

Jesus Explains Why God Sent Him

John 3:12-21



► **Bible Point**
Jesus came to save us.

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
Preteens will respond to Jesus’ offer to rescue them.

Kids this age are just beginning to get a clear grasp of the effects of sin. Many understand what it means to do something wrong, but their cognitive development doesn’t quite grasp the eternal effects that sin has. They need to understand that God’s purpose for sending Jesus was to redeem them from the eternal consequences of sin. As you teach them this lesson, help them understand the effects of sin—and why we need Jesus to save us.

| LESSON | WHAT KIDS DO | SUPPLIES | EASY PREP |
|-------------------------------|---|---------------------------|---|
| 1 Getting Started | Rescue Mission <i>(about 15 min.)</i> Experience a situation in which they need a guide to rescue them. | masking tape, index cards | Run masking tape in 2 lines across the room to create a 6-foot-wide alley. Tear up the index cards. |
| 2 Bible Exploration | The Comparison <i>(about 30 min.)</i> Define <i>analogy</i> , and examine Jesus’ explanation of why he came. | Bibles, Bible Buzz, pens | Tear out the Lesson 3 pages from each Bible Buzz student book. |

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.





| LESSON | WHAT KIDS DO | SUPPLIES | EASY PREP |
|---|--|---|-----------|
| 3 Weaving Faith Into Life | Stories of Help <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Hear a situation in which a mountain climber needed help, and consider when they've been in a similar situation. | CD player, Bible Buzz, copies of the lyrics page (at the end of this lesson) Teacher Pack: CD | |
| 4 Lasting Impressions | Daily Challenges <i>(about 5 min.)</i> Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word. | Bible Buzz | |
| | Weaving Faith at Home <i>(about 2 min.)</i> Talk about how to share what they learned with their families. | | |

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

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

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

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

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.





Rescue Mission Supplies

masking tape
index cards

Rescue Mission Easy Prep

Run masking tape in 2 lines across the room to create a 6-foot-wide alley. Tear up the index cards.

1 GETTING STARTED

Rescue Mission

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Welcome kids warmly as they arrive, and ask them how their week went.

Ask kids to form pairs and decide which member of the pair will play the part of an Explorer and who will play the part of a Guide. Ask pairs to gather at one end of the alley you created beforehand.

Say: **Lots of people end up in situations in which they need to be rescued. Rescuing people is *usually* the job of lifeguards, ski patrols, medics, and emergency-room doctors—but today it's your job.**

Our Explorers need to be rescued. They're walking on a beach they've discovered, and just as the sun goes down, they realize the beach is infested with dreaded attack clams. These bad-tempered clams hide just beneath the sand, attacking anyone who steps on them after dark. If they even hear anyone speaking, they attack!

The good news: There are Guides who know where the clams wait to ambush the Explorers. The Guides risk their lives to join the Explorers and silently guide the Explorers to safety. The Guides do this by nudging the Explorers' elbows. When a Guide nudges an Explorer's right elbow, the Explorer steps carefully to the right. When a Guide nudges an Explorer's left elbow, the Explorer steps carefully to the left. When nudged in the middle of the back, Explorers move straight ahead.

Explorers, since you can't see in the dark, please close your eyes. Don't open your eyes again until I tell you. Guides, stand behind your Explorers.

After Explorers have closed their eyes, place small piles of ripped-up index cards on the floor in the alley.

Say: **Guides, help your Explorers get safely to the other end of the room without stepping on a "clam" or going outside the lines. Explorers, you can't open your eyes. Guides, work silently; direct only with nudges.**

Send pairs down the alley at 8-foot intervals. If an Explorer steps on a pile of cards, allow that pair to continue. When this activity is over, ask kids to help you quickly pick up the cards.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.



Ask:

- How likely is it that the Explorers would have been successful without being rescued by the Guides?
- When you think of a hero, who comes to mind?

Say: **Being rescued from clams with an attitude may not seem like that big of a deal. But today we'll explore being rescued from the one thing that traps us all—sin. Let's see why it's important that ► JESUS CAME TO SAVE US.**

2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

The Comparison

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Have kids form two teams, and give each team a Bible. Distribute this week's Bible Buzz pages and pens.

Say: **English test! Find the "English Test" section on your Bible Buzz page, and follow the test instructions. You have one minute. Begin now.**

After one minute, give kids an opportunity to answer the test question, and affirm everyone who tries to define the term (even if they don't use Latin).

Say: **An analogy is a comparison of two things. For example, I might say, "He has a voice like a chainsaw." You get the point that the person has a loud, annoying voice.**

In a minute, we'll look at a passage in which Jesus compares two events. One event had already happened, and one was still in the future. Let's find out about both of these events and see why Jesus said they were similar.

Have kids form groups of four, and make sure each group has a Bible. Assign each group one of the assignments on the Bible Buzz page, repeating assignments as needed.

Say: **Each group will read its passages, think about the analogy, and come up with a modern-day analogy using the same theme that's present in your passages. You can write your analogy on your Bible Buzz page.** Give groups time to come up with their analogies.

Say: **Great! Now I want you to take your analogy and create a short drama about it. You're going to use this to convey the meaning to the other groups, so make sure it's clear.**

When five minutes have passed, have groups take turns performing their dramas. Applaud all efforts.



The Comparison Supplies

- Bibles
- Bible Buzz
- pens

The Comparison Easy Prep

Tear out the Lesson 3 pages from each Bible Buzz student book.



Stories of Help Supplies

CD player
Bible Buzz
copies of the lyrics page
(at the end of this
lesson)

Teacher Pack

CD: “Now or Never”
(track 5); “God So
Loved the World”
(John 3:16) (track 7)

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- How can creating an analogy help us better connect with what Jesus did for us?
- What did these analogies have in common?
- What do these analogies say about Jesus and who he is?
- What was so “dangerous” about what Jesus was saying?
- Why are people so drawn to darkness?

Say: **We’re drawn to the darkness, but ► JESUS CAME TO SAVE US from the darkness. He’s the light, and if we trust him, we’ll be safe with him forever.**

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Stories of Help

What You’ll Do ■■■■■■

Gather kids, and play “Now or Never” (track 5 on the CD). Pause the CD when prompted. Ask these questions at the pauses:

First pause—**Describe this man’s attitude about his own abilities.**

Second pause—**What solutions can you think of for the man to save himself?**

Third pause—**Describe the man’s attitude about getting help. What are the possible consequences for his stubbornness?**

Fourth pause—**What are some solutions you can think of for this man to be rescued by someone else?**

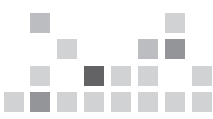
At the end of the track—**What’s wrong with the man’s decision to take credit for his own rescue?**

Say: **This mountain climber isn’t the only person in need of rescue. If we think about it, we all have stories of times we’ve gotten into a fix and needed help to get out.**

Tell about a time you needed help to accomplish something. Then invite kids to share their stories of when they needed help.

Say: **We may never need to be rescued from a mountain, but we all need to be rescued from one thing—sin. We all need someone to guide us back to God. And that’s why ► JESUS CAME TO SAVE US. Today’s Key Verse is one that may be familiar to many of you.**

Have kids find the Key Verse, John 3:16, on their Bible Buzz pages and say the verse a few times: “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.”



Say: **Let's sing a song about this verse. For those who believe in Jesus, sing this song as a prayer of thanks. For those who have not chosen to believe in Jesus, think about the words in this song as it's sung.**

Hand out copies of the lyrics, and play "God So Loved the World" (John 3:16) (track 7 on the CD).



**I believe in God
'Cause what he says is true.
I believe that Jesus died
To save me and save you.**

**I believe in God
And all that he came to do.
I believe that Jesus died
Because he loves both me and you.**

(Chorus)

**For God so loved the world
He gave his one and only Son
That whoever believes in him
Shall not perish.**

**For God so loved the world
He gave his one and only Son,
That whoever believes in him
Will have eternal life.**

(Repeat from the beginning; then repeat chorus.)

"God So Loved the World" (John 3:16) by Ben Glover. © 2005 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **Why do we find it so hard to ask for help?**
- **Why isn't being a "good person" good enough?**
- **Why do some people say no to God's help, like the mountain climber did?**
- **What would it take for you to put your trust in Jesus?**

Say: **Jesus said that everyone needs to be rescued from his or her sins, and ► JESUS CAME TO SAVE US. And the great thing about it is that no one has to do anything to be rescued except have a relationship with Jesus. He wants to rescue us; we just have to say "yes."**





Daily Challenges Supplies

Bible Buzz

4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Say: **This week, let's think about how ► JESUS CAME TO SAVE US.**

Have kids find this week's Daily Challenges on their Bible Buzz pages and choose one to do this week. They can choose one or more of these three options:

- **Ask a Christian adult to help you ask Jesus to rescue you from your sins.**
- **Do you have a friend who doesn't know Jesus? Help that friend learn how Jesus rescues us.**
- **Even if you already have a relationship with Jesus, he wants us to grow closer to him. Spend time with Jesus in prayer or worship this week.**

Make sure you choose a Daily Challenge as well, and tell the kids what you chose. Kids will be more inclined to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What's a practical way you're going to do your Daily Challenge? Include a time, place, and other ideas.**

Say: **Jesus told us that we're in need of rescue. But the great news is that ► JESUS CAME TO SAVE US. Let's remember that as we follow through on our Daily Challenges this week.**

Weaving Faith at Home

Encourage kids to talk with their parents about the Daily Challenges they chose and what they learned about Jesus coming to save us. Kids can also do the activities in the "HomeConnect" section of their Bible Buzz pages with their families.

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

Take a couple of minutes to pray with your kids. Some kids might want to take this opportunity to accept Jesus' offer of salvation. Include a time of praying with kids who want to take that opportunity.

Lyrics **God So Loved the World (John 3:16)**

I believe in God
'Cause what he says is true.
I believe that Jesus died
To save me and save you.

I believe in God
And all that he came to do.
I believe that Jesus died
Because he loves both me and you.

(Chorus)

For God so loved the world
He gave his one and only Son
That whoever believes in him
Shall not perish.

For God so loved the world
He gave his one and only Son,
That whoever believes in him
Will have eternal life.

(Repeat from the beginning; then repeat chorus.)

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