

# LOOKING FOR THE KINGDOM

## John 3:1-17 // Jesus and Nicodemus

*This service is centered around John 3:1-17, Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus. This story corresponds to the second Sunday in Lent. Here are some materials to help you create your own worship service.*

MAIN THEME: *What is the kingdom of God, and how can I help it flourish?*

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## CHOOSING MUSIC // FOR SINGING

- 🎵 **As It Is In Heaven** [Key of G]  
Text and Music: Matt Maher and Ed Cash  
© 2010 ThankyouMusic
- 🎵 **The Love of God** [Key of D]  
Text and Music: Frederick Lehman  
© 1945 Nazarene Publishing House  
[We like MercyMe's arrangement. Listen below.]
- 🎵 **Kyrie Eleison** [Key of B minor]  
Text and Music: Keith Getty and Stuart Townend  
© 2008 ThankyouMusic
- 🎵 **We Will Run to You**  
Text and Music: Lisa Gungor  
© 2009 worshiptogether.com Songs (ASCAP)  
(adm. at EMICMGPublishing.com) All rights reserved.
- 🎵 **Your Grace Finds Me** [Key of A/Bb]  
Text and Music: Matt Redman, Jonas Myrin  
© 2013 Said And Done Music // SHOUT! Music Publishing // sixsteps Music // Thankyou Music // worshiptogether.com songs

## CREATING DRAMA // FOR HEARING

The heart of this scripture passage is the relationship between Jesus and the Kingdom of God. The video *Jesus and the Kingdom* by The Work of the People [[www.workofthepeople.com](http://www.workofthepeople.com)] focuses on the Kingdom of God using the Lord's Prayer. Perhaps we, like Nicodemus, don't really understand what it means to live as members of God's Kingdom here on earth. Purchase, show, and discuss this video as part of worship.

## FINDING ART // FOR SEEING

Consider showing a piece of artwork with the following C.S. Lewis quote from "The Weight of Glory:"  
"...next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbor is the holiest object presented to your senses." This

reminds us that the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus in John 3 was a special one. It also reminds us that anyone we meet – whether we know it or not – presents an opportunity to explain the love of God through word or deed.

## LIVING WORSHIP // FOR DOING

Use the guided prayer experience, “Walking with Jesus” (found below) In this guided prayer, worshipers are asked to imagine walking on a journey with Jesus. Jesus takes them on a journey through their school (or workplace), stopping at different places.

### **Walking With Jesus**

*A Guided Prayer Activity*

#### **Overview**

In this guided prayer, worshipers are asked to imagine walking on a journey with Jesus. Jesus takes them on a journey through their school (or workplace), stopping at different places. In each place, Jesus says to them, “It’s your turn to touch lives with my love.” The worshiper writes a name of an individual they might touch with Jesus’s love in each place on an index card. In the final question, Jesus asks them to choose some other place in their city, write it down, and write the name of someone they might touch there with the love of God. These index cards become the source of discussion in small groups following the guided prayer activity.

#### **Materials Needed**

- One person to give instructions
- An index card (or something else) to write on
- A writing utensil

#### **Instructions (to be given by leader)**

For our prayer time, you will need one index card and a pen.

*[Allow time for worshipers to get these materials]*

Once you have these materials, allow yourself to get into a comfortable position. Quietly, take a few deep breaths, close your eyes, and let yourself be still.

You’re going to use your imagination to go on a journey with Jesus. Keep breathing slowly and quietly, and keep your eyes closed. Imagine with me.

First, imagine it is the start of a new day, and you have just been dropped off at school (or work). You are making your way into the building, and Jesus walks up beside you. You aren’t quite sure about who Jesus is, but you begin to trust him, and so you let him walk with you. As Jesus walks to the door with you, Jesus tells you he wants you to touch others with his love. He also says he is going to help you do that. Imagine yourself entering the doorway. It is noisy and crowded in the building. Jesus asks you about the people there. Who are they? Your friends? People you casually know? Strangers? Jesus asks you another question, “Who in this hallway needs to know about my love?” Then, Jesus says, “Go and touch them with my love.” As you think about who in the hallway needs to know about the love of Jesus, write their name on your index card.

*[Allow time for worshipers to complete this task]*

Now, imagine yourself eating lunch. You are having lots of fun at lunch, doing the things you love to do with your friends, and Jesus shows up again. Jesus asks you about your friends. Who are they and what do you like to do with them? Then, Jesus asks you another question. It's the same question Jesus asked you in the hallway: "Who among your friends needs to know about my love?" Then, Jesus says, "Go and touch them with my love."

As you think about who of your friends needs to know about the love of Jesus, write their name on your index card.

*[Allow time for worshipers to complete this task]*

Finally, think about someplace in our town that you don't go very often. It might be a place where there are people that aren't like you: people who don't eat what you eat, drink what you drink, or dress like you. Where is this place? Suppose that one day Jesus asks you to go to this place. Jesus promises he will go with you, but then he asks, "Who in this place needs to know about my love?" Then, Jesus says, "Go and touch them with my love." As you think about this place and the people who are there that need to know about the love of Jesus, write the name of the place and a description of the people on your index card.

*[Allow time for worshipers to complete this task]*

Now, turn over your index card. Think about the ways you can mirror the love of Jesus to the people you saw in this prayer exercise. Write down one or two ways you can mirror Jesus' love to them.

*[Allow time for worshipers to complete this task]*

Once you have finished, gather in small groups with those around you. There should be no more than four people in each group. Talk through these questions together.

1. Who did you notice that needs to be touched with the love of Jesus?
2. Where do you need to go in town to show someone the love of Jesus?
3. How can you show others the love of Jesus?

## **MAKING SPACE // FOR WORSHIPPING**

Keep the materials we suggested in previous weeks: burlap, a cross, stones, and other neutral colors that are appropriate for Lent. This week, add dark purple fabric to the space, a common color in Lent. Also, since the John 3 passage recounts a conversation that took place at night, you might keep lights in the worship space dim.

## **WRITING POETRY// FOR PRAYING**

Pray this prayer of confession written by one of our friends, John, then follow it with the Lord's Prayer, which asks for God's Kingdom to be the same on earth as it is in heaven.

*Highest God, You are our Father in heaven, yet we have ignored your loving guidance and failed to acknowledge the place of Creator above creation. Your name is to be honored; yet “me” and “I” pervade our speech, speaking your name only in sudden crisis or panicked alarm. Your kingdom should be our priority, but we find it much easier to make excuses for what is, instead of acting to bring heaven to earth. You provide all that we need; yet we silently take from the provision of others and claim it as blessing. You forgive our many sins, but we’d rather cling to what we know, so we do not forgive ourselves. You pardon all those who sin against you, and still we keep score and hold grudges, calling it “justice.” You deliver us from evil and are present in the midst of trial, yet our faith is constantly wavering. Yet we want to be different. We want to practice what we preach. So we practice. And we pray as you taught us to pray, saying... [the Lord's Prayer]*

# SAMPLE WORSHIP SERVICE

*Looking For The Kingdom // John 3:1-17 // Jesus and Nicodemus*

## WELCOME

Say hi to other worshipers and welcome them in the name of Christ

## WHAT IS LENT?

If Lent isn't common to your tradition, you might explain it at the end of the welcome and the beginning of worship.

## SONGS OF PRAISE

*The Love of God  
As It Is in Heaven*

## PRAYER OF PRAISE

## SONG OF CONFESSION

*Kyrie Eleison (Lord, Have Mercy)*

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**One:** Highest God, You are our Father in heaven, yet we have ignored your loving guidance and failed to acknowledge the place of Creator above creation. Your name is to be honored; yet “me” and “I” pervade our speech, speaking your name only in sudden crisis or panicked alarm. Your kingdom should be our priority, but we find it much easier to make excuses for what is, instead of acting to bring heaven to earth. You provide all that we need; yet we silently take from the provision of others and claim it as blessing. You forgive our many sins, but we'd rather cling to what we know, so we do not forgive ourselves. You pardon all those who sin against you, and still we keep score and hold grudges, calling it “justice.” You deliver us from evil and are present in the midst of trial, yet our faith is constantly wavering. Yet we want to be different. We want to practice what we preach. So we practice. And we pray as you taught us to pray, saying...

**All:** **Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy**

**will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.**

## RECEIVING GOD'S FORGIVENESS

John 3:16-17

## VISUAL // WRITTEN MEDITATION

Visual // Consider purchasing a piece of art by Julie Quinn, but it is up to you.

Written // “...next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbor is the holiest object presented to your senses.” -C.S. Lewis

*[Project an image with the quote by C.S. Lewis underneath. Allow worshipers to reflect on it during 1-2 minutes of silence. Bring worshipers out of silence with the refrain of the previous song: “Kyrie Eleison.”]*

## READING SCRIPTURE TOGETHER

John 3:1-17

## MEDITATION

“Jesus and the Kingdom”

[[www.workofthepeople.com](http://www.workofthepeople.com)]

*[Purchase and show this video instead of a “sermon.” Then, use the guided prayer activity below to send worshipers into small groups for discussion.]*

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Guided Prayer // “Walking with Jesus”

## Instructions to be given by leader

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*[Allow time for worshipers to get these materials]*

Once you have these materials, allow yourself to get into a comfortable position. Quietly, take a few deep breaths, close your eyes, and let yourself be still. You're going to use your imagination to go on a journey with Jesus. Keep breathing slowly and quietly, and keep your eyes closed. Imagine with me.

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*[Allow time for worshipers to complete this task]*

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are people that aren't like you: people who don't eat what you eat, drink what you drink, or dress like you. Where is this place? Suppose that one day Jesus asks you to go to this place. Jesus promises he will go with you, but then he asks, "Who in this place needs to know about my love?" Then, Jesus says, "Go and touch them with my love."

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## CLOSING SONG

*As It Is in Heaven*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

## BENEDICTION

**One:** Go in peace to love and serve.

**All:** **With God's help, we will.**