Facilitator

1. Open with Prayer

2. Welcome any newcomers

3. Read John 3:9-21 and give a five-minute review of the sermon using Peppy’s sermon notes.

Facilitator: Please don't feel you have to cover every question. Try to keep your discussion to an hour and a half at the most.

**CONNECT Group study questions, John 3:9-21**

**March 8, 2015**

**Title: The Most Important Question Ever**

**Read to the group:** If there were such a thing as a top-40 hymns of all time, “Jesus Loves Me—This I Know” would be high on the list. Peppy used the long-time favorite to illustrate how the gospel is so simple a child can understand it, yet so profound that it can encompass a lifetime of theological study. It might profit us to read through the three stanzas as they were first written by Anna Bartlett Warner and published in 1860 as part of a novel by Anna’s sister Susan. In the context of the novel, the poem was read to a dying child.

Jesus loves me—this I know,

For the Bible tells me so;

Little ones to him belong,—

They are weak, but he is strong.

Jesus loves me—loves me still,

Though I'm very weak and ill;

From his shining throne on high,

Comes to watch me where I lie.

Jesus loves me—he will stay,

Close beside me all the way.

Then his little child will take,

Up to heaven for his dear sake.[2]

**Question**: Why does Jesus compare himself to the serpent that Moses lifted up in the wilderness?  What point do you think Jesus is trying to make? **Facilitator**: As we learn from the context of the passage, John 3:14-15, Jesus was using the Numbers 21:5-9 reference, of which Nicodemus was familiar, to illustrate the belief he must have to answer his “most important question ever.”

**Question**: In light of the Numbers 21 illustration, can a person come to faith if he or she doesn’t feel any deep conviction of sin?

**Question**: Pastor Peppy mentioned that Jesus came to pull us out of the quicksand of sin. We all have experienced the quicksand of sin, and if we are paying attention, that quicksand still tries to pull us away from His amazing grace. Share with the group how you have seen and are seeing this specifically occur in your life.

**Question**: Pastor Peppy gave some suggestions on how to strengthen (or recover) the original meaning of the word “believe." Give some examples of how we might use *believe* in our everyday conversation. Now, by contrast, use *believe* the way Jesus meant it. **Facilitator**: Everyday—Look at those clouds, I *believe* (think) it’s going to rain. The way Jesus meant it—I *believed* my jump instructor, and pulled the ripcord at the altitude he taught me.

**Question**: Does a person born in the Middle East and who has been brought up in the Muslim faith have the same opportunity for salvation as a person born in America? How would you answer the charge that God isn’t fair. **Read:** Romans 1:18-20 for help with an answer.

**Question**: Nicodemus, being the very personification of religion, had removed belief from the equation. He was trying to achieve salvation through obedience and good works. Why do people think they have to somehow earn their salvation? What place does obedience have in the life of a Christian? **Facilitator**: Read John 3:21

**Meditation and Prayer**: Let’s take time in prayer to name the mighty works of deliverance God has performed in our lives. Thank Him for each one and thank Him for each work of deliverance you still need Him for.