

**The Case of the Surprising, Second Birthday**

John 3

**Story-telling Tips**

Ahead of time:

1. Read the Bible verses and story. Pray!
2. Choose story action cues and prepare storyboard figures/Story Scenes, if using. (In Visual Aids book)
3. Practice telling story with the storyboard figures/Story Scenes, timing your presentation. Shorten, if necessary.

During your presentation:

1. Maintain as much eye contact as possible as you tell the story.
2. Put up storyboard figures/add story action cues/hold up Story Scenes as you tell the story. Allow the children to help you put them on the board, if desired.
3. Include the children in your story with a few questions about what they think will happen or words/concepts that might be new to them.
4. Watch the kids for signs that their attention span has been reached. Shorten, if necessary.

**INTRODUCTION/ LISTENING ASSIGNMENTS**

**"Our story is called: The Case of the Surprising, Second Birthday. Here is your listening assignment."** Read from Detective Dan's Listening Assignment signs, but questions are summarized below:

**Detective Dan's Lesson #1 Listening Assignment:**

I need to know:

1. What special kind of second birthday did Jesus promised to all who trust in him as her Savior?
2. To Who did Jesus tell about this birthday? What did they find so surprising about it?

**Detective Dan's Lesson #2 Listening Assignment:****Our Bible Verse is Titus 3:5:**

"... He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit."

I need to know:

1. What kind of special, second birthday does God give to each of His people?
2. Who does God send to work in their hearts and give them this special, second birthday?

**Detective Dan's Lesson #3 Listening Assignment:**I found six clues, but two of them are **NOT** in the story.

They are: a farmer, a pizza, a leaf, an important city person, a heart, and the moon.

*Hold each of them up for the children to see as you identify them.*

I need to know:

1. Which four belong in the story and which two don't?
2. Who did the Holy Spirit work inside of as they listened to Jesus preach? What special birthday did God give them when he worked?

**Read the assignment questions, THEN SAY,**

"Ok, Deep Down Detectives! Put on your best listening ears and see if you can hear the answers to Detective Dan's questions. When I finish telling the story, we will see if we can answer all the questions."

*Read the Bible Truth story, answer questions, present the gospel and lead in prayer.*

*Answers to questions; the gospel; and, ACTS prayer are included with the story text.*

**The Case of the Surprising, Second Birthday***John 3*

*Story with lines separating paragraphs (text in bold, optional interaction cues in italics) Numbers correspond to storyboard pictures and placement upon the storyboard. Always feel free to use less pictures, if it's best for your kids. Simply black out the numbers next to pictures you do not plan to use. All pictures are found in the Visual Aids book. Put BG (background) pictures on storyboard ahead of time. SB pictures (listed below in story text) are added to board as you tell the story. These numbers are also found on the back of each picture. Tip: Stack pictures in numerical order before telling story for easy use. Use sticky-back velcro to attach pictures to storyboard felt. Use sticky-tac putty to stick a picture on top of another picture. OR, if using the Story Scenes to tell the story, disregard the storyboard picture references listed below.*

**(SB1) Jesus and His close friends, the disciples, went out to the country to the people there. Jesus taught them all about God and did amazing things by God's power.**

There were plain, country people, like (SB2) shepherds, fishermen and farmers. There were (SB3) fathers, mothers and children. There were sick people there. Important country people, like teachers of God's Word and rich people were there, too. And they all came to Jesus to hear Him teach about God and do amazing things.

And amazed they were, by what Jesus said and did! "This Jesus is not like any other teacher we've ever heard! What amazing things He says about God! What amazing things He does! (SB4) He even heals sick people with just His words! Let's go and hear more. Let's go and see more," they exclaimed.

Soon, (SB5) great big crowds of country people followed Jesus around, listening to Him teach about God and watching the amazing things Jesus did with God's great power.

But you know, Jesus wasn't the only one doing amazing things by God's great power. God, the Holy Spirit, was doing some amazing things, too.

For as some of those country people listened to Jesus talk about God and watched Him do amazing things by God's great power, (SB6A,6B) God, the Holy Spirit, was at work in their hearts, changing them.

*What kind of changes do you think the Holy Spirit was doing in them?*

**(SB7A,7B) The Holy Spirit was giving them faith in Jesus, so that they would want to turn away from disobeying God and trust in Jesus as their Savior. Yes, by His Holy Spirit, God was giving these people the best gift of all: the gift of being saved from the punishment they deserved from God for their sins.**

This wonderful gift meant that God would forgive their sins and make them His dearly-loved people. They would get to know and love God in their hearts their whole lives. And one day, when they died, they would get to live with Him in heaven forever and ever. What a wonderful thing the Holy Spirit was doing as those country people listened to Jesus!

But God didn't just care about country people. He cared about city people, too. So, (SB8) Jesus and His disciples went walk, walk, walking along the road, out of the country, and up, up, up the mountain to the great city of Jerusalem. What do you think Jesus did in Jerusalem?

*Can you guess?*

Jesus taught them about God and He did amazing things by God's great power, just like He had done in the country for the country people.

All sorts of city people came to Jesus. (SB9) Plain ole city people, like the people who sold food and cloth in the markets. Sick people came to see Him. (SB10) Important, city people, like the Pharisees (the teachers of God's Word) Important, city people, like (SB11) Even city people who had done lots of bad things came to Jesus.

*Story with lines separating paragraphs (text in bold, optional interaction cues in italics)*

**And amazed they were, by what Jesus said and did! "This Jesus is not like any other teacher we've ever heard! What amazing things He says about God! What amazing things He does! (SB12) He even heals sick people with just His words! Let's go and hear more. Let's go and see more," they exclaimed. And soon, (SB13) great big crowds of city people followed Jesus around, listening to Him teach about God and watching the amazing things Jesus did with God's great power.**

**But you know, Jesus wasn't the only one doing amazing things by God's great power in the big city of Jerusalem. Can you guess who else was at work?**

*Can you guess who?*

**(SB14) It was God, the Holy Spirit. He had done amazing things in the country people; and now, He was doing amazing things in the city people, too. For as some of those city people listened to Jesus teach about God and they watched Him do amazing things by God's great power, God, the Holy Spirit, was at work in their hearts, changing them. (SB15) He was giving them faith in Jesus that they would want to turn away from disobeying God and trust in Jesus as their Savior.**

**Yes, the Holy Spirit was giving them faith in Jesus, so that they would want to turn away from disobeying God and trust in Jesus as their Savior. Yes, by His Holy Spirit, God was giving these people the best gift of all: the gift of being saved from the punishment they deserved from God for their sins.**

**This wonderful gift meant that God would forgive their sins and make them His dearly-loved people. They would get to know and love God in their hearts their whole lives. And one day, when they died, they would get to live with Him in heaven forever and ever. What a wonderful thing the Holy Spirit was doing as those city people listened to Jesus!**

**Now among the city people who came to Jesus, there was (SB16) a man named Nicodemus. Nicodemus was NOT a plain ole city person. He was a very, VERY important city person. Why, he was one of the most important people in the city and in the country! What made Nicodemus so important? It was what he taught.**

*Can you guess who Nicodemus taught about that would make him so important?*

**Nicodemus taught the people about God. He was one of the best of all the teachers of God's Word. He was one of men who told everyone else just exactly how they should please God by obeying God's good laws written down in the Bible.**

**Nicodemus had spent years and years learning God's Word and teaching it to everyone else. But when Jesus came to Jerusalem, Nicodemus just shut his mouth and listened and watched. He was amazed at what Jesus taught about God. He was amazed at the mighty things Jesus did by God's power. When Nicodemus was around Jesus, he could see that Jesus was not just another teacher like himself or any of the other teachers. Jesus was a teacher especially sent by God.**

**Nicodemus didn't feel like such a great teacher. He felt like a learner. "No one could do the things Jesus does, if God had not sent him. (SB17) But there's so much more about Him and what He teaches that I don't understand. I have to find out more," Nicodemus thought.**

*Story with lines separating paragraphs (text in bold, optional interaction cues in italics)*

**But perhaps what amazed Nicodemus the most were the changes he saw in the city people who came to Jesus—especially the city people who had done really bad things. For years, Nicodemus had taught these people to work hard to obey all of God’s good laws. These good works were how they could please God, he taught them. But never in all his years did Nicodemus EVER see changes in people like the changes he saw when Jesus taught! (SB18) Jesus was teaching and people were turning away from the bad things they had been doing! Jesus was teaching and people were putting their trust in God! Jesus was teaching and people were CHANGING!**

**What was going on? What was changing these people? Nicodemus wanted to know. He decided he would go to find Jesus and talk to Him, all by himself. (SB19) So one night, Nicodemus made his way down the dark, dark streets of that big city of Jerusalem to the place where (SB20, SB21) Jesus stayed.**

**That night as they talked, Jesus answered Nicodemus’ questions. (SB22) “Trying hard to keep all of God’s good rules is not how people become God’s people,” Jesus told Nicodemus. “All people are sinners who have disobeyed God. They all deserve God’s punishment, not His friendship. No one can ever obey God’s laws well enough to please God,” Jesus told Nicodemus. “No, the only way you can become God’s people is when God’s Holy Spirit works in your heart. Only the Holy Spirit can come in and make it brand new,” Jesus said.**

**“(SB23) Yes, it’s God’s Holy Spirit who comes in and cleans it of sin, just like water cleans away dirt. God does not hold your sins against you. They are paid for through Me, God’s Son. The Holy Spirit helps people repent—that is, He helps them to not want to disobey God anymore. He helps people love God and trust in Me as their Savior,” Jesus told Nicodemus. “And when the Holy Spirit works, He makes such a big change in your heart that it’s like becoming a whole new person—like being born again,” Jesus explained.**

**Nicodemus listened to Jesus’ words and this time he wasn’t just amazed. He was confused! What do you think confused him?**

*Can you guess?*

**“Born again? How can this be, Jesus? I’m a full-grown man. Do I have to be born like a baby from a mother again? I don’t understand,” Nicodemus told Jesus.**

**“Nicodemus, you are one of the big and best teachers of God’s Word, yet you don’t understand?” Jesus replied. “But this is why God has sent His Son—that’s ME!-- from heaven. Yes, God loved the world so much that He sent Me to be the Savior, so that whoever believes in Me won’t face God’s punishment for their sins,” Jesus said. “Instead, they will be forgiven and they will become God’s people forever,” He explained.**

**Nicodemus had much to think about that night as he went home. Jesus had taught him so much about God. New things he had never understood before. Jesus is God’s Son, the Savior. The Holy Spirit works inside people to help them believe and make them brand-new people—God’s people.**

**Did the Holy Spirit work in Nicodemus’ heart as he thought about these things? It seems that He did. (SB24) For who was it who helped take down Jesus’ body from the cross when He died for the sins of God’s people? It was Nicodemus! And who was it who took Jesus’ body and buried it in a tomb. It was Nicodemus! Some say that some of Jesus’ enemies made Nicodemus stop being one of the important teachers because he believed in Jesus. The Bible doesn’t tell us that part of Nicodemus’ story.**

**But something I DO know for sure, is that we can ask God’s Holy Spirit to work in our hearts right NOW! He can help us to turn away from disobeying God and to trust in Jesus as our own Savior. Yes, even to you and me, God offers to give us the wonderful free gift of salvation--of life with God forever, through Jesus. Let’s ask God to work in our hearts! Let’s ask Him to give us this gift!**

**Cracking the Case:** (story wrap-up for Listening Assignments)

It's time to see how we did with our Listening Assignment.

**Detective Dan's Lesson 1 Listening Assignment:**

**1. What special kind of second birthday did Jesus promised to all who trust in him as their Savior?** To be a changed person, forgiving of their sins and one of God's dearly-loved people forever.

**2. To whom did Jesus tell about this birthday? What did he find so surprising about it?** To Nicodemus. He didn't understand that the Holy Spirit is the one who works inside us and changes our hearts. He is the one who helps us repent and believe so we can become God's people.

**For You and Me:**

That special second birthday wasn't just for important people like Nicodemus. It's for anyone who turns away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior. Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your heart and help you. He loves to answer these prayers!

**Detective Dan's Lesson 2 Listening Assignment:  
Our Bible Verse is Titus 3:5:**

"... He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit."

**I need to find out:**

**1. What kind of special, second birthday does God give to each of His people?** To be made a new person inside their heart. God forgives their sins and helps them trust in Jesus as their Savior.

**2. Who does God send to work in their hearts and give them this special, second birthday?** The Holy Spirit.

**For You and Me:**

That second that special second birthday that God gave to his people long ago is something he still gives to people even today. How? When? When they turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior. Ask the Holy Spirit to come and work in your heart and help you do this. He loves to answer this prayer!

**Detective Dan's Lesson 3 Listening Assignment:**

Our six clues were: a farmer, a pizza, a leaf, an important city person, a heart, and the moon.

**1. Which four belong in our story?**

The farmer, the important city person, the heart and the moon belong.

**2. Who did the Holy Spirit work inside of as they listened to Jesus preach? What special birthday did God give them when he worked?** He worked inside of many country and city people. The Holy Spirit helped them turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior. He changed their hearts so they would become God's people. This is the special, second birth of salvation through Jesus.

**For You and Me:**

The Holy Spirit work in the hearts of many as they listen to Jesus preach from God's Word long ago. And He still works in hearts today as we listen to God's Word. Ask Him to work in your heart. Ask Him to help you to turn away from your sins and trust in Jesus as your Savior.

**The Gospel** (story wrap-up if NOT using Listening Assignments)**Our Bible Truth is:****How Can We Be Saved?****It Is God's Free Gift...****When the Holy Spirit Works in Our Hearts!**

How can we be saved? It is God's free gift... when the Holy Spirit works in our hearts. All of us are sinners. We would rather do things our own ways rather than obey God. We have hearts that are dead and empty of love for Him and His good ways! We would never choose to love God on our own. But guess what God has does for His people? He treats them so much better than they deserve! He sends His Holy Spirit to work in their hearts. When they hear God's Word, He helps them know they are sinners. He helps them want to stop disobeying God and trust in Jesus as their Savior. He makes their hearts alive to God and gives them a special closeness with Him. Now they want to obey Him and love Him. We can ask God to send the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts, too. He can help us to say "sorry" to God and to trust in Jesus as our Savior. Then we can have special closeness with God forever!

*Close in prayer.*

**Closing ACTS Prayer**

- A** God, we praise You for being the Changer of the hearts of sinful people, like us.
- C** God, we confess that we are all sinners. We have hard hearts that are slow to believe, love and obey You. We need Jesus to save us!
- T** Thank You for sending Your Holy Spirit to work inside us that we can know You, love You and live for You. You give us what we need but could never get on our own.
- S** God, send the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts. Give us faith as we hear Your Word, the Bible. Help us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Make us new creations! Give us the new birth! We want to know You and live for You!

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

***Go to Lesson Plan, p.9 for the script to the rest of the lesson.***

