




Jesus Explains Why God Sent Him

John 3:12-21

God so loved us that he gave his Son to the entire world—infants, toddlers, and 2-year-olds included. How can we convey such a great, yet complex, concept to help our little ones know how much God loves them? Young children don't understand abstract ideas. Just as they need their food to be cut into very small pieces, they need to have spiritual concepts broken down into very small bites. This lesson provides games, songs, and activities that will give each child in your care a simple understanding of a complex truth: God loves everyone, and Jesus came to show that love to us.

INFANT

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	Sing and Celebrate Listen to praise songs.	CD player Teacher Pack: CD	
2 Bible Exploration	A Son for Us Look at pictures of Jesus behind little doors.	four 3x3-inch sticky notes Teacher Pack: "Jesus Loves the World" teaching picture 	Place sticky notes over the small pictures of Jesus to make little lift-and-look doors.
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	Rolled Away Play a blanket game.	blanket	
	Tug the Toys Pull toys at the end of a ribbon.	ribbon, scissors, toys	Cut two or three 24-inch lengths of ribbon. Tie a toy onto each ribbon.
	Weaving Faith at Home Take home their "Growing With Jesus" pages.	My Bible Snuggles or 1 copy per child of the "Growing With Jesus" page (at the end of the lesson)	Remove the Lesson 3 pages from each My Bible Snuggles student book.

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



► 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 thank God for sending his Son, Jesus, to show his love.



TODDLER



LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	Sing and Celebrate Listen to or sing praise songs.	CD player Teacher Pack: CD	
2 Bible Exploration	He's a Godsend! Open doors to see Jesus.	Bible, four 3x3-inch sticky notes Teacher Pack: "Jesus Loves the World" teaching picture 	Place sticky notes over the small pictures of Jesus to make little lift-and-look doors.
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	Search and Rescue Place toys in a dark hole and take them out again.	empty tissue box, 6 or more small toys	
	Caring Capers Listen for and find the teacher by voice.		
	Weaving Faith at Home Take home their "Growing With Jesus" pages.	My Bible Snuggles or 1 copy per child of the "Growing With Jesus" page (at the end of the lesson)	Remove the Lesson 3 pages from each My Bible Snuggles student book.

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





2-YEAR-OLD

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	Sing and Celebrate Listen to or sing praise songs.	CD player Teacher Pack: CD	
2 Bible Exploration	Open Up to the Son Remember Jesus' actions as they open doors to see him.	Bible, four 3x3-inch sticky notes Teacher Pack: "Jesus Loves the World" teaching picture 	Place 3x3-inch sticky notes over the small pictures of Jesus to make little lift-and-look doors.
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	Lifesaver "Rescue" toys with a hoop.	Hula-Hoop, 3 stuffed animals, masking tape	
	Son Seekers Seek and find Jesus behind the doors on the teaching picture.	1 copy for every 2 children of the "Matching Actions" page (at the end of the lesson), scissors Teacher Pack: "Jesus Loves the World" teaching picture 	
	Weaving Faith at Home Take home their "Growing With Jesus" pages.	My Bible Snuggles or 1 copy per child of the "Growing With Jesus" page (at the end of the lesson)	Remove the Lesson 3 pages from each My Bible Snuggles student book.

***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.

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**INFANT****1****GETTING
STARTED**

Sing and Celebrate

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Sing "God So Loved the World" (John 3:16) (track 5 on the CD) anytime during the lesson. Sing as you rock, feed, or play with the infants. As you sing, gently touch each baby's arms, legs, head, toes, and nose. Give babies gentle hugs. Tell them God loves everyone.



**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 loved 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.)

Will have eternal life.

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

Afterward, say: ► **JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD'S LOVE.**

Sing "Jesus Is the King" (not on the CD) to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It" anytime during the lesson. As you sing, gently touch each baby on the head and draw a crown with your finger. Give babies gentle hugs, and tell them Jesus is king.



Sing and Celebrate Supplies

CD player

Teacher Pack

CD: "God So Loved the
World" (John 3:16)
(track 5)



A Son for Us Supplies

four 3x3-inch sticky
notes

Teacher Pack


“Jesus Loves the World”
teaching picture

A Son for Us Easy Prep

Place sticky notes over
the small pictures of
Jesus to make little lift-
and-look doors.

Rolled Away Supplies

blanket

 Jesus is the king, clap your hands.
Jesus is the king, clap your hands.
Jesus is the king. Yes! Jesus is the king.
Jesus is the king, clap your hands.

Afterward, say: ► **JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD’S LOVE.**

2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

A Son for Us

What You’ll Do

As crawlers are playing on the floor or as you hold an infant, show the teaching picture “Jesus Loves the World.”

Say: **Let’s find a picture of Jesus.** Help baby open one of the doors. **God loves everyone. God sent Jesus to earth to help us.** ► **JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD’S LOVE.** Open another door with the baby.

Continue until all the doors are open, repeating this chant each time:

**Jesus, Jesus, everywhere,
Showing us how much God cares.**

Say: ► **JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD’S LOVE.**

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Rolled Away

What You’ll Do

Do this activity with babies over 3 months old. Lay the baby flat on the floor on his or her back on a blanket. Help the baby roll over on the blanket. Make eye contact and smile as the baby returns to his or her back. As you play, sing “Roll Away” (not on the CD) to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat,” ending with a tummy tickle:





Roll, roll, roll away,
Roll away and smile!
Jesus loves you, little one.
He came to love you all the while.

Say: ► **JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD'S LOVE.**

Tug the Toys

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Set out the toys. Sit near a baby, and pull a toy toward the two of you. Straighten the ribbon and encourage the baby to pull the toy.

Say: **Pull, pull, and reach!** After baby has played with the toy, repeat the activity again. **Thank you, God, for reaching us and sending Jesus. ► JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD'S LOVE.**

Ensure ribbons do not get wrapped around the baby's neck. Set the toys out of children's reach once the baby loses interest.

Weaving Faith at Home

Have children take home their "Growing With Jesus" pages. Encourage parents to do the activities with children to help them grow with Jesus. 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.

TODDLER

1

GETTING STARTED

Sing and Celebrate

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Sing "God So Loved the World" (John 3:16) (track 5 on the CD) anytime during the lesson. Give toddlers gentle hugs. Tell them God loves everyone.



Tug the Toys Supplies

ribbon
scissors
toys

Tug the Toys Easy Prep

Cut two or three 24-inch lengths of ribbon. Tie a toy onto each ribbon.

Weaving Faith at Home Supplies

My Bible Snuggles or 1 copy per child of the "Growing With Jesus" page (at the end of the lesson)

Weaving Faith at Home Easy Prep

Remove the Lesson 3 pages from each My Bible Snuggles student book.

Sing and Celebrate Supplies

CD player
Teacher Pack
CD: "God So Loved the World" (John 3:16) (track 5)



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 loved 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.)

Will have eternal life.

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

Afterward, say: ► **JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD'S LOVE.**

Sing "Jesus Is the King" (not on the CD) to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It" anytime during the lesson with your toddlers. Encourage them to do the motions as you sing.



Jesus is the king, clap your hands. (clap, clap)
Jesus is the king, clap your hands. (clap, clap)
Jesus is the king. Yes! Jesus is the king.
Jesus is the king, clap your hands. (clap, clap)

Add variations to the actions such as tap your feet, slap your knees, nod your head, or give a smile.

Afterward, say: ► **JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD'S LOVE.**



2

BIBLE
EXPLORATION

He's a Godsend!

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Gather a group of toddlers together. Open your Bible to John 3:12-21. Show children the words and tell them the Bible is God's special book.

Say: **God loves everyone in the world. He sent Jesus, his Son, to show us his love. Jesus showed us how to love. ► JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD'S LOVE.** Show the teaching picture "Jesus Loves the World" to the toddlers. **Pictures of Jesus are hiding behind these doors. Let's find out what Jesus is doing.**

Invite toddlers to help you open the doors. Discuss what Jesus is doing in each picture.

Close your time by thanking God for his love and for sending Jesus to show us his love.

3

WEAVING FAITH
INTO LIFE

Search and Rescue



Tip You may want to have more than one box so several toddlers can play this game at the same time.

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Set a few small toys in front of the toddlers. Show children how to drop the toys into the hole in the tissue box. Shake the box. Then help toddlers reach in and retrieve the toys from the box.

Say: **Reach into the dark hole, and pull out the toy! God sent Jesus to pull us out of sadness and to pull us close to him. ► JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD'S LOVE. Thank you, Jesus!** Most toddlers will want to repeat this activity over and over. You can repeat the words, "We come out of sadness...and close to Jesus!" as they pull out the toys.

He's a Godsend!
Supplies

Bible
four 3x3-inch sticky
notes
Teacher Pack
"Jesus Loves the World"
teaching picture

He's a Godsend!
Easy Prep

Place sticky notes over
the small pictures of
Jesus to make little lift-
and-look doors.

Search and Rescue
Supplies

empty tissue box
6 or more small toys



Weaving Faith at Home Supplies

My Bible Snuggles or 1 copy per child of the "Growing With Jesus" page (at the end of the lesson)

Weaving Faith at Home Easy Prep

Remove the Lesson 3 pages from each My Bible Snuggles student book.

Sing and Celebrate Supplies

CD player
Teacher Pack
CD: "God So Loved the World" (John 3:16) (track 5)

Caring Capers

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Ask an assistant to take your toddlers out of the room or area long enough for you to hide somewhere in the room. Have the toddlers return.

Say: **Come and find me.** Wait for the children to find you, and then give each one a big hug. **God loves you! God finds us like you found me.** Repeat the game as long as children are interested. **God sent his Son, Jesus, to find us. ► JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD'S LOVE.**

Weaving Faith at Home

Have children take home their "Growing With Jesus" pages. Encourage parents to do the activities with children to help them grow with Jesus. 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.

2-YEAR-OLD

1 GETTING STARTED

Sing and Celebrate

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Sing "God So Loved the World" (John 3:16) (track 5 on the CD) anytime during the lesson. Have 2-year-olds point to each other and themselves on "me and you."



**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 loved 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.)

Will have eternal life.

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Afterward, say: ► **JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD'S LOVE.**

Sing "Jesus Is the King" (not on the CD) to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It" anytime during the lesson. Encourage children to do the motions as you sing.

🎵 **Jesus is the king, clap your hands.** *(clap, clap)*
Jesus is the king, clap your hands. *(clap, clap)*
Jesus is the king. Yes! Jesus is the king.
Jesus is the king, clap your hands. *(clap, clap)*

Add variations to the actions such as tap your feet, slap your knees, nod your head, or give a smile.

Afterward, say: ► **JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD'S LOVE.**

2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

Open Up to the Son

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Gather a group of children together. Open your Bible to John 3:12-21. Show children the words and tell them the Bible is God's special book.

Say: **Today we're learning that people are important to God. God loved the world so much he sent Jesus to help us. ► JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD'S LOVE.** Hold up the teaching picture "Jesus Loves the World." **Here's a picture of the world. People live all over the world. Let's find out what's behind each flap to see some of the things Jesus did for people.**



Open Up to the Son Supplies

Bible
four 3x3-inch sticky
notes

Teacher Pack
"Jesus Loves the World"
teaching picture

Open Up to the Son Easy Prep

Place 3x3-inch sticky
notes over the small
pictures of Jesus
to make little lift-
and-look doors.





Lifesaver Supplies

Hula-Hoop
3 stuffed animals
masking tape

Son Seekers Supplies

1 copy for every
2 children of the
“Matching Actions”
page (at the end of the
lesson)

scissors

Teacher Pack

“Jesus Loves the World”
teaching picture

Weaving Faith at Home Supplies

My Bible Snuggles or 1
copy per child of the
“Growing With Jesus”
page (at the end of the
lesson)

Weaving Faith at Home Easy Prep

My Bible Snuggles or 1
copy per child of the
“Growing With Jesus”
page (at the end of the
lesson)

Lay the picture on the floor, and have children sit around the picture. Select 2-year-olds to open the doors to the pictures. Discuss what Jesus is doing in each picture, and encourage children to thank God for Jesus showing us his love.

3

WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Lifesaver

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Use masking tape to form a large circle on the floor of your room. Place the stuffed animals inside the circle. Tell children it's a pretend lake.

Say: **Look! The animals are in the water, and they don't like it. Let's help them!** Use the Hula-Hoop to pull the animals to “safety.” Let the children help the animals while you encourage them. **We showed love by helping our animal friends. God wants us to know he loves us. God sent Jesus to help us. ► JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD'S LOVE.**

Son Seekers

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Cut the bottom row from one or more of the “Matching Actions” pages. Give each child one of these cut-out pictures of Jesus. Challenge children to find the matching picture under the doors on the “Jesus Loves the World” teaching picture. Close the doors after each peek. Let each child open doors until he or she finds the matching picture. Remind children that **► JESUS CAME TO SHOW GOD'S LOVE.**

Weaving Faith at Home

Have children take home their “Growing With Jesus” pages. Encourage parents to do the activities with children to help them grow with Jesus. By working together and focusing on the same goals, you and parents can help children weave faith into their lives!

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Growing With Jesus



Your child learned that Jesus came to show God's love (from John 3:12-21). Your child participated in one of the following activities today. You can use these activities with your child to help your child grow with Jesus throughout the week.

INFANT

Tug the Toys

Cut two or three 24-inch lengths of ribbon. Tie a toy onto each ribbon. Sit near your baby, and pull the toy toward the two of you. Straighten the ribbon and encourage your baby to pull the toy.

Say: **Pull, pull, and reach!** After baby has played with the toy, repeat the activity again. **Thank you, God, for reaching out to us and sending your Son. Jesus came to show us God's love.**

TODDLER

Caring Capers

Tell your child to close his or her eyes as you hide somewhere in the room. Once you're hidden, tell your toddler to open his or her eyes.

Say: **Come and find me.** Wait for your child to find you, and then give him or her a big hug. **God loves you! God finds his children like you found me.** Repeat the game. **God sent his Son, Jesus, to show us his love.**

2-YEAR-OLD

Lifesaver

Use masking tape to form a large circle on the floor. Place a stuffed animal inside the pretend "lake."

Say: **Look! The animal is in the water, and he doesn't like it. Let's help him out!** Use a Hula-Hoop or your hands to pull the toy to "safety." Repeat the game. **We helped our animal friend. God sent Jesus to help us. Jesus came to show us God's love.**



Saving Love

Small children know fear and then the comfort of being "rescued" by someone they trust. Think of how relieved they are when someone comes into the room after they've been crying. As your child experiences the security of your love, consider how to help provide understanding of Jesus' comforting love. Use hugs and words as reminders of your love, and talk frequently about the love that God has for all of us.



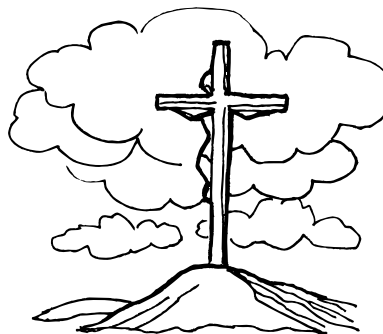
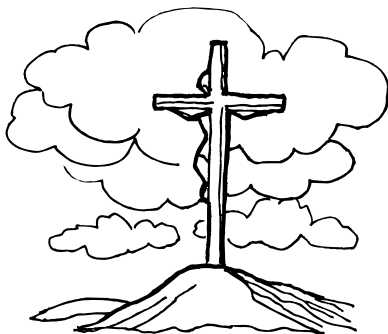
Use these ideas to help your child become a FaithWeaver:

- Hide behind a chair or sofa, and call out, "Help me! I'm lost!" When your child comes near, reach out and offer a hug. Say, "You found me! Jesus came to help us and show us God's love."
- Review the verse "God so loved the world." Personalize the verse with your family names: "God so loved [child's name]. God so loved Mommy. Thank you, thank you, God."

**OK
TO COPY**

Matching Actions

Directions: Photocopy this page. Cut out the right row of cards and separate them. Let children try to match these cards to the pictures on the paper as you talk about what Jesus is doing in them.



**OK
TO COPY**
Illustrated by Nancy Munger.