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# Scripture Press®

## SAMPLE LESSON

Includes links to related resources

### MIDDLER TEACHING GUIDE



Total Bible  
Learning®

## UNIT THEMES

*Christians* Belong  
to God's Family

*Christians* Are  
Known for Their  
Love

*Christians* Look for  
the Lord's Return



# Middler

## Teaching Guide

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# Theme Chart 2-Year Cycle

September	<p><b>Treating People Right</b> 1 Samuel</p> <p><b>Making Right Decisions</b> 1 &amp; 2 Samuel</p> <p><b>Keeping Right-On with God</b> 1 Kings</p>	<p><b>The Beginnings of God's Plan</b> Genesis, Isaiah, Ezekiel, selected Scriptures</p> <p><b>How People Lost Out</b> Genesis</p> <p><b>God's Plan for Redemption</b> Genesis, Hebrews</p>
December	<p><b>Happiness Is Getting Along</b> Genesis, Isaiah, Luke</p> <p><b>Happiness Is Forgiving</b> Genesis</p> <p><b>Happiness Is "Yes, Lord"</b> Exodus, Acts, Hebrews</p>	<p><b>How God Gave His Word</b> 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Jeremiah, selected Scriptures</p> <p><b>Making Right Choices</b> Judges, 1 Samuel</p> <p><b>Doing Things God's Way</b> 1 Samuel, Psalms</p>
March	<p><b>Our Christian Faith</b> The Gospels, Acts, 1 Corinthians</p> <p><b>Our Christian Church</b> Acts</p> <p><b>Our Christian Witness</b> Acts</p>	<p><b>A Life of Prayer</b> Matthew, Luke, John</p> <p><b>A Life of Service</b> The Gospels</p> <p><b>A Life of Following Jesus</b> Psalms, Isaiah, Luke, John</p>
June	<p><b>Christians Belong to God's Family</b> Luke, John</p> <p><b>Christians Are Known for Their Love</b> Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 3 John</p> <p><b>Christians Look for the Lord's Return</b> Matthew, John, 1 Corinthians, 1 Thessalonians, Revelation, selected New Testament Scriptures</p>	<p><b>How Family Members Behave</b> Genesis, Ruth, Romans</p> <p><b>Your Part in Your Family</b> Genesis, 1 Kings, Luke, James, 1 Peter, selected Scriptures</p> <p><b>Families Are Special</b> Exodus, 1 &amp; 2 Samuel, 1 &amp; 2 Kings, 1 Timothy, Hebrews, selected Scriptures</p>

## Coming Next Quarter

### Themes

- The Beginnings of God's Plan
- How People Lost Out
- God's Plan for Redemption

### Aims

- To realize that the Eternal God is known by His acts
- To understand that only God can cure our sin
- To discover that God's plan for redemption rests on His unfailing promise

### Middler Curriculum Tools

- ☐ [Teaching Guide](#)
- ☐ [Teaching Resources](#)
- ☐ [Bible Promises Student Guide](#)
- ☐ [Counselor take-home papers](#)

*Order these and other materials on Next Quarter's Curriculum Order Form or see your Sunday School curriculum supplier.*

# UNIT 1 - CHRISTIANS BELONG TO GOD'S FAMILY

## LESSON 1

# BECOMING A CHILD OF GOD

## OVERVIEW

### Scripture

Jesus explains salvation to Nicodemus—*John 3:1-15*

### Bible Truth

We can join God's family only by being born again.

### Life Response Aim

To be confident that faith in Jesus makes us members of God's family.

### Memory Verse

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." *John 3:3, KJV*

Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."

*John 3:3, NIV*

### FOCUS

Your Place in Your Family

### DISCOVER

The Secret of God's Family

### RESPOND

Affirming Our Birth into God's Family

## MATERIALS

- ☐ Bible, pencils

### FOCUS

- ☐ White- or chalkboard drawing of genealogical chart
- ☐ Paper and pencil for each student
- OPTIONAL: Reproduction of genealogical chart for each student

### DISCOVER

- ☐ [Bible Promises](#), page 3

### RESPOND

- ☐ [Bible Promises](#), page 4

## PREPARING YOUR HEART TO TEACH

Read the text for this week's lesson: John 3:1-15.

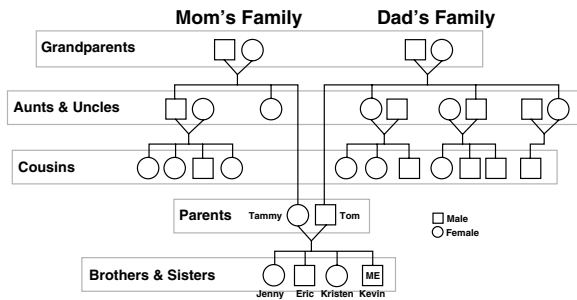
- Among your non-Christian friends and acquaintances, who is most similar to Nicodemus—a person of stature in his or her group or community, who might have all the answers to religious questions, who would not be expected to seek the Saviour? How would you respond if he or she asked you about Jesus?
- On the surface it seems as though Jesus didn't answer Nicodemus's opening statement. But Jesus' discernment enabled Him to get beyond His visitor's question to the man's real need. That Nicodemus made the effort to secretly seek Jesus at night was a statement of spiritual hunger.
- Pray that you will be able to discern the spiritual hunger of your students and others, and respond with the words about Jesus they need to hear.



## YOUR PLACE IN YOUR FAMILY



Before class draw on the board the genealogical chart shown in the illustration below.



Genealogy chart

Then give each student a sheet of paper. Ask them to copy the chart and fill in the names of their grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, and cousins—as many as they can remember. (Or, reproduce the chart—without names—on the papers you hand out.) Most students should be able to identify family members up to their grandparents, but encourage each to do the best he or she can. If you have children who are adopted or in foster families, they may not know this information; be sensitive to their needs by using an alternate activity.

When the children's genealogies have been completed, have them show their charts to the rest of the class and tell something about their families.

You may want to “prime the pump” by asking questions like these.



• **Where did your family come from originally?** (Ireland, India, Africa, Vietnam, etc.)

• **Do the members of your family have any physical feature in common?** (Hair color, eye color, shape of nose, height, physique, etc.)

• **How often do you get to see the members of your family who don't live with you?** (Holidays, seldom, etc.)

• **Is there a talent or interest that several members of your family share?** (sports, school, singing, etc.)

• **What makes you most proud to be a member of your family?**

• **Is there something special about being a member of your family that you'd like to add?**

**TRANSITION →** During these next few weeks, we're going to look at another family. Some of you are already members of that family, and if you're not, you can easily become a member. This family is the most special family of all. We're going to talk about becoming members of God's family.

## ENRICHMENT IDEAS

### ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Divide your Middlers into teams of three. Each team is to describe a different element of family life.

One team can describe their parent(s).

Another can describe family chores.

Another can describe what people in their families talk about and do.

Have teams report their ideas. If you have a smaller class, stay together and explore your students' ideas about the characteristics of their families.

Conclude with the Transition paragraph in Focus.

### FAMILY QUESTIONNAIRE

Have students fill out questionnaires on their families, using the questions in Focus. To begin class, read the family profiles and let class members guess whose family you're reading about.

### ICON KEY:



TEACHER SUPPLIED  
RESOURCE



STUDENT  
ACTIVITY



VISUAL  
TEACHING AID



MEMORY  
VERSE




DISCUSSION



PRAYER



## THE SECRET OF GOD'S FAMILY

 Ask two men of the church to assist you with this lesson by playing the parts of Jesus and Nicodemus. Provide them with costumes and copies of pages 6 and 7 with their respective acting and speaking parts highlighted. (Permission granted to reproduce the pages for this purpose.) Or you may want them to use the words recorded in your Bible. You be the narrator. Darken the room to remind everyone it's nighttime. Have the actors sit on an elevated surface to resemble a rooftop. Speak in quiet voices as Jesus and Nicodemus may have for such a late conversation.

### NICODEMUS HAS A SECRET MEETING WITH JESUS

(John 3:1-2)

**Nicodemus was a Pharisee. The Pharisees were among the religious leaders in Jesus' time. They had strict ideas about how to keep God's Law. They didn't like what Jesus taught because He taught about the right way to live for God, which was different from their way.**

**Nicodemus was also a ruler—a member of the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was a group of 70 men who made the rules which told the Jewish people how they should live.**

**But there was something different about Nicodemus compared to the other Pharisees and members of the Sanhedrin. Nicodemus was interested in what Jesus was saying and doing. He didn't want to condemn Jesus; he wanted to better understand Jesus' message.**

**Late one night, Nicodemus came to see Jesus—perhaps at the house where He was staying. [Have Nicodemus come to Jesus, then have them both go to your designated roof as you continue.] Nicodemus probably hoped that, by coming at night, no one would see him talking to Jesus.**

**Though the location of the conversation is not specified in John, we will picture it as happening on the roof. The flat rooftops of homes often functioned as the living room. So Jesus and Nicodemus probably climbed the stairs that were built along the outside wall of the house to the roof.**

### NICODEMUS HEARS A MYSTERY EXPLAINED

(John 3:2-15)

**Nicodemus was the first one to talk. He called Jesus "Rabbi," a title that means teacher.**

**"We know that you've come from God; no one could do the miracles you do unless God were with him."**

**That was a surprising statement! The Pharisees and members of the Sanhedrin didn't like Jesus. But Nicodemus said "we," as if they all knew that Jesus had been sent from God!**

**Jesus replied, "Unless a person has been born again, he can't even see the kingdom of God."**

**That surprised Nicodemus! He thought that he was already a citizen of God's kingdom because he'd been born a Jew. Then he wondered, What did Jesus mean, be "born again"?**

**"What do you mean? How can a grown person become a baby again in his mother's womb?" Nicodemus knew it was impossible to be born all over again.**

**Jesus explained to Nicodemus what born again meant.**

**Our first birth is physical—we get our physical life from our mothers and fathers.**

**Our second birth is spiritual—we get our spiritual life from the Holy Spirit. Because Nicodemus was born a Jew, he was one of God's special people. But even being a Jew didn't give him spiritual life or make him part of God's family.**

**Nicodemus was still confused. Jesus may have just shook His head in amazement. "Here you are, a teacher of the people of Israel, and you don't understand what the Old Testament says about the new heart and life God gives to people who trust in Him."**

**Then Jesus reminded Nicodemus of a story from the Old Testament to help him understand how people are born again by believing in Jesus. "Do you remember when the Israelites traveled through the wilderness and were bitten by poisonous snakes? God told Moses to make a bronze snake and put it high up on a pole so people could see it from far away. God promised that whoever was bitten by a snake should simply look at that bronze snake for healing, and he or she would live. Everyone who trusted God enough to look at that snake stayed alive.**

**"This is the key to being born again. Soon I'm going to be lifted up on a cross to die for the sins of the people. Then everyone who believes in Me will be given new life from**

God—that's how people are born again."

Sometime later, Jesus was put on a cross and lifted up on it—He died on the cross. The Bible says He died to free us from the power of sin in our lives. And God promises that when we trust Jesus as our Saviour, God forgives our sins and gives us spiritual life. A person who is born again and has spiritual life becomes a member of the most special family of all—God's family.

Many scholars feel Jesus' conversation ends with verse 15, and that verse 16 is John's explanation. How wonderful to know today that we who believe in Jesus will not perish but will receive everlasting life!

*[Ask your actors to stay in place until you complete the next section.]*

## NICODEMUS—A BELIEVER?

Did Nicodemus trust Jesus and become born again? We don't really know. But sometime after he'd talked to Jesus, when the Pharisees and members of the Sanhedrin wanted to arrest Jesus, Nicodemus defended Him (John 7:50-52).

Then, after Jesus was crucified, Nicodemus showed his loyalty to Jesus by helping Joseph of Arimathea remove Jesus' body from the cross and place it in the tomb (John 19:38-42).

But whether or not Nicodemus was born again isn't the most important question we can ask. The most important question you and I can ask is whether or not we trust Jesus as our Saviour today. If we do, then we have been born again. We have been given spiritual life by God and then we are related to Him—this is the secret of God's family. And when our bodies die, we will be with the Lord as members of His family forever and ever.



Thank your actors for their help. Then turn to page 3 of [Bible Promises](#). This page leads your Middlers to verses that provide a basic understanding of what the Bible says about being born again.

### Understanding Salvation

Nicodemus talked with Jesus and found out how he could have eternal life. Complete the puzzle to show what Jesus told Him and what God's Word tells us today.

**John 3:3**  
Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be 1-A. (two words with a space between them) to become a part of the 3-D of 2-D.

**John 3:15**  
Jesus said that everyone who believes in Him receives 4-A (two words with a space between them).

**John 1:12**  
What Jesus told Nicodemus is true for us today. All those who have 5-A Jesus and 1-D in His 8-A become children of God. They are "born again" into God's family.

**Ephesians 2:8-9**  
There is nothing we can do to earn salvation. We are saved by God's 7-D. Salvation is a 7-A from Him, but we must have 5-D to accept it.

When you are "born again," you receive many wonderful benefits. Unscramble the letters in the colored squares of the puzzle to discover one.  
A NEW FAMILY

**Key:** A=Across  
D=Down

**A Verse to Remember**  
What answered and said unto him, Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. John 3:3

Lesson 1
Becoming a Child of God — John 3:1-15
3

*Bible Promises, page 3*

## ENRICHMENT IDEAS

### MEMORY VERSE QUERIES

Before looking at the Bible passage for Discover, have students read the memory verse and list all the questions they can think of. For example: Isn't everyone a child of God? Isn't there any other way to become a member of God's family?


### MEMORY VERSE SPIN-AROUND

Print the words of John 3:3 equally spaced around the outer edge of a paper plate. Fix a large paper clip to the center of the plate with a brass paper-fastener (brad). Each student will take a turn spinning the clip. When the clip stops opposite a word, the student will say the memory verse from the beginning, up to that word. For a greater challenge, have them say the verse from that word to the end.

### EVALUATING EVIDENCE

Have the students review Nicodemus' s actions that lead us to believe that he might have become a Christian. Then have the students list evidences that we can look for in the lives of our friends and relatives that show the person might be a Christian.



 Today's Life Response aim is to help Christian students affirm their personal relationships with God as members of His family. We also want to help those who still aren't Christians see some of the benefits of membership in God's family. The activity on page 4 of the student guide is a good way to begin. Build on the Luke 10:20 question by asking those who have received Jesus as Saviour what makes them happiest about being a believer.

Ask for a volunteer to recite, paraphrase, or read (from John 3:3) what Jesus said in reply to Nicodemus's explanation of why he had come. Invite students to ask any remaining questions about what it means to be *born again*.

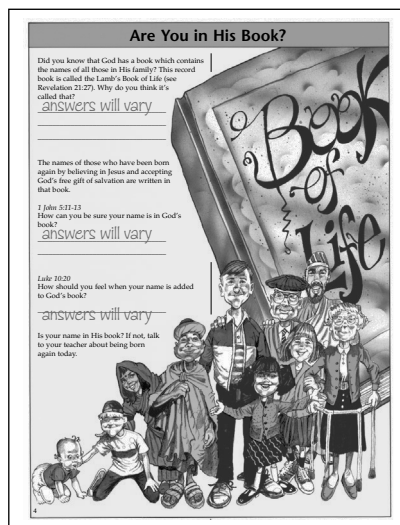
**If you haven't been born again yet, and you're ready to be today, you can tell Jesus you accept Him as your Saviour right now. When you are born again, you become a member of God's family.**

Use the ideas on page 3 of this teacher guide or the "My Decision" page of the student guide (inside back cover) to help students with this decision.

## AT HOME THIS WEEK

In a difficult situation in today's feature story, "I'm Always Here," Dan learns what it means to support a hurting friend in God's family. Some of your students may have friends in similar circumstances.

Mention the BREAKTIME section also as you distribute this week's [Counselor paper](#). These daily readings emphasize the joys of being members of God's family.



Bible Promises,  
page 4

## ENRICHMENT IDEAS

### ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Create a unit bulletin board to reinforce the benefits of belonging to God's family.

Ask your early arrivers to cut out letters for the title "Now I Belong." Have them locate pictures of children about their age from magazines and place them on the board, or bring photos from home. Let volunteers write their ideas about what it means to be members of God's family and add them to the board.

### PRAISE-AND-PRAYER PARTNERS

Point out that members of God's family care about and for each other. One way to show that care is to pray with each other about things that concern them. Establish some summer prayer partnerships among your class members, either by assignment or by letting them choose their own. Encourage partners to exchange prayer requests and pray for each other. Provide time for this at the end of each class session. Each week have a group of "ones" meet to pray for their absent partners and for each other.

## WORSHIP IDEAS

### WORSHIP MUSIC

Introduce "Living for the Lord" from page 29 of the student guide. Add other songs about being part of God's family and about salvation.

### WORSHIP ACTIVITY

Before class make signs saying "Sons of God," "Named after Christ," and "Have needs met through Jesus." Tape the signs on the walls. Write on three small note cards these references (one per card): Acts 11:26; Galatians 3:26; Philippians 4:19. Organize students into three groups and give each group one of the cards. Have them look up the verse and then stand by the sign matching what their verse tells is a benefit of being a member of God's family. When all the groups are in place, have them discuss the value of each benefit of salvation. What other benefits can they think of?