

Jesus Sees Nathanael

Overview

Materials You'll Need

- newspaper
- tape
- scissors
- brown and green paint
- paint brushes



Scriptures

Jn 1: 43-49

Bible Truth Objective(s)

Jesus always knows where we are, what we are doing, what we are thinking, and cares for us

Behavioral Objective(s)

To identify the different times and ways God sees what we are doing

Memory Verse

"Fear God and keep His commandments."
(Ecc 12:13)



Bible Knowledge

Philip

Philip was called to follow Jesus the day after Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John were called. He was instrumental in bringing his friend Nathanael to Christ (Jn 1:43-36). His home town was Bethsaida (Jn 1:44). This was the Bethsaida of Galilee (Jn 12:21), the hometown of Andrew and Simon Peter, and is thought to have been a fishing village on the west shore of the lake. In the lists of the apostles (in Mt 10:3, Mk 3:14; Lk 6:14) he is placed fifth in order, with Bartholomew sixth (who is speculated to be Nathanael).

It is very possible that Philip had received the testimony from Andrew and Simon Peter concerning Jesus' wonderful deeds. His eagerness to introduce Jesus to others is admirable. Philip's invitation for Nathanael to "Come and see," is an illustration of personal evangelism. Of the four Gospels, Philip appears most often in the Gospel of John. He is known as a link to the Greek-speaking Jewish community. Philip introduces many members of this community to Jesus. Philip of Bethsaida is not to be

confused with Philip the evangelist (Acts 21:8, 9), who taught and baptized the eunuch of Ethiopia. He also had four daughters who prophesied (Acts 8).

Nathanael

The name Nathanael means "gift of God," and it occurs only in John 1:45-51 and 21:2. He seems to be one of the twelve disciples and he has also been identified as Bartholomew. Bartholomew is next to Philip in the lists of the Twelve (Mt 10:3; Mk 3:18; Lk 6:14).

Nathanael is a wise and cautious man who truly feared God and tried to live according to His word after knowing Christ. Jesus revealed His omniscience to him. He was aware of Nathanael when he sat under a fig tree in prayer and meditation. Jesus praised Nathanael for his pure and simple faith, for believing that He was the Son of God and the King of Israel. Jesus promised that he would see greater things, such as heaven opening, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man (Jn 1: 51). Nathanael later confessed along with Philip that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah.



Understanding Your Students

God is omnipresent. We should explain to the students that God is not just in church. He is everywhere—on the street, in the park, at school, at home, and in all other places. That means we can talk to Him wherever we are, and whenever we need His help. Our parents may not be with us all the time, but God is always with us. He knows everything about us and wants to help us at any time.

Assure your students that they do not need to be afraid of God. He is happy when we make the right

choices, and listen to our parents and teachers. When we do make a mistake, we can sincerely ask God to forgive the wrong things we have done. Since God knows every little thought we have in our hearts, there are no secrets before Him. God knows everything, even things we think others cannot see or hear. Even if we are alone in our room or whisper something quietly to another person, God knows all that. Talk about why it is good that God knows all about us, and how we should behave since God knows all about our thinking. Point out that He will do what is best for us because He understands what we need.



Vocabulary

Messiah

Messiah means Savior, someone who saves people; Jesus is the Messiah

Truth

what is real and correct

Disciples

the followers or students of Jesus; they learn from Jesus

Pure

clean; when there is nothing dirty



Before You Teach

Philip was from Bethsaida, the same city as his friend Andrew. They were both disciples of John the Baptist who preached of the Savior who was to come. Once Philip received the calling from Jesus, he was ready to accept Christ as the Master in his heart. When Jesus found him, Philip knew that this must be the long-awaited Messiah whom he had been praying for. He also realized how blessed and privileged he was to become Jesus' disciple.

Feeling happy and excited, Philip couldn't wait to find his friend Nathanael to share in his joy. Philip and Nathanael were of one mind and heart in wanting to serve God. In fact, before Philip came to him, Nathanael was praying in the hidden cover of the branches of a fig tree, seeking God's wisdom and guidance.

Philip knew his friend of great faith would rejoice when he heard, "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." But Nathanael didn't seem to be excited at all. On the contrary, he was skeptical toward the whole thing and felt that Philip had accepted Jesus too quickly

without confirming all the facts. Nevertheless, after Nathanael's personal encounter with Jesus, his simple faith and honest personality allowed him to discover that Jesus was truly the Son of God.

We can compare this story to that of Naaman, a great commander of the army who desperately sought ways to heal his leprosy (2 King 5:1-27). But when he was given a cure, he rejected God's help. The prophet Elisha told him the way to be cured was to simply wash himself in the Jordan River seven times. Naaman was angry and skeptical at first. He didn't believe it could be so easy and he wasn't sure he wanted to accept God. Fortunately, Naaman was convinced to at least give it a try. He did not regret the result. The leprous general who visited Elisha was cured, and converted to the Lord in the end.

Today, how do we keep our faith pure and simple so that we can also receive the great blessings Nathanael and Naaman did? It is important to emphasize to the children that there are no secrets before God. He knows everything about us. We just need to remember to rely on Him, and believe that He has the power and solutions to our problems. A pure and simple faith is very precious in the eyes of God.



Bible Story

Jesus Knows Everything About Us

Dear children, did you know that there are some things only God knows, such as what people are thinking inside of their brains? (Ask students to turn to their neighbor without talking, and give them 10 seconds to just look at each other. After 10 seconds, ask them to raise their hand if they know what their neighbor was thinking about in the past 10 seconds.) Share and point out that we can see how our friends are on the outside, but it is hard to even guess what they are thinking about inside. However, our almighty God has that special power. He knows how each of us feels on the inside. He knows if we feel happy, sad, angry, or glad. He knows every little thought we have and what we need in our everyday life. He knew us even before we were born! In today's story we are going to learn about a person who was amazed by how much Jesus knew.

From our last story, do you remember who became Jesus' first four disciples? They were Peter, Andrew, John and James. Raise your hand if you remember what they were doing when Jesus walked to their boat. (Allow time for student response.) Jesus knew that Peter and his brother Andrew tried to fish all night without even catching one tiny fish. Jesus helped them catch a lot of fish, and asked them to come follow Him.

Jesus wanted everyone to hear about God. He wanted some helpers to work with Him and help Him spread the good news and teach the people. That is why He chose Peter, Andrew, John and James to follow Him. And the fishermen decided to follow Jesus and help Him. But Jesus still needed more helpers. Let's find out who Jesus is going to call to be His followers.

Jesus Goes to Galilee

Jesus went to a place called Galilee. It wasn't long before He found Philip. Philip had already heard who Jesus was. He was ready in his heart to have Jesus be his Master and Teacher. So when Jesus found him, He asked him to be one of His special disciples and helpers.

Jesus said, "Follow Me."

Philip was so happy! He couldn't believe that Jesus wanted him to be a disciple! Do you know what he did right away? Philip ran to tell his good friend Nathanael. He couldn't wait to share this exciting news, and he wanted Nathanael to meet Jesus too. After looking for a while, he finally found his friend sitting under a fig tree, praying.

Philip Preaches to Nathanael

As soon as Philip saw Nathanael, he shouted, "Nathanael! We found Him! He is the one Moses wrote about in the Law. He is the Messiah. Jesus is from Nazareth. He is God!"

Nathanael laughed and said, "Nazareth? Can anything holy and good come from a place like Nazareth?" Nathanael could not believe his friend Philip's words. Even though Nathanael believed in God, he wasn't sure that Jesus was really the Savior.

But Philip was so excited, he tugged at his friend's arm, and said "Come and see for yourself, my friend!"

Nathanael got up and went with Philip. But he was sure that it was a mistake. The man Philip told him about couldn't possibly be God. He felt that Philip was not being careful at all.

"Nothing good has ever come from Nazareth. The Messiah God promised must come from an important place, like Jerusalem. How could Philip accept someone as the Messiah just like that?" Nathanael thought to himself.

Boys and girls, what do you think will happen next in the story? Do you think that Nathanael is going to change his mind about Jesus? What do you think Jesus will tell Nathanael when He sees him? (Encourage students to share and predict.)

Nathanael Meets Jesus

As Philip and Nathanael walked toward Jesus, Jesus looked Nathanael straight in the eye.

Jesus said to him, "You are a man from Israel who always tells the truth."

Nathanael stared at Jesus. How did this man know what he was like? Nathanael had never seen this man. Yet the man knew all about Him. Nathanael asked surprisingly, "How do you know about me?"

Jesus answered with a loving and gentle voice, "I saw you sitting under the fig tree even before Philip talked to you."

Right away Nathanael's heart jumped. He thought to himself, "Only someone with the power of God could have known this. Jesus knew that I was praying in secret and beneath the branches of the fig tree. Jesus must be the Son of God who can do the things God can do!"

Then Nathanael immediately cried out, "Teacher, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel."

Jesus was very touched by Nathanael's pure and simple faith. He said to Nathanael, "You have accepted me just because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree. Your pure and simple faith will allow you to see even greater things in the



Check For Understanding

1. **What did Jesus ask Philip to become?** (He asked Philip to become His disciple.)
2. **Why did Philip run to find his friend Nathanael?** (Philip discovered that Jesus was the Messiah that they had been waiting for. He felt very honored that Jesus asked him to be one of His helpers. He also wanted to share the wonderful news with his friend so that he could know who the Messiah is.)
3. **What did Philip say to his friend Nathanael?** (He said, "I just talked to Jesus; He is the one Moses wrote about in the Law. He is the Son of God.")



Life Application Story

Julie's Big Secret

Julie and her cousin Michelle, who was visiting for the afternoon, were playing by a small creek near the house. They were looking for special rocks. Both of them were barefoot. Soon, Michelle heard a loud, "Whoopee!"

"Michelle! Michelle! Come here!" Julie said

future."

From that day on, Nathanael became a faithful follower of Jesus just like his friend, Philip.

Today's story teaches us that God is the Creator of all the people. He knows everything about us and He knows exactly what we are thinking. For example, you may have tried to do something in secret, and maybe your parents don't know about it, but God knows. There is really no secret between you and God! And because of this, all of us should watch what we say and what we do all the time, so that God can be very proud of us, and be our help whenever we need Him.

4. **What did Nathanael say when Philip asked him to go see Jesus?** ("Has anything good ever come from Nazareth?")
5. **What was Nathanael so surprised about when Jesus started talking to him?** (Jesus knew all about him even though they had never met before.)
6. **What did Jesus know about Nathanael before they met?** (Jesus knew that Nathanael had been sitting under a fig tree; He knew where Nathanael was from and what he was like.)
7. **Jesus knows everything about us, even what we are thinking. We cannot hide things from Him. How should we behave since God knows everything?** (Students' answers may vary.)

excitedly.

Michelle ran quickly to Julie. Julie showed her a very beautiful rock. It was an almost see-through rock and had red and green spots on it.

Michelle said, "What a beautiful rock, Julie! Are you going to bring it home to keep?"

"Of course, Michelle, I'm going to let my other friends at school see this beautiful rock, too," Julie added. "But I wonder where I should hide it at home. I don't want my brother Tommy to touch it at all."

Michelle thought for a moment and then her eyes lit up. She said excitedly to Julie, "I know! You can keep it in the Secret Treasure Box!"

"Great idea!" Julie said.

They ran back to Julie's house. When they got into Julie's room, they both lowered their voices and said, "Shh... Let's keep it a secret."

Julie took out the Secret Treasure Box and the key that opened it. They were ready to put this special rock in the Treasure Box when, all of a sudden, they heard a noise. It was coming from the closet! Julie and Michelle looked at each other. Then Julie got up, walked slowly over and opened her closet door. It was Tommy, her little brother!

"What are you doing in my closet?" Julie questioned.

"I wanted to see what you two were doing," Tommy said.

"Well, we're doing something secret. We don't want you to see so you better leave my room now," Julie demanded.

Tommy said, "I already saw your rock, and I saw your Secret Treasure Box, too. I peeked through this little gap. So it's not a secret anymore."

Julie was mad. How could her brother hide in her room and look at her stuff? She ran down the stairs to her mom, Mrs. Lewis.

"Mom! Tommy was hiding in my closet! He saw my Secret Treasure Box! He shouldn't have touched my things and peeked at my secrets," Julie screamed.

Mrs. Lewis used her calm and firm voice and said, "I agree with you, Julie, that Tommy shouldn't have hidden himself in your closet in the first place."

Mrs. Lewis turned to the stairs and called Tommy to come down. He was afraid he would get into trouble and had stayed upstairs.

"Tommy, I need you to come down, please. There is something you need to say to your sister," Mrs. Lewis said.

Tommy came down quietly. He shuffled his feet as he walked into the family room.

"I am sorry, Julie. I won't do it again," said Tommy.

"Thank you for apologizing, Tommy," said Mrs. Lewis. Then she turned to Julie. "Don't get too mad, Julie. Remember God tells us that it is

not good to stay mad for a long time. And besides, there are really no such things as secrets, you know?"

"What do you mean, Mom?" Julie asked.

Mrs. Lewis continued, "Well, no matter what, we can't keep everything totally secret. There is someone who knows everything about us. He knows everything we do. He knows how we feel. He even knows what we think."

"Who is this someone?" Julie asked curiously.

"This someone is God," Mrs. Lewis said. "And if God knows everything, that means He knows you are mad at Tommy right now. I don't think God would be happy that you're mad at your brother. I think you need to forgive your brother for being in your room so that God can be proud of you again."

Julie nodded her head. "Okay, Mom." She turned to Tommy and said, "I am sorry I got so mad at you just now. But I don't want to stay mad at you. I want God to see that I am a good big sister."

Tommy was glad that he didn't get into trouble and promised that he would ask for permission next time he wanted to see his sister's things.

Questions to Think About

1. **Why was Julie upset?** (She found her brother hiding in her room and looking at her secrets.)
2. **How did Mrs. Lewis handle the situation?** (She was very calm and firm. She asked Julie and Tommy to say sorry to each other, and reminded Julie that there is someone who knows everything about us—that someone is God.)
3. **How did Julie change her attitude after talking to her mother?** (She decided to say sorry to her brother, and realized that she needed to be a better sister since God was watching her all the time.)
4. **Do you have something that is special that you don't want to share with others?** (Allow students to share.)
5. **Should we keep secrets from our parents? Why?** (We should never keep secrets from our parents. They want to help us grow and learn right from wrong. We need to share our thoughts and feelings with them. Even if we think they will get mad, we need to be honest. That is what God taught us to do.)
6. **Can we keep secrets from God?** (Allow students to answer.)



Activity 1

Jesus Sees Nathanael Under the Fig Tree

Where did Jesus see Nathanael? Draw the fig tree.
Color in the picture.



Activity 2

Jesus Sees Us...

There are no secrets between us and God. Jesus sees everything. Fill in the blanks for each picture.

1. Jesus sees us when we are _____. (playing.)
2. Jesus sees us when we are _____. (sleeping)
3. Jesus sees us when we are _____. (eating.)
4. Jesus sees us when we are at _____. (school)



Activity 3

Fig Trees

Materials:

1. newspaper
2. tape
3. green and brown paint
4. paint brushes
5. scissors

Directions:

1. In this activity, the students will be making "fig trees."
2. Provide each student with two pieces of newspaper.
3. Help the students roll up the paper and tape the ends together to secure the roll.
4. Show the students how to cut strips along one end of the tube. Make about six cuts, each about six inches long.
5. Now gently pull out the layers of the cut paper to form the leafy part of the tree.
6. Let the students paint their trees brown and green.
7. Talk about how Jesus saw Nathanael under the tree even before Philip brought him to meet Jesus. Only God knows everything about us.



Activity 8:1

Jesus Sees Nathanael Under the Fig Tree

Where did Jesus see Nathanael? Draw in your own fig tree. Color in the picture.



