



**theme:** Salvation #2 – Out of the Dark, Into the Light  
**materials:** Bibles, blindfolds, keys

## welcome

Play the Key Game. Have one volunteer sit on the ground in the middle of the circle, with everyone else sitting around them, somewhat spread out. The person in the middle is blindfolded, and a set of keys is placed just behind them. The object of the game is for one person from the outside circle to sneak in and get the keys and get back to their chair without the person in the middle hearing them and pointing at them. So the leader picks a person to try it, and the person in the middle has three tries to point at the person who is sneaking in. If the person gets the keys back to their chair without getting caught, they go in the middle. Or just ask this question: What is the most “impossible” or unlikely thing you have ever seen or heard of?

## interact

Give blindfolds to everyone, and turn off all the lights where you are meeting. Read out John 3:19-21. What parts of us are still in the dark? What are we trying to hide from God, from others, from ourselves? What are we afraid will be exposed? Ask these questions and allow each person to ask themselves and God these questions as well.

Do we want to live in the light of truth? What would that look like in your life? Take off your blindfolds, and ask God together to help you want to escape the darkness and to live in the light of truth. How difficult is it to “live in the light” and not try to hide our evil deeds?

## read

Read John 3:1-21

Why do you think Nicodemus the Pharisee came to talk to Jesus at night? What do you think he wants from Jesus?

Have you heard the phrase “born again” before? What does that phrase mean to you?

How does Jesus explain the concept of being “born again”? Why does it confuse Nicodemus?

What do your friends think of the ideas of “salvation” or being “born again”? Are there any misconceptions?

Where do these misconceptions come from?

What is meant by verses 14-15, where it talks about Moses and the snake?

John 3:16 is probably the best known Bible verse in the world. As a result, our familiarity with it can make us lose its meaning. So what does this verse mean to you?

What does it mean to “believe” in God’s Son? Is it enough just to accept with our minds that Jesus is who the Bible says He is?

How does belief give us eternal life?

What difference should belief in Jesus make to our lives here and now?

How should this belief in Jesus affect the world around us? Jesus did say He came to save the world. How is that being accomplished?



## think

If we live by the light of truth, then it will be seen plainly that what we do is done through us by God. Commit to one another to hold each other accountable for temptations, sins, and darkness in our lives, so that we can be regularly helping each other to live in the light.

## live & pray

Set up a regular prayer time with one or more of your cell members this week to confess sins and be accountable.

## useful resources

Book: *Life Together*, by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. There is a powerful chapter on confession.  
Website: <http://www.renovare.org/> - A resource for spiritual renewal and small groups.  
Song: *Asleep In The Light*, by Keith Green. An oldie, but a powerful goodie.

## leader's guide

We don't know exactly why Nicodemus came at night, but it is interesting that it is specifically mentioned. One suggestion is that Nicodemus wanted to have the kind of conversation with Jesus that might get him in trouble with the authorities or his fellow Pharisees if he had it out in the open. He seems to want to know if Jesus really has come from God, and what this might mean. It is particularly interesting that they meet in the dark, as later Jesus talks about loving the darkness instead of the light, and that evil deeds must be brought out into the light.

Jesus' explanation of "born again" means being born not of the flesh, but of the Spirit. So we are born once of the flesh, but we need to be born a second time into the Kingdom of God, by the Spirit of God. This is a profound spiritual reality, but in our time it has often been reduced to a simple formula involving a one-time decision during an altar call. This is not to disparage altar calls, but to suggest that there may be more to being born again (it implies an utterly new type of life).

Verses 14-15 are making reference to the story in Numbers 21:4-9. You should definitely read out this story to give some background and understanding. Jesus must be lifted up in the cross, and we must look to him (an act of faith) in order to be healed from our rebellion.

Belief in God's Son does mean believing that Jesus is the Son of God, that He came in the flesh, and that He was crucified and resurrected for our sins. But it also means an entire life commitment, wholesale allegiance to the Kingdom of God as opposed to the Kingdom of this world. Eternal life means membership in the Kingdom of God, which requires belief in the King and what he has done for us.

Jesus brought about salvation for the world by His death and resurrection, but He wants to continue enacting His salvation in the world through His people, His Body on earth. That is why He wants us to live in the light of truth, so that all will see that God is working through us.