

TEXT John 3:1-7,16,17

OBJECTIVE The students will realize that they must have Jesus living in their clean hearts in order to make Heaven their home. They will be able to explain how one can be born again.

MEMORY VERSE Create in me a clean heart, O God. — Psalm 51:10

A Clean Heart

MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

CREATE — Strike fists together, one on top of the other.
IN ME — Point to self.

A CLEAN — Hold left palm facing up. Pass right palm over left palm as though brushing off dirt.

HEART — With index fingers draw a heart shape over your own heart.

O GOD — Point up.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

This week's memory verse is illustrated with two children holding a heart. (See pattern at the end of this lesson.) Cut the four pieces apart on the heavy black lines and display them as your students learn their verse.

BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction: Bring two glasses to class, one smudged and dirty, and one clean. Ask your students which one they would like to put away in the dish cupboard. What needs to be done to the dirty glass to make it ready to go into the cupboard? Compare these with a clean and a sin-spotted heart. The sin-spotted heart needs to be cleansed before it is ready to go to Heaven.

Progression of events:

1. Nicodemus came to Jesus saying that Jesus was a teacher come from God.
2. Jesus told him he must be born again.
3. Nicodemus questioned how this could be possible.
4. Jesus explained the difference between being born of the flesh and of the Spirit.

Climax: When we are born again our hearts are washed clean. Use the white page of the Wordless Book. Talk about the good feeling (clean feeling) we have when we have asked Jesus to take away our sins.

Conclusion: We must have the sin taken out of our hearts in order to be ready for Heaven.

Response: Your students will be able to explain what it means to be born again and how this new birth occurs.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart" (Psalm 24:3,4). In order to enter Heaven it is imperative that our hearts are purified by Jesus' Blood (I John 1:7). Without experiencing the cleansing of His Blood the heart of man is "desperately wicked" (Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18), but through the provision of the sacrifice of His Son on the cross, He can wash "us from our sins in his own blood" (Revelation 1:5).

SPECIAL NOTE FOR THIS LESSON

Refer to Lesson 1d for additional ideas.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Bring a suitcase filled with some things you would take on a trip. Talk to the class about the trip you are taking, the places you are going, what you will see, etc. Show them the things in your suitcase, stating that you will need them. We are all going on a trip, hopefully to Heaven. We all have sinned (show picture of Adam, Eve, and the serpent). What are some sins? (Show black heart with sins written on it.) We all need to prepare: We come to Sunday school and learn how Jesus died for our sins. (Show Bible, lesson paper, and picture of Jesus on the cross.) We learn that we can pray and ask Jesus to forgive us. (Show picture of someone who is praying.) We ask Jesus to come into our hearts and He takes out all the sin. (Show white heart with picture of Jesus.)

Use a red magnet to pick up black steel pins from a heart-shaped sheet of white paper.

Use the same catalog and magazine people that you used for the activity described in lesson 18a. This week, carefully peel off the old backing behind the hinged door and replace it with a paper on which you have drawn a clean heart. Talk about how every person can experience a change which takes away the sin-spotted heart and puts in a clean heart.

Put some water in a clear glass. Add a tiny bit of food coloring (not black — use green or blue). Then add some strong bleach which makes the water clear again. (Be sure to hold jar in front of a white background so students will see the contrast. Practice this at home before you try it for your students!)

For each child, cut out two five-inch hearts, one black and one white, from construction paper. On the black hearts, use a white pencil and write the words, “Born into this world.” On the white hearts, write the words, “Born again!” Glue each black heart back-to-back with a white heart. Let the children use these as visual reminders that being born again is just as important as being born into this world.

Make a copy of the Letter From Nicodemus for each child in your class (see Patterns). Tell them to fill in the missing words in the letter using the words in the box at the bottom of the page. Talk about what Nicodemus learned when he visited Jesus that night.

Review the memory verse with your class. Give each student a copy of the verse hearts (see Patterns). Have them circle the right word in each heart so they will correctly finish the memory verse. Go through the verse together and talk about what each of the correctly chosen words means.

QUESTIONS

What did Nicodemus hope to learn from Jesus?

What does being born again mean?

Describe how sweet and precious a newborn baby is. Talk about when a person is born again, how fresh and new he feels with all his sins forgiven.

Why is it necessary to be born again?

What should we say when we pray to Jesus and ask to be born again?

Do we need to be sorry for any sin in our lives? Why?

Can just a little bit of sin be in a clean heart? Why or why not?

How did Nicodemus know he needed to be born again? How do we know that we need to be born again?

A person with a clean heart is a special person. Tell how that person acts. (Bring out the positives from the Ten Commandments.)

Tell some ways we can keep our hearts clean.

Will there be any sin in Heaven? Why or why not?

PRESCHOOL SUGGESTIONS

Make two heart-shaped books out of white paper. One cover is pure white with pictures inside showing children doing good things like sharing, obeying, etc. The second

book has smudges on it and has pictures inside showing children doing things that cause smudges — lying, fighting, etc. As an alternative, instead of books you could use heart-shaped boxes and put the pictures inside.

Prepare some paper hearts; crumpled, torn, etc. Try to repair them with band-aids, string, Scotch tape, or whatever. Show that you can't mend a broken, sinful heart, but God can. That is why He sent Jesus to this world.

Make a heart from white paper, then one from cellophane the same size to fit over the white one. Talk about different sins and put black spots on the cellophane with a felt pen. Then the child repents and God forgives and forgets the sins. Wad up the cellophane and toss over shoulder to illustrate that God forgets. The white heart remains.

Make a Happy Heart book for each child (see Patterns). Cut out the two pages. Lay the sad-face page on top of the happy-face page. Staple them together along the left margin. Talk to the children about how sad you would feel if Jesus was not in your heart. People are always happier if they love Jesus and have a clean, white heart.

REVIEW IDEAS

Hit the Bull's Eye by going to the Cross of Calvary. Divide the class or department into two teams. Prepare 15 to 25 questions. Using cardboard, make a target with six rings. Color each circle a different color using the colors of the Wordless Book. In the center make Jesus' cross. Make two flags from triangles of paper (using two colors not used in Wordless Book) and glue each around a straight pin (see Patterns). Ask one team a question. If answered correctly move their pin with their flag color onto the outer circle. If they miss, they don't move and the other team gets a chance. The first team to reach the Cross wins.

This lesson lends itself well to an overhead presentation. Begin with a heart with several “sin spots” drawn on it. (Be sure you use a non-permanent pen for the sin spots — the heart should be drawn with permanent ink.) Explain that everyone is born with sin in his heart, and everyone does naughty things. Show simple line-drawings illustrating sins which a primary child would identify with; for instance, disobeying, lying, being unkind. After each naughty behavior, put the heart back on the overhead and add another sin spot. Talk about how sad sin makes you feel. Show a sad face and draw in some tears as you talk about repentance. Then use a damp cloth to wipe the sin spots out of the heart. End by showing a happy face to represent how good a clean heart feels.

Use a hot-air popcorn popper and pop some corn to illustrate what a complete change takes place when a person is born again. Show the children the kernels. They are hard and certainly wouldn't be much fun to eat. But when they are popped, they are white and soft and good to eat. They don't look anything like the kernel of hard corn. God makes a complete change in us too, when we

are born again — old things pass away and all things become new.

On a large sheet of posterboard, copy the What Does It Mean...? review quiz (see Patterns). Read each of the questions and have the children help you find the answers. Stop after each answer and talk about it to make sure the children really understand. You can even give them their own copies, after the review, to take home so

they can talk about it with their families. Note: This would also do well as an overhead review.

COORDINATING SONGS

"In My Heart to Stay" — Salvation Songs No. 4

"I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" — Salvation Songs No. 4

"Into My Heart" — Salvation Songs No. 1

"Is My Name Written There?" — Salvation Songs No. 3

MEMORY VERSE SONG



MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

