

IN THE BEGINNING

WEEKLY THEME:

THE CREATING WORD BECOMES FLESH

BASED ON:

John 1:1–14, NIV

KEY VERSE:

John 1:3, NIV

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Knowledge: Preschoolers will recognize that Jesus desires to shine His light in dark places by drawing pictures.

Attitude: Preschoolers will express joy by deciphering that Jesus is God.

Action: Preschoolers will practice their understanding of the Bible Story by singing a song.

DEAR TEACHER

The concept of Jesus being God is hard for preschoolers to grasp. However, focus on Jesus coming to earth to dwell among us so we can know who God is.

SUPPLY LIST

SECTION	MATERIALS
Focused Learning Center	Watercolor paints or dark-colored markers, white cardstock or construction paper, white crayons
Life Application Story	Pictures cut out from magazines or printed (provided in the <i>Teaching Success Kit</i>), two boxes, labeled “Made by Man” and “Created by God”
Knowing	Dark-colored markers
Worship Time	Candle and lighter, battery-operated tea lights, flashlights, or light that projects stars

OPEN THE LESSON

Focused Learning Center

Before class: Write the word “Jesus” with a white crayon on a large sheet of white cardstock or construction paper.

During class: Let the students know that in today’s lesson, they will learn that Jesus came to take away the evil in the world. We could not see Him, but He was there the whole time. Then, use any dark-colored watercolor to paint over the word and reveal what it says. Give time for students to draw their own picture with the white crayon and reveal it with watercolor like you did. Allow for time to dry.

PRESENT THE SCRIPTURES

Life Application Story

(Distribute student folders.)

Before reading, cut out three random objects, such as books, video games, a hammer, etc. from pictures in magazines or print a few out. Also, mix in about three pictures of natural landscapes, such as mountains or the ocean. (Provided for you in the *Teaching Success Kit*.) Hold up each picture and ask them if it was created by God or by human beings. Put each picture in the “Made by Man” box and “Created by God” box. Explain that a boy named Julian will learn more life lessons in today’s story.

While reading, pause at, “You know who made this beautiful sky?” Ask the class to answer the question and to share anything else they would like to add to the list. Continue reading.

After reading, hold up a picture of Jesus. Ask if they think He was created by God. Tell them that today they will learn that Jesus gets a whole other box of His own. He was neither created by God nor man! He IS God! Let them know they may not fully understand it now, but at least they should know that Jesus went through so much just to show His love for His creation.

Reading the Bible Story

In the Beginning

The Bible Story in the student folders is designed for preschool students to read. The Scripture Scene® is provided as a visual aid. Be sure to study the information on this Bible passage in the white pages of the Teacher Guide.

Jesus has been around forever. He was with God when God created the world. Jesus is called “The Word” in the Bible because it was His voice that made Earth and sky and grass and trees and flowers. And even though He lived in Heaven, He came to Earth to live with us. He is God, but He became human, too, so that He could live like us, love us, and die for us. He loves us that much.

EXPLORE THE MEANING

Memory Verse

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father” (from John 1:14, NIV).

To help the children learn the Memory Verse, divide them into two groups and make it a cheer. Have the first group say, “The Word became flesh” and the second group say, “and made His dwelling among us.” Then have the first group say, “We have seen His glory” and the second group say, “the glory of the One and only Son.” Then together have them say, “who came from the Father.” Repeat the cheer a few times and then have each group say the other group’s parts of the verse. After a few more repeats, then cheer the entire verse all together.

Action Time

Reinforce that God loved us, His people, so He came to Earth to build a relationship with us and save the world. He came through Jesus. Sing the following to the tune of B-I-N-G-O. Sing it all together several times, changing your voice each time you repeat.

God made the world and came to Earth through His Son named Jesus!

J-E-S-U-S, J-E-S-U-S, J-E-S-U-S

Yes, Jesus is His name-o!

NEXT STEPS FOR APPLICATION

Knowing

Hidden in Plain Sight

Remind students that Jesus has always lived, even before the world was created! We could not see Him, but He was there the whole time. Read the directions. Have them create another picture with the white crayon and, but this time reveal it by coloring over the page with markers.

Growing

Light of the World

Remind preschoolers that like the stars light up the sky, Jesus came to take away the darkness in the world. Assist them with circling the objects that are a source of light.

ABC Connect: *This teaches shapes and assists with developing fine motor skills.*

Worship Time

Light a candle, some battery-operated tea lights, or hold some flashlights while the room is dark. Another option is to find a light that projects stars on the ceiling. Sing songs about light and Jesus being the Light. To end class, have children repeat after you, “Jesus, You are the Light of the World!”

Craft Kingdom®

Craft Kingdom® provides directions to complete a craft that reinforces the lesson. Play the *Sing-Along* CD as students work.

The Creating Word Becomes Flesh

Bible Background • JOHN 1:1–14

Printed Text • JOHN 1:1–14 | Devotional Reading • GENESIS 2:1–3

Aim for Change

By the end of this lesson, we will EXPLORE the meaning of the Word for the world, FIND true inspiration for life in Jesus, and LIVE in relationship with Creator God because of the “light” (grace and truth) that Jesus gives.

In Focus

Sister Nancy is a gifted Christian who serves on her church’s Board of Trustees. However, this was not always the case. She is a recovering alcoholic who used to verbally abuse her husband and children. After years of tolerating Nancy’s behavior, her husband had finally had enough. One weekend Nancy arrived home drunk as usual and found her husband, children, and all their possessions gone.

Nancy had been miserable without her family. One of her coworkers, Mitch, noticed her downward spiral and invited her to come to church with his family the next Sunday. After service, they all went out for lunch together. Mitch’s wife, Bea, asked Nancy what she thought about coming to church with them more often. Nancy said she probably wouldn’t be able to make it. Mitch and Bea pressed her, and Nancy confessed she didn’t feel comfortable going to church when her life was so messed up.

Her co-worker, Mitch, told her about the life-changing relationship he had with Jesus. Jesus was Mitch’s light and life, and from what Nancy could see, it was a glorious light and life. Then Bea asked Nancy if she would like to become a new person in Christ. Right there in the restaurant, Sister Nancy gave her life to Christ. She no longer drinks; she and her family are reunited and happy.

Sister Nancy did not just turn over a “new leaf.” She actually became a new person in Christ.

How would your life have been different if you didn’t have new life in Christ?

Keep in Mind

“All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”
(John 1:3, KJV)

Focal Verses

KJV **John 1:1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

The People, Places, and Times

Gnosticism. Many of the early Gentile believers had been exposed to varying strains of Gnosticism (an early heresy) and did not believe in the humanity of Jesus. As people from diverse backgrounds became part of the church, it became necessary for the apostles to correct errors in doctrine as well as encourage the existing believers. In the Gospel of John, the writer seems to be addressing a mixed audience of believers and unbelievers, Jews, and Greeks. The other Gospels had already been written and circulated. John used his writing not to simply tell stories about Jesus, but to explain Christian theology, especially the place of Christ Jesus.

Background

The author of the book of John identifies himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23; 19:26; 21:7, 20). Most scholars agree that the apostle John is the author of this

book. John was well-known in the early church and was intimately familiar with Jewish life. He would have been an eyewitness to many of the events recorded in the Gospel of John.

Dating of the Gospel of John is a matter of debate, with dates ranging from AD 50 to 95 or later. However, most scholars accept the later date of AD 95. Although we may not know the exact date of the writing, we do know that the first-century church was thriving. Even amid the threats of persecution and heresy, the church continued to grow.

John wrote to encourage the believers, most of whom were Jewish. He affirms their Jewishness as well as their faith in Jesus Christ, contrasting them with the Pharisees, who claimed to be the true or real Jews. The first 14 verses of the book of John summarize the whole Gospel. In these verses, we are introduced to Jesus—who He is, what He does, and the role He plays in the eternal plan of God for the world.

At-A-Glance

1. Jesus Is the Word (John 1:1–3)
2. Jesus Is the Light (vv. 4–9)
3. Jesus Reveals God's Character (vv. 10–14)

In Depth

1. Jesus Is the Word (John 1:1–3)

John introduces Jesus as the “Word.” The word used here is *logos*. The Greeks understood *logos* to mean not only the written or spoken word, but also the thought or reasoning in the mind. Jewish believers also used the word *logos* to refer to God and would have connected this concept to the wisdom personified in the Old Testament (see Proverbs 8). In tandem with wisdom was ability; in this case, God’s wisdom was used to create the universe. Jesus is that wisdom personified. Through Jesus, all things were created. To understand the creation, we must know the Creator. All of these concepts are bound up in the word *logos*.

As believers today, we may not realize all the nuances that the author intended. But what we must learn is clear: Jesus was, is, and always will be. He is God. He is the Creator and the Source of all life. The entirety of our Christian faith rests upon accepting these truths.

How have you seen loaded words used or abused in your life?

2. Jesus Is the Light (vv. 4–9)

John speaks of Jesus as “the light.” Jesus is Life itself, and that Life is our Light (v. 4). When we receive this life Jesus offers, His light replaces our spiritual darkness, and we become more like our Creator. However, many people live in deep darkness, which often connotes sin in the Bible. Even though Jesus is the light to dispel darkness, many people refuse to accept

the light of salvation. It’s the same today. People are so thoroughly entrenched in their sin and ignorance that they are blind to the light.

God can use anyone to pierce through the darkness. In Jesus’ time, God sent John the Baptist to bear witness to Jesus (vv. 6–7). John the Baptist did not want people to believe in him; he pointed the way to Jesus. Today, God uses His written Word and the power of the Holy Spirit to testify to the Light. He also uses believers. Every believer should view himself or herself as a testimony to the truth of salvation through Jesus Christ.

What has the Light of Christ made clear to you?

3. Jesus Reveals God's Character (vv. 10–14)

Although Jesus created the world (Colossians 1:16), the world did not recognize Him as Savior (John 1:10). Jesus came to the Jews first, but most of them rejected Him as their Messiah. His gift of salvation is offered freely to all. When we do receive Jesus, God gives us the right to become His children (v. 12), not physically, but spiritually. We are considered His heirs (Galatians 3:29), eligible to receive all of His promised blessings.

We cannot become God’s children by any means other than through salvation in Jesus Christ whom God sent to the earth to take on human flesh. He came to live with us, to feel our pain, to experience our joy, and to know our sorrow.

John’s Jewish readers would have understood the word “dwelt” to be connected to the word for “tabernacle,” where God’s presence dwelt. As modern-day believers, we can’t physically touch Jesus, yet we can see His glory. We can testify to the miracles He has worked in our lives and the lives of others. We can bear witness to the power of salvation.

Why did Jesus need to become a human to understand humanity?

Search the Scriptures

1. Who is the “Word” (John 1:1)?
2. What is the “light of men” (v. 4)?

Discuss the Meaning

Jesus came to give meaningful, real life to all who will receive Him. He is the living revelation of God, who expressed God's truth in a way we can understand. It is our task to share this light with others. What are effective ways to be witnesses to Jesus' light today?

Liberating Lesson

Jesus came into this world in the form of human flesh, yet those around Him did not acknowledge Him for who He is: God. They chose to continue living in darkness rather than receiving the Light. Things aren't so different in our world today. In modern society, many people have become accustomed to a fast-paced, hectic lifestyle. They are easily distracted, often bored, or generally dissatisfied with life.

Jesus came to free us from the rat race. His light reveals that we are in fact human beings, made in the glorious image of God. Jesus' light burns away our ignorance and reveals our worth. It is then up to us to embrace that worth instead of taking the darker, but easier, path.

Application for Activation

This week, ask God to reveal Himself to you in a new way. Spend time praying, reading the Word, and meditating on what you have read. Let God's Word permeate your spirit so that

you might know God more deeply. Rejoice in the fact that God has revealed Himself to you through Jesus, the Word made flesh, and that He will continue to do so.

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

Sources:

Keener, Craig S. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993. 261.

Tenney, Merrill C. *Expositor's Bible Commentary* (John and Acts). Electronic edition. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelien. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1992.

Vincent, Marvin R. *Vincent's Word Studies*, Vol. 2: The Writings of John. Electronic edition. Hiawatha, IA: Parsons Technology, 1998.

Say It Correctly

Incarnation. in-car-NA-shun.
Gnosticism. NOSS-tih-siz-um.

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

God Created the World
through Wisdom
(Proverbs 8:22–31)

TUESDAY

In Christ All Things Hold Together
(Colossians 1:13–17)

WEDNESDAY

Christ, the Head of All Things
(Colossians 1:18–22)

THURSDAY

God’s Well-Ordered Creation
(Psalm 104:1–15)

FRIDAY

Praise God for Creation
(Psalm 104:24–35)

SATURDAY

The Son Reflects God’s Glory
(Hebrews 1:1–4)

SUNDAY

The Word Became Flesh
(John 1:1–14)

Notes
