



WORSHIP & DRAMA

Leader Guide

Overview

DAY	TITLE & SCRIPTURE	STORY SUMMARY	SPARK FOR CHANGE
1	How Is This Possible? <i>Nicodemus</i> John 3:1-17	A Jewish leader named Nicodemus came to Jesus at night to ask him about the amazing signs Jesus was doing. Jesus talked to Nicodemus about being born of the Spirit. Jesus compared this new birth to the blowing of the wind and told Nicodemus about God's great love for the world, believing in the Son of man, and having eternal life. Those who do what is true come into God's light.	Changemakers ask questions.
2	Who Will Fix It? <i>Five Friends</i> Mark 2:1-12	When Jesus was preaching, some people carried a paralyzed man to see him. When they could not get through the crowd, they dug through the roof and lowered the man into the house. Jesus saw their faith and forgave the man's sins. The scribes present cried, "Blasphemy!" Jesus asked which was easier—to forgive or to heal. Jesus healed the paralyzed man, revealing his authority to forgive as well. The people were amazed and glorified God.	Changemakers work together to solve problems.
3	Will There Be Enough? <i>Early Church</i> Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37	The early church demonstrated commitment and unity as they shared a common life. After the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, an ever-increasing group of people listened to the apostles' preaching and ate and prayed together. People who owned possessions sold what they had and gave the money to the apostles, who then gave the money to those in need. Everyone in the community had enough. Many who saw this joined the community of Jesus' followers.	Changemakers respond to the needs of others.
4	What Are We Building? <i>Peter and Cornelius</i> Acts 10	In Caesarea, a Roman believer named Cornelius received a vision to send for Peter in Joppa. Peter received a vision of his own in which he heard a voice telling him to eat without worrying about what was allowed by Jewish law. When Peter went to Cornelius, Peter realized the meaning of his vision was that the message of Jesus was for more than the Jews. He shared the good news about Jesus to both Jews and Gentiles.	Changemakers build bridges.
5	Can You Imagine? <i>A New World</i> Isaiah 65:17-25	Isaiah describes a vision of a new heaven and a new earth. God will rejoice in the people. There will be no more weeping. All people will live long, healthy lives. People will build houses and plant crops and have what they need. God will be close by, answering before people call. People will enjoy the fruits of their labor; predators and prey will eat together.	Changemakers create a new kind of world.

BIBLE MEMORY

Early Childhood:

You are the light of the world.
—Matthew 5:14a (NRSV)

Grades K-5:

You are the light of the world. Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

—Matthew 5:14a,16 (NRSV)

Get Connected!



Pinterest: *Growing Up Catholic Board:*
Changemakers Lab:

<https://pinterest.com/growingupcatholic/changemakers-lab/>



CHANGEMAKERS LAB

Worship & Drama Leader Guide

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WELCOME TO CHANGEMAKERS LAB

Changemakers Lab is an interactive Vacation Bible School where children learn that everyone can make a difference in the world! The five Bible stories in this curriculum explore examples of people who experienced and brought about change in the world around them. Children will meet Nicodemus, five friends on their way to meet Jesus, people from the early church, Peter and Cornelius, and the prophet Isaiah. These people provide a model for asking hard questions, working together to solve problems, caring for all people, reaching across differences, and imagining a new world.

IMAGINE (35 min)	INVESTIGATE (90 min + snack)	TRANSFORM (10 min)
<p>Children start in small groups and then gather for worship.</p> <p>Spark Lab (10 min) (small groups)</p> <p>Changemakers Lab (25 min) (large group, songs, offering, drama, questions, prayer)</p>	<p>Small groups rotate between three activity stations and have a snack.</p> <p>Bible Lab (30 min) (Bible study)</p> <p>STEAM Lab (30 min) (science, technology, engineering, art, and math activities)</p> <p>Action Lab (30 min) (active games)</p> <p>Snack Time (15 min)</p>	<p>The large group gathers for worship and dismissal.</p> <p>Changemakers Lab (10 min) (large group, songs, sharing)</p> <p>Dismissal</p>

Items you will need:

- *Worship & Drama Leader Guide*
- Electronic files
- Worship & Drama Area Poster

The **electronic files** include a folder of teaching aids and materials related to worship and drama. Each leader (Worship Coordinator, Music Leader, Drama Director, Technology Coordinator) should be given access to the relevant materials. The folder includes the following:

- Five Worship PowerPoints, one per day (includes song lyrics)
- Song Lyrics PowerPoint
- Seven songs in MP3 format
- Lead sheets for each song
- Seven song motion videos
- Changemakers Chant video
- Song motions (Songbook)
- “Spark Lab” Instructions
- Drama Scripts
- Offering Display
- Spark Signs for small groups
- Nametags

Media Connections are included in each guide and posted on the **Growing Up Catholic Pinterest** page for ease of use: <https://www.pinterest.com/growingupcatholic/changemakers-lab/>. The items are organized by day. Additional songs, decorating ideas, snack ideas, and offering-related videos are also included.

Welcome to Worship!

Each day of *Changemakers Lab* has three main sections: **IMAGINE** (opening worship), **INVESTIGATE** (activity stations), and **TRANSFORM** (closing worship). The provided times for each worship session are approximate. They can easily be shortened or lengthened depending on your schedule. The specific plans for IMAGINE and TRANSFORM are included in this guide.

IMAGINE

(opening worship, 35 minutes)

Spark Lab (10 minutes): Children gather in small groups with a group leader and participate in activities designed to nurture relationships and introduce the theme of the day. There are “Spark Lab” Instructions on pages 49–50 in this guide and in the electronic files that summarize the activities for the week. Print one for each leader.

Changemakers Lab (25 minutes): Small groups come together for worship. Children sing songs, give an offering, see a dramatization of the Bible story, have a “Changemaker Chat,” and close in prayer. The electronic files have a Worship PowerPoint for each day that includes the song lyrics, offering information, Bible memory verse, “Changemaker Chat” questions, and the blessing. Customize the worship plan to fit your needs.

INVESTIGATE

(activity stations, 90 minutes)

Small groups of children rotate through three activity stations: **Bible Lab** (Bible activities), **Action Lab** (active games), and **STEAM Lab** (science, technology, engineering, art, and math activities). Each station is 30 minutes. A snack can be incorporated into this time period if desired.

TRANSFORM

(closing worship, 10 minutes)

Small groups return to the worship area with their group leaders to sing and pray. They will receive a Changemaker Challenge Card from the *Changemakers Lab Books* (pages 19–22) to take home. These activities will help families extend the learning from VBS. Each day closes with a blessing.

Worship Leaders

The worship plan in this guide could be implemented by one leader, or the tasks could be divided in the following way:

- **Worship Coordinator:** Oversee all worship and drama-related leaders. Oversee Small Group Leaders, welcome the children, lead prayers and give instructions each day.
- **Song Leader:** Choose and lead songs or coordinate a music team.
- **Drama Director:** Coordinate the dramas, find actors, design the set, gather props, and arrange rehearsals.
- **Technology Coordinator:** Set up the laptop, projector, and screen. Show the Worship PowerPoint for each day. Play MP3 versions of songs as needed. Troubleshoot technology-related problems that arise.

Small Group Leaders

The children will gather and then move throughout the day to the different stations in small groups. Leaders are needed for each group of children. Group size will vary depending on the total number of children and volunteers you have. Leaders will implement the Spark Lab activities, which are designed to build relationships and connect to the theme of the day. Those instructions are included in the electronic files. Then they will guide children to their activity stations and back to the worship area for closing worship. Small Group Leaders will distribute the Changemaker Challenge Cards at the end of the time.

Setting Up the Worship Space

Refer to the *Director Guide* and the “Changemakers Lab” board on the *Growing Up Catholic* Pinterest page for ideas about decorating and setting up for the drama. Use the area poster designed for the worship space.

Designate an area for each small group of children so they know where to go at arrival time. If possible, use tables that are decorated to look like science labs. Otherwise, designate pews or blankets on the floor with a Spark Sign from the electronic files. Each group will need a different color Spark Sign as well as the daily “Spark Lab” Instructions (pages 49–50 in this guide or the electronic files), nametags (electronic files), and the specified materials for each day’s Spark Lab activity.

A stage or other raised area is best for presenting dramas. Information about staging and props is on pages 31–32 in this guide.

A laptop, projector, and screen are needed for the Worship PowerPoint for each day. You will also need a way to play the chosen songs if you don’t have live music. There is a lead sheet (electronic files) for every song if you wish to have someone lead the songs with a guitar or piano. Song motion videos are also available (electronic files) and could be inserted in the Worship PowerPoint or just used for reference by the worship leader.

Worship Preparation

IMAGINE (opening worship) and **TRANSFORM** (closing worship) have a variety of repeated elements. Prepare for the week by completing the tasks on the list below. Many of these can be done by volunteers.

- Make Spark Signs for each small group (electronic files). Use the signs to mark the meeting space for each group.
- Set up the small group tables to look like science labs.
- Print nametags (electronic files) for each child. If possible, print them on card stock and insert them in nametag holders so they can be reused from day to day.
- Set up an offering display using ideas from the Offering Display (electronic files). Count and record the amount of money collected.
- Choose and learn songs (electronic files).
- Practice words and motions for the songs and the readings.
- Rehearse the Bible story drama for each day.

General Supplies

- Laptop, projector, and screen
- Music player
- Glass beakers or other containers to collect the offering
- Offering display (ideas in electronic files)
- Nametags (electronic files)
- Spark Signs (electronic files)

Music

The theme song for VBS is titled “We Are Changemakers.” It is included in the electronic files along with six other songs for you to choose from. In addition to the MP3 versions of the songs, there are **song motion videos, lead sheets, and written song motions** for each song (see the Songbook).

The lyrics are included in the Worship PowerPoint for each day but also as a separate Song Lyrics PowerPoint in case you want to use alternate or additional songs on any given day. Delete the slides from the Worship PowerPoint that you won’t be using. Copy and paste the slides from the Song Lyrics PowerPoint into the Worship PowerPoint in the appropriate place. **Note: If you choose different songs, the slide numbers in the session plan will no longer be correct. You will need to update them to reflect your changes.** Additional song ideas are posted on the *Growing Up Catholic* Pinterest page. Look for the “Changemakers Lab” board. Song motion videos could also be inserted into the Worship PowerPoint.

Some songs are used every day:

- The theme song “We Are Changemakers” is played to cue small groups to gather for worship and then later sung together.
- “One for You and One for Me” is the offering song.
- “Sing Amen!” is the sending song used during **TRANSFORM** (closing worship).

The remaining songs can be used in whatever way works best for your group.

- “Standin’ On the Rock”
- “Jesus Come Soon”
- “Send Out Your Spirit”
- “Our God is Here”

Please note that music in the electronic files cannot be distributed for children to take home! If you wish to share the music with children and their families, purchase the *Changemakers Lab* MP3 download cards or CDs, which are sold separately.

Offering

Check with the Director to learn about the chosen offering project. The goal is to support a local organization that is making positive changes in your community. If possible, invite someone from the organization to come speak to the group about their work during opening worship. Alternatively, they may be willing to provide photos or videos that you can share, or such content might already be on their website or YouTube. Photos and videos from the organization could be inserted into the Worship PowerPoint each day.

Bible Memory

The Bible memory passage is Jesus’ words from Matthew 5:14a and 16:

“**You are the light of the world.**
Let your light shine before others,
so that they may see your good works
and give glory to your Father in heaven.”
—Matthew 5:14a,16 (NRSV)

Children will practice saying the Bible passage during opening worship. Project the words from the Worship PowerPoint each day. During their time in the Bible Lab, the children will work on learning the passage again in other interactive ways.

Day 1

How Is This Possible?

Scripture Text

John 3:1-17

Spark for Change

Changemakers ask questions.

Story Summary

A Jewish leader named Nicodemus came to Jesus at night to ask him about the amazing signs Jesus was doing. Jesus talked to Nicodemus about being born of the Spirit. Jesus compared this new birth to the blowing of the wind and told Nicodemus about God's great love for the world, believing in the Son of Man, and having eternal life. Those who do what is true come into God's light.

Bible Essay

The Bible is regarded by many as a book of answers, but it might more accurately be a book of questions. Throughout scripture, faithful people like Moses, Gideon, Jeremiah, and Mary all ask questions of God in the face of startling circumstances. Questions were also a key part of Jesus' ministry. Jesus is asked something like 183 questions in the four Gospels—most of which he does not directly answer. Instead, Jesus frequently responded to questions by asking *more* questions. He asks more than 300 unique questions throughout Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John!¹

Questions—not always with answers—are welcome, essential, necessary, and vital to follow Jesus. And though Jesus doesn't answer all our questions, he never ignores, belittles, or dismisses an honest query. We see this in Jesus' nighttime encounter with Nicodemus. Nicodemus, like Jesus, was regarded as an answer man—he was a religious scholar and leader. He was the expert; if anyone should have answers about what God wanted and what God was up to in the world, it's a Pharisee like Nicodemus!

Yet when Jesus started doing things no one had ever seen (in John 2, we see how Jesus turned water in wine and cleared the temple of moneychangers), Nicodemus finds himself bursting with questions. And so he visits Jesus at night. Perhaps he doesn't want to be seen. Perhaps he feels embarrassed that a scholar like him needs to ask questions of a small-town preacher.

Still, Nicodemus feels confident Jesus is going to give him answers: "Rabbi," he begins, "we know that you are a teacher who has come from God" (John 3:2). But what Jesus has to say about wind, birth, new life, God's kingdom, water, and the Spirit shows Nicodemus that learning at the feet of Jesus means not receiving answers, but more questions.

Just as the specific questions and answers of this extended dialogue befuddled Nicodemus, they might feel confusing to us, and especially to children. As you read this story with your group, you don't need to dwell on or delve into the exact theological content of each question (feel free to breathe a sigh of relief!). Instead, this story offers a great introduction to some very good news: the One who came to show us God's great love for the whole world (John 3:16-17) doesn't judge our questions, but welcomes them with open arms, day or night. After all, Jesus changed the world by asking lots of questions—that's a great starting point for our changemaking journeys too!

"An authentic faith – which is never comfortable – or completely personal – always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better than we found it."

—Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, #183

¹ Martin B. Copenhaver, *Jesus Is the Question* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2014), xviii.

Day 1 At-a-Glance

Advance Preparation

- Read John 3:1–17 and the Bible essay for Day 1 on page 6 in this guide.
- Read the opening and closing worship plans. Make modifications as needed.
- Customize the Day 1 Worship PowerPoint (electronic files) to reflect your plans.
- Hang up the Worship & Drama Area Poster.
- Communicate with Small Group Leaders, the Worship and Drama Leaders, the Music Leader, the Technology Coordinator, and drama participants about their roles and tasks.

	SUPPLIES	TO DO
IMAGINE <i>Opening Worship</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bible• Worship & Drama Area Poster• Nametags (template in the electronic files)• “Spark Lab” Instructions (pp. 49–50 or in the electronic files)• Spark Signs (electronic files)• Day 1 Worship PowerPoint (electronic files)• Offering Display (electronic files)• Selected songs (electronic files)• Changemakers Chant video (electronic files)• Laptop, projector, and screen• Music player• Containers to collect offering• Drama props• Bell	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make a Spark Sign for each small group.• Make nametags for each child and leader.• Designate a space for each small group. Decorate it to look like a science lab. Set out the “Spark Lab” Instructions (pages 49–50).• Learn songs and the Changemakers Chant.• Set up for and rehearse the drama.
TRANSFORM <i>Closing Worship</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Day 1 Worship PowerPoint• Selected songs (electronic files)• Laptop, projector, and screen• MP3 player• Day 1 Changemaker Challenge Cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remove the Day 1 Changemaker Challenge Card from each <i>Changemakers Lab Book</i>.

Imagine

Spark Lab

Be sure each Small Group Leader has the “Spark Lab” Instructions for today (from pages 49–50 in this guide or the electronic files). As children arrive, they can join their groups, put on a nametag, and participate in the questions game described in the “Spark Lab” Instructions.

Changemakers Lab

When you are ready to begin large group worship, turn on the theme song “We Are Changemakers” from the electronic files. This will serve as a cue for small groups to prepare for worship.

(Slides 1–2) Project the Day 1 Worship PowerPoint from the electronic files, clicking through the slides as indicated. **Note:** *If you choose different songs than the suggested ones, the slide numbers will need to be adjusted to reflect your changes.*

Changemakers Chant

(Slide 3) Welcome everyone to the first day of Vacation Bible School then say the chant together. This chant will be repeated every day. There is a demonstration video in the electronic files.

Come on, friends, (gesture “come”)
it’s time to change: (clap on each syllable of “time to change”)
change our hearts, (point to your chest)
our lives, (extend your arms, palms up)
the world (form a circle with your arms)
with the love, love, love (cross your arms over your chest and pat three times, once on each “love”) of
God. (Point up.)

We can use our hands, hands, hands. (Clap on each word “hands.”)
We can use our feet, feet, feet. (Stomp on each word “feet.”)
We can use our words, words, words. (Point to your mouth.)
We can use our minds, minds, minds. (Tap your head on each word “minds.”)
Hurry up, now is the time! (Run in place.)

Songs

(Slides 4–15) Sing “We Are Changemakers” and “Send Out Your Spirit” (electronic files) or another song of your choice. Motions are in the Songbook.

Offering

(Slide 16) Introduce the organization you will be donating to this week. If possible, show a video or pictures to help the children see where they are located, what they do, and who they serve. Many organizations provide pictures or videos on their websites or on YouTube that you can show. See Offering Display in the electronic files for suggestions about an offering display.

Explain how you will collect the offering. This might involve having children come forward to place their offering in a glass beaker or other science-related container. Or children could pass a basket from group to group.

(Slides 17–22) Sing “One for You and One for Me” (electronic files) during the offering.

Words to Remember

(Slide 23) Tell children that this week they will learn some important words from Jesus. Read the Bible memory verse from the slide.

“You are the light of the world.
Let your light shine before others,
so that they may see your good works
and give glory to your Father in heaven.”
—Matthew 5:14a,16 (NRSV)

Say the verse several times as a call and response. Say one line at a time and have children say it back to you. Vary the volume of your voice to keep the children engaged.

The Story

(Slide 24) Introduce the Bible story drama. Say:

The Bible is full of stories of changemakers. These are people who made a difference in the world around them through their kindness, love, courage, and creativity. But they didn’t just change the world. They also allowed God to change their own hearts and lives. Let’s go visit the Changemakers Lab and see what our favorite scientist is up to now! You never know who might stop by to visit the lab!

Present the Day 1 drama titled “How Is This Possible?” (pages 33–35 in this guide or in the electronic files).

Changemakers Chat

(Slide 25) Give several minutes for the small groups to discuss one or both of the “Changemakers Chat” questions on the slide.

- What question would you ask Jesus?
- How can you show love to a friend or neighbor?

Ring a bell to get everyone’s attention again. Pray:

Thank you, God, that when we don’t understand something, we can bring our questions to you. You always listen and help us learn new things. Help us to be changemakers who make this world a more beautiful, peaceful place and share your love with others. Amen.

Dismissal

(Slide 26) Explain the schedule for the day and describe the activities that the children will be doing today. Remind children to stay with their Small Group Leader(s) throughout the day and let them know they will have a chance to visit every activity station.

Dismiss the children by groups to go to the INVESTIGATE stations: Bible Lab, STEAM Lab, and Action Lab.

Transform

(Slide 27) Gather for closing worship. Play the song “We Are Changemakers” (electronic files) as children are returning to the worship space. Have a volunteer hand each Small Group Leader a set of Day 1 Changemaker Challenge Cards, one per child, from the *Changemakers Lab Books*. The children can gather near their Spark Sign.

(Slides 28–36) Sing “Standin’ on the Rock” and “Sing Amen!” using motions (Songbook).

(Slide 37) Ask Small Group Leaders to distribute the Day 1 Changemaker Challenge Cards from the *Changemakers Lab Book*. Highlight the content on the card. Invite children to complete the activities at home with their families. Encourage a brief time of sharing within the small groups. What did the children learn today? How can each child be a changemaker at home or in the neighborhood?

(Slide 38) Read the closing affirmation together several times from the slide. Read one line and have the children repeat it back to you, mirroring your tone of voice and volume.

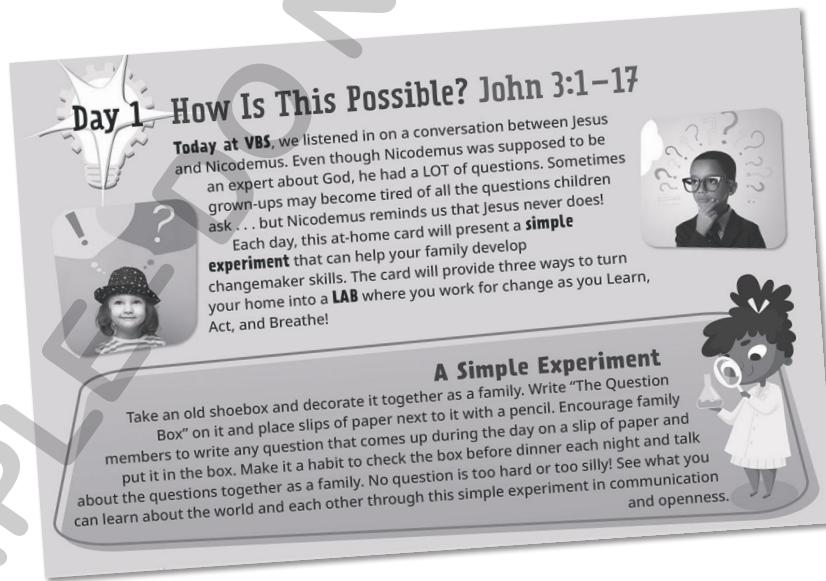
I am a changemaker!

I am loved by God.

I can share God’s love with everyone I meet.

I can change the world.

Remind children to remove their nametags and leave them beside their group’s Spark Sign so the nametags can be reused tomorrow.



Welcome to the Dramas!

The Bible story dramas are the heart of each day's large group worship experience. The drama scripts are included in the Worship & Drama folder in the electronic files for ease of adaptation, emailing, and printing. There is a Drama board on the VBS Pinterest page that has ideas for creating sets and props.

Introduction

Each drama is set in a science lab. The Scientist is working on various ways to change the world. A Bible-times person comes to visit the Scientist each day. The person explains a personal change she or he went through. The Scientist puts each person in a "change machine" to try to understand what brought about the change. Each time, the person comes out looking the same. The changes happened on the inside or to the people around them.

Characters

The Scientist is the main character every day. Have the same person play the Scientist throughout VBS. If you need to use multiple people, you may want to add some dialogue to explain why it's a different person. For instance, the new person could be a scientist from another lab, or the regular Scientist could have gone out to test one of the creations and left a friend in charge.

A Bible-times visitor comes to see the Scientist every day:

- Day 1: Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader
- Day 2: Candace, a young woman who helps carry her friend to Jesus
- Day 3: Lydia, a wealthy woman from the early church
- Day 4: Peter, a Jewish man
- Day 5: Anna, an older woman

On Day 5, the majority of the skit is centered around Anna. However, the previous characters (Nicodemus, Candace, Lydia, and Peter) make an appearance at the end to summarize the events of the week. If they aren't available, simplify the end of the skit so the Scientist just recaps the events of the week for Anna.

Costumes

The Scientist can dress in a lab coat with safety goggles. This character can be as silly and eccentric as desired, perhaps wearing a playful wig.

The Bible characters can dress in costumes that suit the time period. Search online for "Bible-times costumes DIY" to find inspiration for simple costumes. Some ideas are posted on the Change-makers Lab Pinterest page.

Props

Each drama includes a list of props and the set design description on page 32 lists other needed items. Modify the items as needed according to your available space and resources.

A "change machine" is an essential prop. It should have a door on the front and be large enough for a person to stand inside. A refrigerator box could work, or it could be assembled using a variety of boxes attached to a frame created from PVC pipes. Ideas are included on Pinterest. Add lights to it that can flash or turn on and off when using the machine. Play time machine sound effects while the person is inside the machine. Several sound effect videos from YouTube are already pinned on the Pinterest board.

Rehearsals

Plan and schedule rehearsals (as many as you can) and have them take place a week or two before VBS. Distribute the scripts in advance so that participants are familiar with their parts. Make it clear whether lines should be memorized or if it is okay to read from the script.

At the first rehearsal, read through each drama without moving around to allow actors to become familiar with the stories. For subsequent rehearsals, read the script and incorporate suggested movements as well as alternative or additional movements that work for your space. Rehearse each drama several times.

Feel free to make adjustments that will add meaning or that express the personality of the people who are filling the roles. Adequate preparation and rehearsals will help the stories come to life, showing that you value the stories you are presenting to the children.

It will be important to practice using lights and sound effects with the “change machine,” as well as the fan and lamps for Day 1.

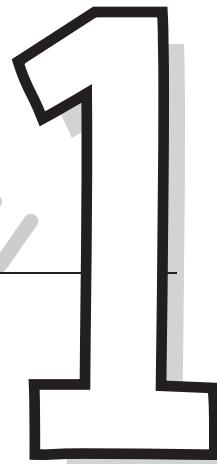
Set Design

Ideally, present dramas on a stage, chancel, or raised area in a sanctuary. If presented at floor level, you may need to make some adjustments to stage instructions so children can see what is happening.

Set up the stage as a science lab with a table that has science equipment on it, such as beakers, microscopes, a balance or scale, test tubes, periodic table chart, and so on. Each day the scientist will pretend to conduct a different experiment. The “change machine” needs to be near the lab table. The Drama and Decorations Pinterest boards give ideas for how to decorate the table and space.

Day 1 Drama

How Is This Possible?



Scripture Text

John 3:1-17

Summary

The Scientist is busily working on an experiment. Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader, visits the science lab to talk about his nighttime conversation with Jesus. Nicodemus and the Scientist talk about the importance of asking questions, being born again, the wind of God's Spirit, and God's love for the whole world.

Characters

- Scientist
- Nicodemus

Props

- Scientist costume
- Bible-times costume
- Lab table
- Science equipment
- Science-related decorations
- Change machine
- Sound effects for change machine
- Notebook
- Pencil
- Two or three lamps
- Fan
- Stack of papers

Preparation

Set up the space like a science lab with a long table that has items for the Scientist to "experiment" with at the beginning of the skit. For instance, the Scientist could be pouring liquids into beakers, weighing things on a scale, or looking at something through a microscope. Have a notebook and pencil for pretending to jot down notes.

Place a fan near a stack of papers so they can be blown around when the fan is turned on. Plug in several lamps and turn them on. The Scientist will need to turn them on and off during the skit. Be sure to practice using the fan and lamps.

SCRIPT

(Scientist is busily conducting some sort of experiment, mumbling and periodically making notes in a notebook. Eventually, Scientist looks up and notices all the children.)

Scientist: (looking up, surprised) Oh! Hello, children! When did you get here? I've been so busy with my latest experiment that I didn't even hear you come in. I'm so glad you're here. Let me tell you what I've been working on. It's so big and so amazing that you are not even going to believe it! Wait for it . . . I am going to change the world! Change it! All of it! The entire world! There are so many problems in the world, and I am going to fix all of them. Isn't that incredible! I haven't quite figured out how to change all of them yet, but I'm sure it will be any day now. Definitely by the end of the week.

Nicodemus: (knocking and entering) I heard you're trying to figure out how to change the world.

Scientist: Yes, yes, yes. You're exactly right. Are you here to help me? Who are you? What do you know? I'm always looking for clues.

Nicodemus: My name is Nicodemus. I don't know the secret of changing the whole world, but something interesting happened to me late last night that might help you.

Scientist: Last night! Ah-ha! It was dark last night. We must turn off the lights. That must be the secret to change.

(Scientist turns off various lights in the lab.)

Nicodemus: Um . . . I don't think that's it.

Scientist: In any good experiment, we have to test the theory. Let's keep the lights off, and we will go on.

Nicodemus: Like I said, it was nighttime. I went to find Jesus.

Scientist: Why did you go at night? That seems like a strange time to show up uninvited.

Nicodemus: Well, I am a synagogue leader. A synagogue is kind of like your church. Some of the other synagogue leaders did not like Jesus. Some even wanted to have him killed. He was saying and doing amazing things, and I had questions I wanted to ask him. But I'll admit—I didn't want the other leaders to find out. I wasn't sure what they would think of me.

Scientist: Questions! I love questions. I ask questions all the time. Why is the sky blue? How far away is Jupiter? How many types of flowers are there in the world?

Nicodemus: You're getting off track. Try to stay with me. As we were talking, Jesus said the strangest thing. He told me I had to be born again.

Scientist: (excitedly) Born again? He said that? This is perfect! (Rushes Nicodemus toward the change machine despite his protests.) I've been working on this Change Machine, and now I can put it to good use. I can send you back in time so you can be born again, just like Jesus said.

Nicodemus: Wait, wait! I don't think . . .

(Scientist puts Nicodemus into the change machine with Nicodemus protesting. Scientist closes the door, and there are flashing lights or other sound effects. After a few moments, the lights and sounds stop. The Scientist opens the door, and Nicodemus comes out.)

Scientist: (disappointed) It didn't work! You look exactly the same. I don't understand. I thought maybe you'd be a cute little baby.

Nicodemus: You didn't let me finish my story. When Jesus told me I had to be born again, I said, "Jesus, I'm a grown man. How could I be born all over again?"

Scientist: That is an excellent question.

Nicodemus: I thought so. Jesus told me that my *body* did not need to be born again, but that I could have a new kind of life as part of God's family. He said that God's Spirit gives this new life. God's Spirit is like a blowing wind. We can't see the wind, but we know it is moving.

Scientist: Wind! I love wind! Let's get some wind going in here. This must be the secret ingredient for change. I never even thought of that! (Runs over and turns on a fan that starts blowing papers everywhere.) Hmm . . . it turns out that the wind is changing things but not quite as expected! Could you help me with these papers?

(Nicodemus turns off the fan and helps the Scientist collect all the papers.)

Nicodemus: Okay. Where was I?

Scientist: (pretending to write a list in his notebook) You were talking about Jesus and wind and God's family and God's Spirit. Did I cover everything?

Nicodemus: Yes. But Jesus didn't stop there. He told me how much God loves all the people of the world. God sent Jesus to be light for the whole world.

Scientist: Light! Just when I thought that darkness was the key to change, it turns out that light is what we need! (Begins turning on various lamps around the lab.)

Nicodemus: Yes, but not just any light. Lamps are great for lighting a room. But what we really need is the light of Jesus, which shows us how to live, and how to love the people around us! Then we can be light for the world too!

Scientist: I can be a light? My mom always told me I was bright!

Nicodemus: Oh, you're bright, all right! Well, it was a late night and I'm tired. I'm going to take a nap.

Scientist: Thanks for stopping by, Nicodemus! You sure gave me a lot to think about!

You are the
light of the world.
Let your light shine
before others,
so that they may see
your good works
and give glory
to your Father in heaven.

—Matthew 5:14a,16 (NRSV)