

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 3:5-7:**

"...He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of 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) To the country, to the cities, went Jesus and His disciples. And everywhere they went, people came. Jesus taught them about God and did amazing things by God's power.

What kind of country people came to Jesus? Well, there were (SB2) plain, country people like shepherds, fishermen, and farmers. And there were (SB3) important country people, like the teachers of God's Word and government workers. Poor people, rich people. Good people, bad people. Sick people, healthy people. Fathers, mothers, and children. They all came to Jesus to hear Him teach about God and do amazing things.

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

Soon, (SB5) big crowds of country people followed Jesus, listening to Him teach about God and watching the amazing things He did by God's 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 and watched the amazing things He did, (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 helped them turn away from their sins 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 by faith in Jesus.

This wonderful gift meant God forgave their sins and made them His people. They could know and love God in their hearts. And one day, when they died, they would go live with Him, face-to-face forever. 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 left the country and went to the great city of Jerusalem. And what did Jesus do when He went there?

Can you guess?

(SB9) Jesus taught them about God and did amazing things by God's great power, just like He had in the country.

All sorts of city people came to Jesus. (SB10) Plain, city people, like the people who sold things in the markets, came. (SB11) Important city people, like the Pharisees (the teachers of God's Word) and government workers, came, too. Poor people, rich people. Good people, (SB12) bad people. Sick people, healthy people. Fathers, mothers, and children. They all came to Jesus to hear Him teach about God and do amazing things.

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

And amazed they certainly were, by what they heard and saw. "This Jesus is not like any other teacher. What amazing things He says about God. What amazing things He does. (SB13) He even heals sick people with just His words. Let's go hear more. Let's go see more," they exclaimed. (SB14) Soon, big crowds of city people followed Jesus, listening to Him teach about God and watching the amazing things He did by God's 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?

(SB15) 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 talk and watched the amazing things He did, God, the Holy Spirit, worked in their hearts, changing them. (SB16) He helped them turn away from their sins 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 by faith in Jesus.

This wonderful gift meant God forgave their sins and made them His people. They could know and love God in their hearts. And one day, when they died, they would go live with Him, face-to-face forever. 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, was (SB17) a man named Nicodemus. Nicodemus was NOT a plain, city person. He was one of the most important people in both city AND country!

Can you guess what Nicodemus did that would have made him so important?

Nicodemus was one of the head teachers of God's Word. He had spent years and years learning God's Word, then years and years teaching it to others. People looked to Nicodemus to teach them how to live to please God and obey His laws.

But when Jesus came to Jerusalem, Nicodemus just shut his mouth and listened and watched. He could see that Jesus was a teacher unlike any other. A teacher especially sent by God. When Nicodemus was around Jesus, he didn't feel like a teacher anymore. He felt like a learner. "(SB18) No one could do the things Jesus does if God had not sent Him," Nicodemus thought.

What amazed Nicodemus the most was what was happening in the city people who came to Jesus. Nicodemus had taught the people to work hard to obey God's good laws. These good works were how to please God, he taught them. People listened to Nicodemus when he taught, but they rarely ever changed.

(SB19) But when Jesus taught, people were turning away from the bad things they had been doing! They were putting their trust in God! Jesus was teaching, and people were CHANGING!

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

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. (SB20) So one night, Nicodemus made his way down the dark streets of Jerusalem to the place where (SB21, SB22) Jesus stayed.

That night as they talked, Jesus answered Nicodemus' questions. Nicodemus was a good Pharisee. He taught the people that only by keeping all of God's good laws could they be God's people and be a part of God's kingdom. (SB23) But Nicodemus had it wrong. Now, Jesus would teach the teacher.

"No one can become one of God's people and part of His kingdom unless they are born again," Jesus told him.

Nicodemus listened to Jesus' words. This time, he wasn't just amazed. He was confused!

Can you guess what confused him?

"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.

"This is a new birth in your heart, not your body. Only God's Holy Spirit working in your heart can make you one of God's people," Jesus explained. "(SB24) The Holy Spirit cleans a heart of sin, just like water cleans away dirt. He helps people repent. That is, He helps them not want to disobey God anymore. He helps them 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 you become a new person on the inside, like being born again," Jesus said.

"How can this be?" Nicodemus asked, still trying to understand.

"Nicodemus, you are one of the best teachers of God's Word, yet you don't understand?" Jesus replied. "This why God has sent Me, His Son, from heaven. Yes, God loved the world so much that He sent Me to be the Savior. Whoever believes in Me won't be punished by God for their sins. They will have eternal life," Jesus said. "I will be lifted up on the cross and will pay for their sins, Myself. They will be God's people. They will live with God in His Kingdom forever," Jesus 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. What big ideas!

Did the Holy Spirit work in Nicodemus' heart as he thought about these things? It seems that He did. (SB25) 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, Jesus' enemies made Nicodemus stop being a head teacher of God's Word 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, God offers to give even you and me the wonderful, free gift of salvation through Jesus. This is how we can become God's people and enjoy Him forever. Ask God to work in your heart. He loves to answer this prayer!

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 promise to all who trust in him as their Savior? To be a changed person, forgiven of their sins, and one of God's 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 trusts 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, ESV:**

"...He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of 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 special, second birthday that God gave to His people long ago is something He still gives to people today. How? 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. We deserve God's punishment, but He is full of mercy! He sent His Son, Jesus, to be our Savior. Jesus lived a perfect life. Then on the cross, He suffered and died, giving His perfect life as the full payment for the sins of God's people. On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead. He had really beaten sin and death for them! We can become God's people, too, when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. God's Holy Spirit can work in our hearts, helping us to do this. And if we do, the Holy Spirit will go on working in our hearts the rest of our lives, helping us know God, love Him, and live for Him. Then one day, we will go to live with God forever. Ask Him to help you! He loves to do this!

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 in the hearts of people like us, so 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.