player, picture of the earth and flashlight from Theo's News, tape <b>Teacher Pack:</b> CD, "Jesus" poster 	

*Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.*

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>4</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Weaving Faith Into Life</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>about 20 min.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Choose 2 centers.)</i></p>	<p><b>Center 1: Lifeline!</b></p> <p>Connect a lifeline from Jesus to a child.</p>	<p>My Bible Playground, pencils, glitter pens, index cards, one 12-inch piece of yarn per child, tape, hole punch</p>	<p>Remove the Lesson 3 pages from each My Bible Playground student book, and punch a hole through Jesus' hand on each page.</p>
	<p><b>Center 2: Jesus Loves Everyone in the World</b></p> <p>Eat a fruit "globe."</p>	<p>1 round fruit per child, such as plums, oranges, or apples; napkins; antibacterial gel (optional)</p>	
	<p><b>Center 3: Love Hopscotch</b></p> <p>Play a game that shows Jesus' love for people.</p>	<p>masking tape, gift-wrap bows, bag</p>	<p>Create a hopscotch path with masking tape.</p>
	<p><b>Center 4: Why Jesus Came</b></p> <p>Make their own puppets and retell the Bible passage.</p>	<p>CD player, flashlight, paper plates, wide craft sticks, yarn, scissors, glitter pens, tape, markers</p> <p><b>Teacher Pack:</b> CD</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>5</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Lasting Impressions</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>about 10 min.</i></p>	<p><b>Daily Challenges</b></p> <p>Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word.</p>	<p>My Bible Playground</p>	
	<p><b>Whole World Prayer</b></p> <p>Pray, inserting names of people Jesus loves.</p>		
	<p><b>Weaving Faith at Home</b></p> <p>Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.</p>		

**Bold text** within the lesson is spoken text.



# Jesus Explains Why God Sent Him

John 3:12-21

BIBLE BACKGROUND  
FOR LEADERS

## Nicodemus Sought Jesus

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In this passage, Jesus is talking with Nicodemus, a Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish religious ruling council. Jesus launched into the conversation by making it clear that new birth is the only way to God’s kingdom. For Nicodemus, a strict follower of the Law who thought obedience to a set of rules was his ticket to heaven, the concept of a “new birth” was tough to grasp. He had trouble accepting that all his good works and intentions wouldn’t get him into God’s kingdom.

## Jesus Summarized God’s Plan of Salvation

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Jesus’ reference to Moses’ lifting up the snake in the desert refers to a time God sent poisonous snakes among the Israelites to punish them for rebelling against him. Those who had been bitten were dying. But God in his mercy instructed Moses to make a snake of bronze and lift it up on a pole where all could see it, promising safety to all who looked upon it. All who believed God and looked at the snake were spared from death. In the same way, Jesus would be lifted up on the cross, and as people looked to him in faith, they would be spared from eternal death for their sins.

Why did God send his own Son to die an agonizing death on the cross? The answer is clear in verse 16: “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.” In this sentence, Jesus summarizes God’s entire plan of salvation. What amazing love!

## We Must Respond in Faith

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Jesus’ message for Nicodemus and for us today is that following religious rules won’t win us God’s favor.

God has a different plan, because all the good we can ever do won’t wipe out a single sin. Only Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross, which paid the death penalty for us, makes it possible for us to enter heaven. And only our response in faith to that gift and to the Holy Spirit working in our lives will seal the deal.

## The Jesus Connection

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There are many awesome “benefits” of a relationship with Jesus, but this is the ultimate one: We can be born again! A new life, a fresh start, a clean slate!

John 3:16 is so familiar that it’s tempting to skim it without taking its full meaning to heart. So stop for a moment and reread it. How do Jesus’ words impact you? What questions do you have? Pray about your thoughts and questions. You can write your prayer here.

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## Welcoming Song Supplies

CD player

### Teacher Pack

CD: "Hi, My Friend"  
(track 2), "God's Not  
Dead" (track 5)

# 1 GETTING STARTED

## Welcoming Song




**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 bring the children together in a circle.

Lead kids in singing "Hi, My Friend!" (track 2 on the CD) to the tune of "Deep and Wide." Encourage them to join you in singing and doing the motions.

 **Hi, my friend! Hi, my friend!** (*shake a different friend's hand each time you sing "friend"*)

**I'm so glad you came to class today.** (*hug a friend*)

**Hi, my friend! Hi, my friend!** (*shake a different friend's hand each time you sing "friend"*)

**God is here with you and me today!** (*hold hands in a circle, and raise them high*)  
(Repeat.)

Say: **Today we're going to learn that ► JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD'S LOVE. Because Jesus died for our sins, everyone who believes in him will live with him forever! Let's celebrate and worship our wonderful, living God and sing "God's Not Dead"!**

Play "God's Not Dead" (track 5 on the CD), and encourage kids to join you in singing and doing the motions.

 (*Chorus*)

**God's not dead, no!** (*cup both hands around mouth, and then shake a pointer finger on "no"*)

**He is alive.** (*wave both hands overhead*)

**God's not dead, no!** (*cup both hands around mouth, and then shake a pointer finger on "no"*)

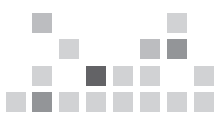
**He is alive.** (*wave both hands overhead*)

**God's not dead, no!** (*cup both hands around mouth, and then shake a pointer finger on "no"*)

**He is alive.** (*wave both hands overhead*)

**I know he's living in me.** (*point to your forehead, and then point to your chest*)

**I see him in my hands.** (*wiggle your hands*)



I see him in my feet. (*wiggle your feet*)  
 I see him in the air. (*place one hand above your eyes*)  
 I see him everywhere. (*place both hands above your eyes*)  
 I see him at the church. (*hold both hands like a roof over your head*)  
 I see him on the street. (*point to the ground*)  
 And I know he's living in me. (*point to your forehead, and then point to your chest*)  
 No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. (*shake a pointer finger*)

(Repeat chorus.)

Say: **God isn't dead, and he loves you very much. In fact, ► JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD'S LOVE. Let's learn more about that!**

**2** KEY VERSE  
ACTIVITY

## Crown Around the World

### What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Have children form a circle and sit down. Open your Bible to Philippians 2:11, and show children the words.

Say: **Our Key Verse from the Bible, Philippians 2:11, says, "Jesus Christ is Lord." Let's say our Key Verse together.** Lead children in repeating the Key Verse after you: **"Jesus Christ is Lord" (Philippians 2:11).**

Have children form a large circle. Teach the children "Crown Around the World" (not on the CD) to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have children continue holding hands as they do the motions indicated.

**Jesus Christ is Lord.** (*circle to the left*)  
**Jesus Christ is Lord.** (*circle to the right*)  
**Give him the crown,** (*hold hands up*)  
**And all bow down.** (*bow toward the center*)

Say: **Lord means leader or king. Jesus is our leader and king.**

### Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- **Who are some leaders you know?**
- **Why is it important to listen to and obey our leaders?**



Crown Around the  
World  
Supplies

Bible





### Theo's News Supplies

Surprise Box (any box will do)  
CD player  
Theo puppet  
picture of the earth  
flashlight

#### Teacher Pack

CD: "Here, Theo" (track 4)

### Theo's News Easy Prep

Put the flashlight and picture inside the Surprise Box, and hide the box where it's easily accessible.

### Bible Time: God Sent Jesus Supplies

Bible  
CD player  
picture of the earth and flashlight from Theo's News  
tape

#### Teacher Pack

CD: "Why God Sent Jesus" (track 10)  
"Jesus" poster

Say: **Jesus is the leader of everything. And ► JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD'S LOVE. We can be happy that we have a special, loving leader who cares for us.**

## 3 BIBLE EXPLORATION

### Theo's News

#### What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Say: **Friends, it's time for Theo's News!**

Have the children sit in a circle, and begin "Here, Theo" (track 4 on the CD). When the CD segment ends, bring out the Surprise Box, and put Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet on your hand. Then follow along with the script.

**Theo:** Hi, everybody!

**Teacher:** Hello, Theo! Tell us what interesting news you've dug up about the Bible today.

**Theo:** I hid it in the Surprise Box.

**Teacher:** Let's look inside to see what Theo dug up for us.

*(Invite a child to open the Surprise Box, and have the kids pass the picture and flashlight around the circle so the rest of the group can see them up close. Give the children time to guess what the Bible passage might be about.)*

**Teacher:** Friends, why do you think Theo had a picture of the earth and a flashlight in the box?

*(Pause for kids to answer your question.)*

**Teacher:** Theo, why did you hide this picture and flashlight in the Surprise Box?

**Theo:** Well, this picture shows us the whole world—and that includes everyone, everywhere. Jesus came to shine God's love on everyone!

**Teacher:** In the Bible, Jesus uses the words *world* and *light* to explain that he came to save us. Friends, let's hear about what Jesus said right now!

**Theo:** Have fun, boys and girls!

**Teacher:** Say goodbye to Theo.

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

### Bible Time: God Sent Jesus

#### What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Open your Bible to John 3, and show children the words. Tell them that the Bible is God's special book.



Ask:

- **Have you ever been lost? What happened?**
- **Tell about when you were found.**

Say: **If you were ever lost in a grocery store or mall, you know what it's like to feel lost and maybe even afraid. When our parents find us, we feel so much better and safer. That's kind of like what our Bible Point means, ► JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD'S LOVE. We're lost because of the bad things we do. Jesus came to earth to save us, to forgive us, and to show us how to live. Because of Jesus, we'll live forever!**

**In our Bible passage today, Jesus explains why God sent him. Let's hear all about it!**

Invite a child to help you tape the "Jesus" poster to a wall. Turn off the lights, begin "Why God Sent Jesus" (track 10 on the CD), and follow the actions in the script below.

*Jesus:* **Welcome, children. I'm so glad you're here to listen to why I came to earth. First of all, do you know that I love you?** Recording will have a three-second pause. **Good! Because I do love you so much!** Hold up the picture of the earth and shine the flashlight on it.

**Well, God loved the world so much that he gave his Son...that's me. Whoever believes in me won't die, but will live forever. Tell someone sitting next to you how that makes you feel. How do you feel knowing you and everyone who loves me will live in heaven forever? Your teacher will pause the CD.** Put the picture and flashlight down and pause the CD.

**I came to save you because I love you so much. It's kind of like this...Light (that's me!) has come into the world.** Hold up the picture of the earth and shine the flashlight on it. **I came into the world to save you!**

**Some people like darkness more than they like light.** Turn off the flashlight.

**That's because they do bad things. In fact, the people who do bad things don't want to come near the light because they're afraid the light will show all the bad things they do.** Turn the flashlight back on and shine it around the picture.

**Other people love me and want to be near the light. These people aren't afraid to come near the light because the good things they do, they do through God. The light...that's me!...has come into the world to save each one of you.** Shine the flashlight so it moves across each of the kids.

**Always remember I love you, and oh yeah—tell everyone about me! Because I love the who-o-o-le world!** Hold up the picture of the earth. Stop the CD and turn the lights back on.



### Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- **Why did Jesus come to earth?**
- **Tell what you think about this: ► JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD'S LOVE.**

Say: **Jesus came to save us! God loves the world, so he sent Jesus to die on the cross for us. When we believe in Jesus and ask him to forgive our sins, he does. That's the way we get to live in heaven forever. Let's tell this good news to our friends, families, and everyone we meet!**

## 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:

## Lifeline!

### What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Set out glitter pens. Distribute the Lesson 3 My Bible Playground student pages, and have kids write their names on their papers.

Let kids each draw a child on an index card. Have kids tape one end of the piece of yarn to the child and then thread the other end of the yarn through Jesus' hand on the page.

Say: **Jesus wants us to be close to him. We can come to him anytime.** Show children how to pull the yarn through the hole so the child draws close to Jesus.

Say: ► **JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD'S LOVE. He reaches out to us and saves us!**

### Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What are some ways we can draw close to Jesus?**
- **Why is it important to be close to Jesus?**

### Center 1: Lifeline! Supplies

My Bible Playground  
pencils  
glitter pens  
index cards  
one 12-inch piece of  
yarn per child  
tape  
hole punch

### Center 1: Lifeline! Easy Prep

Remove the Lesson  
3 pages from each  
My Bible Playground  
student book, and  
punch a hole through  
Jesus' hand on each  
page.





Say: ► **JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD’S LOVE** now and forever. When we believe in Jesus, he forgives us. One day we’ll live forever with Jesus in heaven!

**CENTER 2:**

## Jesus Loves Everyone in the World

### What You’ll Do

Have kids clean their hands.

Say: ► **JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD’S LOVE** to all people, no matter when they lived or where they lived. This fruit looks like the earth. That can remind us of all the people in the world that Jesus came to save, because ► **JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD’S LOVE**.

Have kids tell their addresses (if they can) as they hold their round fruit. Each time a child shares his or her address, say: **You live on our big earth!** ► **JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD’S LOVE** to you, too!

Have children eat their snacks.

**CENTER 3:**

## Love Hopscotch

### What You’ll Do

Set a pile of gift bows at the beginning of the hopscotch path you created earlier, and an empty bag at the opposite end of the path. Hold up one of the bows and show how it looks like someone holding his or her arms across a chest in a loving way.

Say: **Let’s play a game. These bows are people Jesus loves. One at a time, pick up a gift bow, hop or skip along the hopscotch path, place the bow in the bag, and then hop or skip back. Take turns hopping and skipping until you’ve placed all the bows in the bag.** Demonstrate for kids.

### Talk With Kids

Afterward, lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- What can we do to help people know more about Jesus’ love?
- Who are some people you could tell about Jesus’ love?

Say: ► **JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD’S LOVE** to everyone. But people need to be taught about Jesus so they can find out how much he loves them.



### Center 2: Jesus Loves Everyone in the World Supplies

- 1 round fruit per child, such as plums, oranges, or apples
- napkins
- antibacterial gel (optional)

**! ALLERGY ALERT**

### Center 3: Love Hopscotch Supplies

- masking tape
- gift-wrap bows
- bag

### Center 3: Love Hopscotch Easy Prep

Create a hopscotch path with masking tape.



### Center 4: Why Jesus Came

#### Supplies

CD player  
flashlight  
paper plates  
wide craft sticks  
yarn  
scissors  
glitter pens  
tape  
markers

#### Teacher Pack

CD: "Why God Sent Jesus" (track 10)

## CENTER 4: Why Jesus Came

### What You'll Do

Set out your supplies, and have children make puppets—and make sure you make one, too. Have kids each fold a plate in half and attach it to a wide craft stick. Ask kids to decorate the plates with yarn hair, markers, and glitter pens. On one side of their plates, have children draw a happy face and on the other side, a frowning face.

Turn on the flashlight, and play "Why God Sent Jesus" (track 10 on the CD). Follow the directions below to help kids present a puppet show with you.

After Jesus says:

"I came into the world to save you," wave around the happy side of the puppet.

"Some people like darkness more than they like light," show and lower the sad side.

"They're afraid the light will show all the bad things they do," have the sad side hide from the flashlight.

"Other people love me and want to be near the light," turn to the happy side and bring the face out into the open, near the flashlight.

"The light—that's me—has come into the world to save each one of you," have the happy side bounce around in joy.

### Talk With Kids

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- Why do people need a light?
- How is Jesus like a light?

Say: **God loves the whole world! He sent Jesus to save everyone, so everyone could be in heaven forever with him. Let's make sure we tell others about Jesus' love and the fact that ► JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD'S LOVE.**

## 5 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

### Daily Challenges

#### What You'll Do

After the children have cleaned up the centers, bring everyone back to the 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.

#### Daily Challenges Supplies

My Bible Playground

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 CAME TO SHOW GOD'S LOVE. Choose one of these Daily Challenges to celebrate this week that Jesus came to show God's love.**

Give kids these three challenges to choose from:

1. **Make a present for Jesus, and tell Jesus that the present is for him because you're thankful that he came to show God's love to you.**
2. **Say a prayer each night before you go to bed, thanking Jesus for coming to show God's love to you.**
3. **Sit in a circle with your family, and tell each other why you are thankful that Jesus came to show God's love to us.**

Say: **If you want to make a present for Jesus, circle choice number 1. If you want to say a prayer thanking Jesus, circle choice number 2. If you want to talk with your family about why you're thankful for Jesus, circle choice number 3.** Check that each child circled a choice. 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!

## Whole World Prayer

### What You'll Do

Have kids sit in a circle.

Say: **Today we learned that ► JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD'S LOVE—and to show that love to the whole world. When I point to you, name one person (besides yourself) that Jesus loves. Pray: God, thank you so much for sending Jesus to show us your love. We know you love everyone in the world, and we thank you for loving (go around the circle, pointing to each child who will then name a person). We love you, too, Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen.**

## Weaving Faith at Home

Have children take home their My Bible Playground pages whether they worked on them or not. Have children tell their parents the challenge they committed to in the "Daily Challenges" activity. Encourage parents to help their kids fulfill this commitment during 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](http://group.com/digital).



