

G23 | W1

Small Group Leader Guide

Today's Suggested Schedule

Greeting & Prayer (3 minutes)

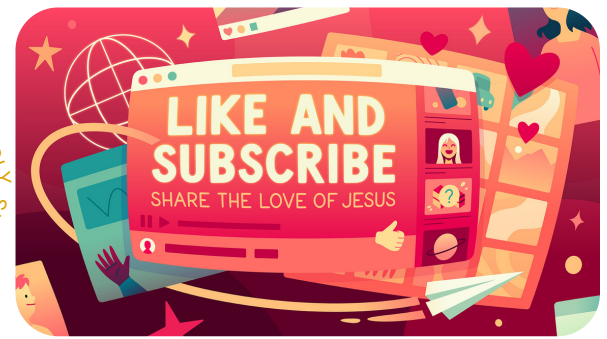
The leader greets the children and asks how they are doing. After a brief time of sharing, the group participates in a short prayer activity to prepare their hearts for the lesson.

Small Group Activity (20 minutes)

Groups: Creating a safe place to connect

Pray & Dismiss (2 minutes)

After small group time, the leader closes in prayer. Then the children are dismissed.



Bible Story

Jesus Teaches Nicodemus
John 3:1-21

Bottom Line

God loves the whole world.

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



G23 | W1

Greeting & Prayer

What You Need

- ☐ A Spinning Wheel
- ☐ Prayer Chart



①

What You Do

Pray for your group before they arrive -> Pray for kids who will visit your group for the first time. Recall a time when God gave you the courage to do something you didn't think you were ready for. Thank God for sending the Holy Spirit to live inside of you and help you take the next step! Ask God to help the kids trust Him when they feel nervous or unsure. Whether it's a big change or something small, pray that kids would know God is with them even when they don't feel ready.

- Choose a child to spin the wheel.
- Each color matches a prayer prompt on the chart.
- After spinning, the child finds the matching prompt, reads it, and prays.
- Let a few more children take turns spinning the wheel and praying.

②

What You Say

"Prayer is how we talk with God, our loving Father. The Bible tells us to pray without ceasing—talking to Him anytime, anywhere. Whatever you do, begin with prayer. When you do, you can trust that God is in control and working in every situation."

Transition -> Lead your group to the small group activity

G23 | W1

ACTIVITY ONE

Story Creation

Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God



What You Need

- Bible
- Play-Doh
- Paper plates



Inclusive Pro Tips

Use thumbs-up and thumbs-down if not all children can sit and stand easily.

What You Do:

- Give each kid a paper plate and Play-Doh®.
- Explain that you're going to retell the story of Jesus and Nicodemus together.
- As you tell the story, encourage the kids to make the key parts with their Play-Doh®.
- Say, "Nicodemus was a very important teacher. Can you make a person out of Play-Doh®? That can be Nicodemus."
- Say, "Nicodemus came to see Jesus at night, because he was afraid of certain people finding out he was talking to Jesus. Can you make some stars?"
- Say, "Jesus told Nicodemus that He was going to make a way for the whole world to be His friend forever because [Bottom Line] God loves the whole world. Can you make a big circle for the world?"
- Say, "In this conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus, we learned that God sent His Son, Jesus, for everyone in the world. Can you make a cross to help us remember Jesus?"
- Encourage the kids to show you their creations after each step.
- Open the Bible and read John 3:16 together.

What You Say:

"Look at all your amazing creations! This helps us remember our Bible Story. Jesus helped Nicodemus understand something very important: that He was going to make a way for everyone to have eternal life, that He was going to make a way for everyone to be God's friend forever!

"Jesus explained a little bit of what this means. He told Nicodemus that, 'No one can see God's kingdom unless they are born again' (John 3:3 NIV). When we accept Jesus' payment on the cross for our sins, Jesus' very Spirit, the Holy Spirit, comes to live inside of us! God's Spirit actually makes us brand-new inside as if we are being born a second time. Jesus explained that God's Spirit is like the wind; you can't see it, but you can see how it changes things.

"Nicodemus also learned that God was going to do this—He was going to give everyone the chance to have a forever friendship with Him—because [Bottom Line] God loves the whole world! And the 'whole world' includes you, me, and everyone!

"Jesus was giving Nicodemus a picture of what was coming—that Jesus would give up His life to pay for our sins because He loves us so much. And He would give eternal life to everyone who chooses Him. Anyone who chooses to follow Jesus can be God's friend forever!"

G23 | W1

ACTIVITY TWO

The Whole World Ball Game

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God



What You Need

- Soft playground ball

What You Do:

- Encourage the kids to stand in a single file line.
- Instruct them to stand with their legs shoulder-width apart, creating a tunnel with their legs.
- Stand at the front of the line and gently roll the ball so it goes through every kid's legs.
- After the first roll, move to a different spot, maybe off to the side. Explain that the group has to move together to make sure the ball can still roll through everyone's legs—including yours!
- Roll the ball again. The kids will need to shuffle and adjust their positions as a group to create a new tunnel for the ball.
- Continue a few times, moving to different spots and challenging them to work together.
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What You Say:

"Great teamwork! You had to work together to make sure the ball could get through everyone in our line. This game helps us remember that God's love is for everyone, everywhere! No one is left out.

"God loves people who are different from you, who live in different places, and people who do wrong things! [Bottom Line] God loves the whole world, and He wants His love to reach every single person. Because you and I are made in God's image—we reflect who God is to the world—we can show His love to others.

"When we're kind, we show the world God's love. When we're compassionate, we show the world God's love. Let's show everyone God's love because [Bottom Line] God loves the whole world!"

Inclusive Pro Tips



Use thumbs-up and thumbs-down if not all children can sit and stand easily.

G23 | W1

GROUPS 4/4

Pray and Dismiss

Prayer Activity



What You Say

“Dear God, thank You that You love the whole world. Thank You for loving [name a few of the people the kids mentioned]. Please help them know that You love them. Help us to share Your love with everyone this week. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

No supplies needed

Transition -> As adults arrive to pick up, encourage the kids to share one promise from today’s Bible Story that God kept and remind the kids to share that *[Bottom Line]* Jesus is good news for everyone.

Inclusive Pro Tips



Instead of praying silently, give options for the kids to write or doodle to God quietly.