



FACILITATOR'S GUIDE—YOUTH

Year 1—The God of Life: A Story of God's Redeeming Shalom

Module 4—Coming Alive by Being Human: Jesus Stories on What it Means to Be Human and Fully Alive

Lesson 5—John 3:1-21

ENCOUNTER 1—Community Discussion

Read John 3:1-21 together out loud as a group. Encourage each person to journal through the passage using these questions. After allowing sufficient time for reflection, invite the group to share their thoughts.

*How is this God's story?
How is this others' story?*

*How is this my story?
How is this the world's story?*

ENCOUNTER 2—Community Discussion

(Read the reflection included with this lesson. The questions are designed for your group to enter into a meaningful dialog about the Word. The bulleted teaching points are taken from the reflection and correspond to the questions.)

GOD'S STORY—Being born again begins with God's life-giving presence in the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ.

If someone asked you what it means to be born again, what would you say?

- Another way of phrasing Nicodemus' question is like this: how can I make myself into something new? What do I have to do in order to be born again?
- To be born again is a not new religious program with step-by-step instructions for how to get in on God's way of life. Being born again is a movement of God's Spirit blowing fresh life into our very being in order that we may see and know what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.
- God's mission is to bring about new life for creation in and through Jesus Christ, and as we'll consider, we play a role in that.
- God acts first, and our lives are a response to the goodness of God in Jesus Christ, who remakes us into the people God created us to be, agents of life and light in the world.

OUR STORY—Being a Christian involves a process of God's Spirit bringing our belief and action into alignment.

What are the ways you know that your beliefs and actions match up?

- We are transformed by God's Spirit to participate in God's mission of restoring the world to its intended wholeness.
- We see in Jesus that we are forgiven, ushered into new life and that this is God's plan for our salvation. Understanding this through God's Spirit draws us to want to live differently, to put our belief into action.
- Our belief in Jesus and our actions do not always align well.
- God's Spirit is still at work, drawing us into the light which exposes the way in which our belief in Jesus and the response of conforming our lives to his do not always match up.
- To be people born again into the light of God's grace is to become people who do not shy away from the way in which God's Spirit works to bring us more and more into conformity with Christ's way of life.

OTHERS' STORY—As others resist the light of life in Jesus Christ, we are called to bear witness to God's life-giving mission among them.

In what ways do others see the work of God's Spirit at work in your community?

- Living as people of light in and through Jesus means that we proclaim the good news that God so loves the world with our lives. We live openly before others, even as they attempt to hide in their darkness.
- The community of God's people drawn together by God's Spirit to participate in the newness of life offered in Jesus Christ is to live among those in darkness in the light of Jesus.
- The community is to compel people to step out of their sin and into the light of Jesus, and thus to discover, through the work of the Holy Spirit, the fullness of life.

THE WORLD'S STORY—God's mission to bring about new life is for the whole world and not just our corner of it.

Talk about ways in which you could expand your perspective on what God is doing to bring the world into the fullness of life in Jesus.

- We have a tendency to identify the work of God's Spirit bringing about new birth with our own tribe. We may make certain exceptions, but we often think it is up to us to identify who has and has not been born again.
- We are reminded that this gospel is for all, that God's life in Jesus Christ is boundary-breaking and that God's Spirit is at work as God sees fit, drawing together a people who will live in God's light from all sorts of different backgrounds.
- Because the work of new birth is first God's story, we can't control it. And, God is intent on bringing the wholeness of life not just to us, but to the entire world. "For God so loved the world . . ."

PRAYER

(Lead your group in corporate prayer.)

Pray Psalm 51:5-17 together.

WEEKLY PRACTICE

(Read the weekly practice out loud, and challenge your group to practice *missio* beyond today.)

From Darkness to Light:

We are told that to be born anew into life with Jesus is to become people of God's light in the world. Yet, our lives can still be marked by darkness. This week, at least one day, find a dark place in your home and sit for 10 minutes in darkness and silence. Let yourself be present to the environment. Reflect on this experience:

How does the darkness affect you? What do you feel?

How do you hear God's voice in the darkness, calling you to draw closer to him?

Then, having brought a flashlight with you, turn on the light and pray this prayer, and reflect with these questions:

- "Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world, and my world. Bring me to life in your light."
- How did the introduction of light to your environment change your experience? Mood?
- Where do you sense God is calling you more deeply into life with him in his mission?

BECOMING MY STORY

(Encourage the group to spend time this week in God's Word, allowing it to penetrate their heart and life.)

Passages for further reflection this week:

• *Numbers 21:4-9*

• *John 7:32-52*

• *Ephesians 5:1-21*

• *1 John 1:5-2:2*

Spend time this week reading and journaling through the above Scriptures. Reflect on how the passage is God's story, my story, others' story, and the world's story. In the context of John 3:1-21, consider the following questions:

How are these Scripture passages related to the message in John 3:1-21?

How do these Scriptures tell us about the story of God being continued from John 3:1-21?

What is God saying to you through these passages?

Consider other passages that you might know related to John 3:1-21 and read them this week, journaling as you go.