

Lesson #4-25**Challenges of Following Jesus**

John 18:12-27

**Key Verse:**

Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.
John 18:27

The Point:

Even for the most faithful disciple, it is not always easy to follow Jesus.

Unit Theme (February 14 - March 4):

Following Jesus

Gather 'Round the Campfire

Lots of things happen around a campfire.

You will need:

- † Tissue paper in various fire colors (red, yellow, orange)
- † Flashlight
- † Optional: sticks or wooden dowel rods, large rocks or stuffed grocery bag “rocks” to create fire ring

Preparation:

1. Choose a space where participants can gather to hear a story. Build a campfire by turning on the flashlight. Create the “flames” of the fire by crumpling up pieces of tissue paper and laying them on top of the flashlight. Build up the rest of the campfire if desired.

Instructions:

1. If you think your participants are able, build the campfire together.
2. Invite the group to sit in a circle around the campfire. **Have you ever been by a campfire before? What are some things you might do at a campfire?** [*Cook food, sing songs, tell stories, make s'mores.*]
3. [Optional] Ask them to act out their ideas.
4. **We can do a lot of fun things around a campfire. One of the things we can do around a campfire is tell stories. Today we are going to hear a story about Jesus and Peter, and part of this story happens around a campfire. In a few minutes we will tell our Bible story around this campfire.**



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Nicodemus Visits Jesus

Experience the story of Nicodemus.

SAY	DO
One night when it was dark...	Turn out the lights or have students close their eyes.
...a man named Nicodemus came to Jesus and said, "I know God sent you because you can do lots of wonderful things." Jesus said, "To see God's kingdom, you have to be born again."	Ask students how well they can see in the dark or with their eyes closed. Not well! And Nicodemus did not understand well, either.
Nicodemus whispered, "How can I be born again? I am not a baby. I am old."	Whisper together: "How can I be born again?"
Jesus told him that he does not have to be born from his mother again, but by the work of the Holy Spirit. He told him: "The wind blows where it wants to blow, just like the Holy Spirit."	Give the students each a straw and let them blow through it.
Nicodemus still did not understand what Jesus was talking about.	Re-emphasize the darkness in the room.
So Jesus told Nicodemus the sweetest news of all: God loves the whole world so much that God sent Jesus. Because of that, everyone who believes in and trusts Jesus will live with God forever.	Pass out a sugar cube or small candy to each student and turn on the light. Tell students that turning on the light means that now Nicodemus could understand. When they finish, have them say, "God loves us so much that he sent Jesus!"

After telling the story one time through, try it by providing the sensory experience first and asking the students questions:

DO	ASK
Turn out the lights or ask the students to close their eyes.	When did Nicodemus come to Jesus? [<i>At night.</i>] Did he really understand who Jesus was? [<i>No.</i>]
Whisper.	What did Nicodemus ask Jesus? [<i>How can I be born again?</i>] Now did Nicodemus understand? [<i>No.</i>] He thought he was supposed to be like a baby and crawl back inside his mom, but Jesus meant being born again by the Holy Spirit.
Blow through the straws again.	What blows where it wants to blow? [<i>The wind and the Holy Spirit.</i>]
Show a sugar cube or piece of candy.	What was the sweet news that Jesus told Nicodemus? [<i>God loves the world so much that God sent Jesus for us.</i>]