

Today's Suggested Schedule—February 2026, Week 1

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

Bottom Line: God loves the whole world.

Conversation Starter: Where have you seen God's love?

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

Supplies NOT Included in the Activity Bags:

Bible Story Review: Bible Story Extension and Discussion Questions

Memory Verse Activity: Verses to Take with You

- Bibles
- Large piece of butcher paper
- Coloring supplies

Prayer Activity: Make It Personal with Prayer

- Coloring supplies

Bible Story Summary

We start off as Nicodemus visits Jesus at night. While Nicodemus struggles to understand how a grown-up could be born again, Jesus challenges him to see with new eyes. John, recording this scene, interprets for us: "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." [BOTTOM LINE] God loves the whole world.

Prayer

Pray for your group before they arrive. Pray for kids who will visit your group for the first time. Thank God that His love isn't a secret and that it's for everyone, everywhere—no exceptions. Recall an age-appropriate story about a time you had to step out of your comfort zone to ask questions about faith, or a time you realized God's love extended to someone you had overlooked. Ask God to open the eyes of your preteens to see "the whole world" in their daily life—the kid who eats alone, the person in their feed they disagree with, or the friend who doesn't know Jesus. Pray that the truth of John 3:16 would move them from knowing God loves everyone to showing God's love to everyone.

1. Bible Story Extension

What You Need:

- No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Ask the group: “In the conversation we looked at today, Jesus tells Nicodemus that **[Bottom Line] God loves the whole world**. Just how big is the ‘whole world?’”
- Ask the kids to guess these fun facts, then give them the answer.
 - How many countries are in the whole wide world? (*around 195*)
 - How many people are in the world? (*over 8 billion*)
 - How many different languages are spoken in the world? (*over 7,000*)
- Now, discuss the following questions:
 - Why do you think Nicodemus, who was a religious leader, might have had a hard time understanding that God’s love was for *everyone*?
 - What makes it hard for us sometimes to believe that God loves the *whole* world—even people who are very different from us?
 - How does remembering that God loves everyone change the way you see people at your school or in your neighborhood?

What You Say:

“These numbers are mind-blowing! It’s hard to even imagine that many people and places. But the most amazing truth from our story today is that God’s love is big enough for every single one of them. Jesus gave Nicodemus a picture of His love by mentioning Moses lifting up a bronze snake in the desert. Just as people looked at the snake to live, Jesus would be lifted up on the cross to bring life to everyone who looks to Him. No matter where you live, what language you speak, or what you’ve done, God’s love is for you. **[Bottom Line] God loves the whole world!**”

2. Discussion Questions

Ask:

- Why do you think Nicodemus came to Jesus at night instead of during the day? What does that tell you about his curiosity or fears?
- Jesus said we need to be “born again.” What do you think that means in your own words, and how might your life look different if you let God’s Spirit make you new?
- John 3:16 says God loved the whole world. What are some groups of people or kinds of situations where it’s hardest for you to believe God loves equally—and why?
- Jesus compared the Holy Spirit to the wind—you can’t see it, but you can see what it does. Can you think of a time when you saw evidence of God’s Spirit working in you or someone else?
- Nicodemus had a lot of questions for Jesus, but he didn’t avoid Jesus—he went right to Him with his questions. What does this story teach you about bringing your doubts or questions to God?

3. Verses to Take with You

What You Need:

- Bibles
- Large piece of butcher paper
- Coloring supplies

What You Do:

- Give every kid a Bible.
- Invite them to look up John 13:34 using the Bible Navigation Tips below.

Finding verses with 4th-5th graders: Ask kids to tell you if the book of the Bible they're looking for is in the Old Testament or New Testament. If it's in the Old, instruct kids to flip slowly, starting at the front of the Bible and heading toward the back, until they find the book they're looking for. If it's in the New, instruct kids to start flipping from the back, going forward to find the book they're looking for. Once they find the book, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. First, have them find the chapter they're looking for. Then explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Tell kids to find the verse within the chapter they've already found.

- Read the Memory Verse together out loud several times.
- Lay the large paper out on a table or the floor (ensure everyone can reach it).
- Write the verse clearly one time in the center of the paper as a reference.
- Challenge the kids to turn the poster into "Verse Graffiti." They should fill the remaining space by rewriting the verse in different ways: huge letters, tiny letters, sideways, drawing symbols (like a heart for "Love" or an arrow for "command"), or using creative fonts.
- Display the finished poster prominently in your small group space.

What You Say:

"This looks incredible! You took Jesus' command and made it your own. In His conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus taught us that we must be 'born again.' That's not always easy to grasp, but it's the core of what Jesus asked him—and us—to understand. When we follow Jesus, there's a huge change on the inside! And then with that changed inside, we are to live out this verse! And God will help us with His Spirit inside of us!"

EveryChild Pro-Tips:

- Allow students to collaborate on a single section or use different colors to express their individual understanding of the verse.

4. Make It Personal with Prayer

What You Need:

- Prepared prayer journals- will use all month long
- Coloring supplies

What You Do:

- Give each kid a prayer journal. Set out the coloring supplies.
- Explain that this will be their personal journal for the month to talk to God.
- Encourage the kids to write their names on the front page of their Prayer Journal.
- Instruct the kids to open their journal to page 2 that says, “God Loves the Whole World.”
- Challenge the kids to spend a few minutes quietly writing or drawing pictures of people and places that remind them that **[Bottom Line] God loves the whole world**. They could write “my family,” “my friends,” “people in Japan,” or draw a picture of the earth.
- After a few minutes of quiet reflection, close in prayer.
- Let the kids know they’ll add to their journal each week.
- Keep the prayer journals in a safe place for the following weeks.

What You Say:

“It’s incredible to stop and think about just how big God’s love is. Let’s thank Him for that love together.

“God, thank You for loving the whole world. Thank You for loving me. It’s the most amazing news ever. Help me not to just know that You love everyone, but to show it in the way I treat people this week. Help me to love others just like You have loved me. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”