

Lesson 3 / March 21, 2010

# Life Changing

for use as

STEP 1 **Lesson 3  
Focus:**

Jesus offers new life.

**Lesson 3  
Bible Basis:**

John 3:1-8, 16-21, 36

Students will think about a life-changing event in their own life as well as God's life-changing work in them.

**Materials:**

- paper
- pencils or pens

Does one game have the power to change someone's life?

**D**oes one game have the power to change someone's life? This was the question posed by ESPN reporters in regard to the Olympic match up between the United States and Canada's hockey duel for gold. They surmised that the 1980 "Miracle on Ice" USA hockey team would likely answer yes to this question, as would the players on the Canadian Summit Series team, which beat the Russians in 1972. On February 28, 2010 at the Vancouver Olympics, this hockey game proved to be equally historic and life changing for both teams.

**▶ Did any of you watch the gold medal hockey game between Canada and the US? What happened?**

At 7:40 of overtime Team Canada's Sidney Crosby slipped the puck past Team USA's goalie, Ryan Miller, to win Gold for Canada. "This is a dream come true," said Crosby. It was a lot closer than we would have liked it, but it is an unbelievable feeling."

"It's not quite what we wanted, but we gained a lot of respect," said Miller, the best goaltender throughout the Olympics. "We came here kind of as an afterthought to some people," he said. "We've started a new trend at USA Hockey."

Can a game really change a person's life? It depends. If the game is of the magnitude of the Olympics, then "yes." A middle school basketball game... probably not. Yet there are many instances that are life changing for people. Some life changes are negative: a careless word that ruins a friendship that has been important to you since you were little; a skipped curfew or rule infraction that leads to a parent losing his or her trust in you; a wrongly spoken word that becomes the rumor texted across school, etc. Positive examples might include: the birth of a sibling, switching schools and making new friends, getting a good grade in a course that has been difficult in the past, remedying a relationship that had pre-

Lesson 3  
**Memory Verse**

“I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”

—John 3:3

viously been broken, accomplishing a sports or academic goal, etc. Keep in mind that a life-changing event is anything that changes your life drastically (either negatively or positively)!

Hand out paper and pencils or pens to each student. Encourage students to write a short summary about a life-changing event in their lives. Explain that this account cannot be their salvation experience (they will write about that experience in Step 4). Give sufficient time for this to be completed. Invite volunteers to share their accounts out loud. If time permits, share your own personal experience with the students. (Have students keep their papers and pencils or pens for use later on.)

- ▶ **What do you think defines a “life-changing experience”? Explain.** *(Students may describe an event or circumstance that had significance for them, something that made way for drastic changes in the way they were living their life, or an experience that has impacted their future.)*
- ▶ **Why do you think life-changing experiences can be positive or negative?** *(Answers will vary depending on students’ experiences. Listen and respond along the lines of “God is always in control even when it is hard to see it sometimes” if applicable. Use this discussion to allow students to see God’s care and concern for them in all situations.)*
- ▶ **Why do you think God allows life-changing events to happen?** *(Invite students to share their answers.)*

All humans will have life-changing experiences. No one is immune to hardship or change. The most important question a person will ever have to answer is one that will be life changing and eternity changing. We’ll look more into this topic in today’s study by examining the questions of a man named Nicodemus.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your *Middle School Teacher’s Guide*; your Step 4 appears below.)

Sources:

<http://sports.espn.go.com/olympics/winter/2010/icehockey/news/story?id=4953006>

<http://olympicsfanhouse.com/2010/02/28/team-canada-defeats-team-usa-wins-gold-medal-in-mens-hockey/>

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# Life Changing

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STEP 4 

## Lesson 3 Focus:

Jesus offers new life.

## Lesson 3 Bible Basis:

John 3:1-8, 16-21, 36

## Lesson 3 Memory Verse





"I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

—John 3:3

**N**icodemus didn't get it. Nicodemus asked Jesus about His miracles and implied that Jesus was from God but the whole salvation thing confused him. Jesus tried to give it to him straight but Nicodemus could only see things literally (being born physically) not spiritually (being born again). As a teacher of the Law, Nicodemus couldn't understand Jesus' simplistic way of salvation through rebirth. The idea of a new life in Jesus was something Nicodemus wasn't sure about. He wanted to earn his way through works...not through faith in Jesus.

John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

John 3:3 says, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

-  **According to these verses how can a person receive eternal life?**  
(Through belief in Jesus Christ, God's one and only Son.)
-  **What do some religions say a person must do to get to heaven?**  
(Answers will vary. Encourage respectful responses while keeping the discussion tuned to the truths of John 3:16.)
-  **There is much negativity in the world with regard to the Christian's belief that salvation can only come through faith in Jesus Christ. Why do you think this is?** (People don't want to say there is only one way to heaven. Some people see Christianity as intolerant for saying other religions won't lead people to heaven, etc.)
-  **Why is it important to stand firm for your faith?**

We don't know if Nicodemus left that evening understanding the spiritual truths Jesus was trying to show him but we do know that his experience with Jesus could have been life changing. Nicodemus could no longer only live by works. Jesus explained to him the way for salvation.

Turn the paper over that you used in Step 1 and use the back of it to record your own salvation experience. (Allow students a few minutes to complete this and provide more paper if necessary.) Invite volunteers to read their life-changing conversion story. If there are students who have not accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior encourage them to write on their paper some of their reasons for not yet being ready to accept Him. Remind these students that there are no second

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chances into heaven. We must be born again. Our eternal life depends on this simple but life-changing truth.

Close by sharing with students that they don't need to leave with their salvation unresolved like Nicodemus may have done. The answers to salvation and eternal life are simple and trustworthy!

Be available afterwards for students who may have personal questions about their faith. If you know of any students who have not yet accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior take extra time this week to pray for them by name.

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