

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: Primaries will recognize that Jesus is the Word of God.

Attitude: Primaries will appreciate Jesus' sacrifice to bring us salvation.

Action: Primaries will demonstrate the life Jesus gives through battery-operated toys.

DEAR TEACHER

This lesson will help primaries to see that Jesus took on human form, becoming one of us to bring us salvation and give us life.

SUPPLY LIST

SECTION	MATERIALS
Focus Activity	“Costumes” of a baseball player, businessperson, and shepherd
Review	Battery-operated toys or devices and the required batteries for them
Worship Time	Memory Verse game pieces

OPEN THE LESSON

Focus Activity

Ask the primaries if they have ever worn a costume for a play or a party. Bring out the first costume—a sports team's baseball cap, jersey or jacket, and have one of the primaries put these on. Ask them if they know what “costume” the primary is wearing. Then, bring out the next costume—a suitcoat and tie, a briefcase, and a cellphone, and have one of the primaries put these on. Give the child the cellphone and briefcase props, if you have provided them. Ask if they know what “costume” the primary is wearing. Finally, bring out the next costume—a robe, a cloth head covering (from a pillowcase), and have one of the primaries put them on.

If you have provided a wooden staff prop, have the child hold it. Ask the class to identify the costume. After the primaries have put on all the costumes, point out that Jesus, Who was

God Himself, came from Heaven in the form of a human to bring us salvation.

PRESENT THE SCRIPTURES

Life Application Story

(Distribute the student folders.)

Before reading, ask the primaries if they have ever been in a reading circle at school. If possible, recall a time when you were a student and were part of a reading circle. Allow time for answers. Tell them they will read about a class that was not listening to the teacher.

While reading, pause after reading about the students not listening. Ask, “What should Mrs. Smith do to help them listen?” Allow a few responses. Continue reading.

After reading, explain that Mrs. Smith sat with her students to be “down where they are” in hopes they would listen better. Remind the primaries that, in the same way, Jesus left Heaven

to live with the people on earth so they would listen to Him and be saved.

Bible Story

In the Beginning

The Bible Story in the student folders is designed for primary 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.

Before anything else existed, Jesus Christ—who is also called “the Word”—was with God in Heaven. Since Jesus is God Himself, everything was created by Him, and eternal life can only be found in Him. This message of life through Jesus is like a light that helps people see God’s truth in a very dark world. God sent John the Baptist to prepare the world for Jesus’ coming. Jesus left Heaven and came to earth to live as a man with Earth’s people. He told them how to have eternal life by receiving Him and being born again. Many people didn’t realize Jesus was God and didn’t listen to Him, even though He had made the world. But those people who did believe in Jesus became God’s children. John the disciple wrote about this and witnessed that Jesus Christ came.

EXPLORE THE MEANING

Review

Choose a child and give them a toy (remote control car, noise-making animal, etc.) or another battery-operated device (a flashlight, a clock, etc.) without the batteries and tell them to operate it. When nothing happens, help put in batteries and tell the child to try again. When the toy or device operates or “comes to life,” explain that batteries empower it to work.

Repeat with other toys or devices until all primaries have had a chance to see the difference batteries make. The batteries make the objects operate properly or do what they should do. After the activity, explain that when a person receives Jesus’ gift of salvation, he or she “comes to life” spiritually. They are able to do what God wants them to do.

Memory Verse

“We have seen ... the glory of the one and only Son” (from John 1:14, NIV).

Lead the primaries in reciting the Memory Verse several times together. Separate them into two teams. Have each word of the Memory Verse written on a separate piece of paper for each team. Then, mix up the Memory Verse words of each set and give a set to each team. Tell them that when you say “Go!” they need to put their team’s words in correct order, as quickly as possible. The first team to put the words from the verse in correct order wins. If the children require more engagement, have them complete the fun craft making microlight lanterns in the *Teaching Success Kit*.

NEXT STEPS FOR APPLICATION

Be Smart

Bright Message

Read the directions. Children should use the pictures to fill in the letters of the missing words to reveal John’s message about Jesus. **Answers:** Jesus’ light shines in darkness.

Good Attitude

One of Us

Read the directions. Children should color the boxes containing the words as directed. (If necessary, show the children that the color words are in the parentheses below the exercise words.) They should then write the words in the boxes they colored red on the lines provided to reveal a special message. **Answer:** Jesus became one of us.

Worship Time

Have the primaries stand in a circle. Sing songs about Jesus’ love. Close in prayer, thanking God that Jesus came to earth as one of us to bring us life.

Craft Kingdom®

Craft Kingdom® provides directions to make 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
