



## Overview

The most important thing about a church is the message. Ministries, facilities, and worship styles are all part of the overall experience of a church, but they exist only to support, not define. The message of the church is at the core of who we are, what we believe, and why we exist. This message is not something we create or generate but rather was spoken by Jesus Himself in John 3. Jesus plainly declares the message of the church, and His very words must be the central beliefs of all of His followers. When Jesus spoke His message to Nicodemus, He plainly communicated the absolute necessity of a new birth – a spiritual, supernatural, and eternal birth that is both life-changing and life-fulfilling – a new birth that changes the life patterns, experiences, and life mission of all who truly believe.

## Going Deeper

- Talk through the differences between being a fan and being a follower of something or someone.
- Do you consider yourself a fan or a follower of Jesus?
- How might others who know you answer that question?

## Making It Stick

**Read John 3:1-8 and answer these questions:**

- Who was Nicodemus, and what makes his conversation with Jesus significant?
- Nicodemus made an opening statement to Jesus in verse 2, but Jesus ignored his declaration and moved straight to Nicodemus' heart need in verse 3. What did Nicodemus need?
- What does it mean to be “born again” or “born of the Spirit”?
- In verses 6-7 Nicodemus discovers he doesn't need just an intentional adjustment, but rather a complete redo! Read the following verses and discuss what it means to be “transformed.” (Mark 9:2, Romans 12:2, and 2 Corinthians 12:18)
- Has this transformation taken place in you? If so, when? If not, why not?

**Read John 3:9-15 with Numbers 21:4-9 and John 8:28.**

- How was the symbolism of the serpent on the pole from Numbers 21:8-9 a foreshadowing of what was to come?
- As the people gazed at the serpent, they were healed. What happens when a person gazes on the face of Jesus?
- What had to happen for the gift of eternal life to be bought for us?
- Discuss specifically what Christ did for us.
  - He *became* one of us – the manger – **Galatians 4:4-5**
  - He *bore* the debt of sin – the cross – **2 Corinthians 5:18-21**
  - He *bestowed* power by His resurrection – the empty tomb – **John 11:25-27**
- What must we do to receive eternal life? (John 3:15, 11:25-27)
- What does it mean to believe?

**Read John 3:16-18.**

- There are four simple actions that occur in John 3:16 – two that God initiates and two that we respond to:

- God loved (the whole world). Talk about the unconditional love God has for the world.
- God gave (His Son). Discuss why it had to be God's Son who died for our sins.
- We believe (in His Son). Talk about the difference between head knowledge and heart knowledge when it comes to "believing" in God.
- We receive (His Son). Discuss the fact that the gift of Jesus is a free gift that we must take hold of or accept. We can't save ourselves, and we can't pay for it ourselves. Salvation is a free gift. (Ephesians 2:4-8)

**Who has God placed on your heart during this discussion that needs to know about Jesus? Use the remainder of your group time to practice Living Out the Gospel. Break into groups and rehearse sharing the Gospel with each other so you can be ready when the time comes. There is a very simple, yet effective method below.**

### **Living It Out**

Ask God to bring someone into your life this week who needs Jesus. Share the Gospel with them. Below is a simple way to share.

**Practice and memorize this method for Gospel-sharing.**

#### **The Roman Road**

**Everyone needs salvation because we have all sinned.**

- Romans 3:13, 23 – *None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one. For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.*

**The price (or consequence) of sin is death.**

- Romans 5:8 – *But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

**Jesus Christ died for our sins. He paid the price for our death.**

- Romans 6:23 – *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**We receive salvation and eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ.**

- Romans 10:9-10 – *Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.*

**Salvation through Jesus Christ brings us into a relationship of peace with God.**

- Romans 5:1 – *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*
- Romans 8:1 – *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*