

UNIT 33 | SESSION 1

PAUL BECAME A CHRISTIAN

ACTS 9

CHRIST CONNECTION:

Paul was an enemy of Jesus, but then God changed him. When we trust in Jesus, He changes us from the inside out.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Who can be saved? Anyone who trusts in Jesus is saved.

KEY PASSAGE PHRASE:

God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to save people. John 3:17



PREPARE

YOUR HEART TO TEACH



LEADER Bible Study

The Acts 9 story of how Saul of Tarsus came to be a follower of Jesus is a widely known passage that reveals an essential truth for us as believers: God has the power to transform the hearts and lives of anyone who places their faith in Him. The power of the Holy Spirit changes us from the inside out, and the same Lord who transformed Saul causes us to talk in new life when we turn to Christ.

What do we learn about the role of God's saving grace in this story? How can our testimonies reflect the same Spirit-empowered life change as Saul's?

God sought out Saul for the work of His kingdom, despite the hostility and malice this former Pharisee had toward the Christian church. Nothing in Saul's story—not even the wrongful executions and imprisonment of Christ's disciples—was too big for God to forgive by grace through faith in His Son, Jesus. Through his experience on the road to Damascus, Saul realized the weight of his own sin, the power of this mighty God, and the only chance he had in being made right before Him: surrendering his life to Jesus. Nothing Saul did could separate him from God's love for him in Jesus. The same is true for us!

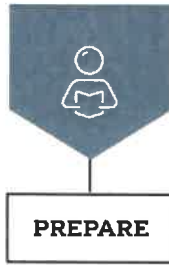
Later, in a letter to his protégé Timothy, Saul—also known by his Greek name, Paul—

wrote, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners’—and I am the worst of them” (1 Tim. 1:15). He knew he needed God's grace to be made right before the Father and that trusting in Jesus was his only means of being saved.

Teach the kids in your group that all of us, no matter how young or old we are, needed Jesus to come into the world to save us. The gospel transforms our hearts and propels us to share the life we've found in Jesus with all who will listen. How can you equip your class with the excitement and knowledge of Jesus Christ that will lead them to share of His love, just as Paul did?

TERMS TO KNOW

Christian: From the Greek noun *Christos* (“Christ” or “Messiah”) comes the word *Christianos*, meaning “belonging to Christ.” The disciples were first called “Christians” in Antioch. (Acts 11:26)



YOUR HEART TO TEACH

GATHER Supplies

Keep a supply of the following items available during all teaching sessions: Allergy Alert, Bibles, washable markers, crayons, scissors (adult use), blunt-tipped scissors, construction paper, copy paper, glue sticks, glue, tape, baby dolls, blocks, play dough, and a beanbag.



WELCOME

Find and complete the hidden puzzle

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster



LEARN

Learn and practice the key passage phrase

- ☐ Key Passage Phrase Marker



LOVE

Guess the items

- ☐ shoebox with lid
- ☐ people figure
- ☐ animal figure

Find and spell Jesus

- ☐ large plastic container
- ☐ play sand
- ☐ plastic tablecloth
- ☐ magnetic letters or letter tiles to spell Jesus



LIVE

Create a texture collage

- ☐ items with various textures (lace, sandpaper, bubble pack, curling ribbon, aluminum foil, ect.)
- ☐ "Key Passage Phrase Labels" printable, 1 copy

Missions activity

- ☐ "Betsey Stockton Photo" printable
- ☐ pillows
- ☐ blankets
- ☐ books, children's Bibles, and Bible storybooks

Snack and transition

- ☐ snacks
- ☐ Activity Page, 1 per child
- ☐ Big Picture Cards For Families, 1 per child



BONUS

Say the key passage phrase

- ☐ Key Passage Phrase Marker

Make a sound shaker

- ☐ empty plastic water bottles, 1 per child
- ☐ dried beans
- ☐ dried rice
- ☐ sand
- ☐ funnel
- ☐ stickers (optional)

Follow the light

- ☐ flashlight



Provide as many learning activities as possible from the Love and Live sections to give preschoolers choices to learn. Incorporate the Bible story, the Christ connection, and key passage phrase in your conversations as the preschoolers engage in learning activities throughout the session.

WELCOME

Use the following activity to greet children as they enter the classroom. Talk about the big picture question and answer. After each child completes the welcome activity, encourage him to participate in the activities provided from the Love and Live sections of the leader guide.

FIND AND COMPLETE THE HIDDEN PUZZLE

Post the big picture question poster near the entrance to the classroom. On the back of the Bible story picture, write a message that says, Paul was an enemy of Jesus, but then God changed him. When we trust in Jesus, He changes us from the inside out. Cut the Bible story picture into a two-piece puzzle. Tape the puzzle pieces in two separate places in the classroom. Greet preschoolers as they enter the room. Encourage them to find the puzzle pieces and complete the puzzle. Give clues as needed to help boys and girls. Celebrate when the puzzle is completed. Read the message on the back of the puzzle to preschoolers and talk about the picture. Encourage preschoolers to hide the puzzle pieces again for the next preschooler to find.

SAY “ I am so glad that you are at church today. Our big picture question and answer is, **Who can be saved? Anyone who trusts in Jesus is saved.** Today’s Bible story is about Paul. He trusted in Jesus and was saved. ”

* Big Picture Question

* Big Picture Answer

Worship

* Joy

* I will Trust you God

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story



1 INTRODUCE THE BIBLE STORY VIDEO

Invite preschoolers to find a friend or two and lead them to group time by holding hands. Allow a preschooler to lead you to group time if needed.

SAY “In our Bible story today, Paul was traveling along when a very bright light came down from heaven. He could not see. The men who were traveling with Paul led him into the city.”

2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Open your Bible to Acts 9:1-30 and tell the following Bible story.

PAUL BECAME A CHRISTIAN

SAY “In the early days of the church, Paul worked hard to stop people from telling about Jesus. Paul was traveling along when a very bright light came down from heaven. Paul fell to the ground. Then Paul heard a voice saying, ‘Why are you against Me?’”

“Who are You, Lord?” Paul asked.

“I am Jesus,” He said. Jesus told Paul to go into the city and wait for more instructions.

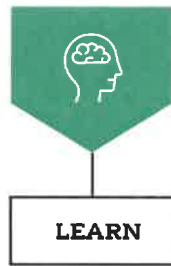
Paul got up and opened his eyes, but he couldn’t see anything! So the men who were traveling with Paul led him into the city.

A man named Ananias (an uh NIGH uhs) lived in the city. God told him to go visit Paul. God said, “I have chosen Paul to tell many people about Me.”

Ananias went to Paul and said, “Jesus sent me here to help you.” Then Ananias put his hands on Paul, and Paul could see again. Paul got up and was baptized.

Paul went to the synagogues. “Jesus is the Son of God!” Paul said. The people were amazed. They knew Paul had been an enemy of Jesus, but now he loved Jesus!

Christ Connection: Paul was an enemy of Jesus, but then God changed him. When we trust in Jesus, He changes us from the inside out.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

3 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

Ask preschoolers how they think the people felt at different times in the story. Encourage boys and girls to show each expression with their faces as they answer. Review different parts of the story such as the bright light coming down from heaven, Paul hearing Jesus' voice, Paul opening his eyes and not being able to see, Ananias placing his hands on Paul, and the people hearing Paul teach.

SAY 🗣️ You showed how Paul and the other people in our story felt. How would you feel if you saw a bright light come down from heaven? How does it make you feel to know that when we trust in Jesus, He changes us from the inside out? 🗣️

4 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow."

"God sent His Son, Jesus.

God sent His Son, Jesus.

God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to save people."

* song - "To save the world"

5 LEARN AND PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the key passage phrase marker at John 3:17. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Lead preschoolers to learn the key passage phrase by using the following motions as you repeat the key passage phrase several times: God (point upward) sent His Son, Jesus (touch the palm of each hand with a finger from the opposite hand), into the world (stretch arms outward) to save people (point to people in the classroom). John 3:17.



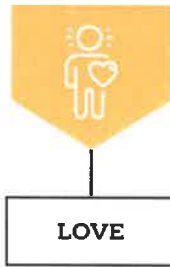
SAY 🗣️ God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to save people. Jesus saved Paul. Paul had been an enemy of Jesus, but then God changed him. He loved Jesus! 🗣️

6 PRAY

Pray: Thank God for changing Paul. Thank God that when we trust in Jesus, He changes us from the inside out.

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God because of what we learned

1 **LEAD FRIENDS**



Invite three or four preschoolers to form a line and hold hands, creating a chain. Hold hands with the first child in line and lead the boys and girls around the classroom. Navigate preschoolers around classroom furniture and fixtures. Be cautious of your pace so that everyone is able to keep up. Allow boys and girls an opportunity to lead their friends as well.

SAY You did a great job leading your friends around the obstacles in the room. Paul's friends had to lead him into the city. He was traveling when a very bright light came down from heaven. A voice asked him, 'Why are you against me?' It was Jesus. Jesus told him to go into the city and wait for more instructions. When Paul opened his eyes, he couldn't see anything. His friends had to lead him.

2 **GUESS THE ITEMS**

Before the session, cut holes on both ends of a shoebox large enough for a preschooler's hand to fit through. Place a familiar item in the box for the preschooler to feel and try to guess what it is. Items could include a crayon, a marker, a small block, a people figure, or an animal figure. Invite a preschooler to place his hands through the holes and feel the object without looking. Encourage him to guess what he thinks it is. After he has guessed, open the lid to reveal the object.

SAY You guessed what was in the box just by feeling it. You could not see what it was. Did you guess correctly? There was a time when Paul could not see. He had been an enemy of Jesus. He worked hard to stop people from telling others about Jesus. When he was traveling, a very bright light came down from heaven. The voice of Jesus asked, 'Why are you against Me?' When Paul opened his eyes, he could not see. God sent Ananias to help Paul. Ananias put his hands on Paul, and he could see again.

3 **FIND AND SPELL JESUS**

Fill a large plastic container with 1 to 2 inches of sand. Bury the magnetic letters J-E-S-U-S in the sand. Place a plastic tablecloth on the floor for easier clean up. Place the container of sand on the floor. Write JESUS on a piece of paper for preschoolers to match up with the letters as they find them. Invite preschoolers to dig for the letters. Demonstrate how to match the letters to the word Jesus written on the paper. Encourage boys and girls to bury the letters again after they have spelled Jesus.

SAY You spelled the name Jesus. In the early days of the church, Paul worked hard to stop people from telling about Jesus. Paul was an enemy of Jesus, but then God changed him. Paul started teaching that Jesus is the Son of God. When we trust in Jesus, He changes us from the inside out.

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE for God out of love

1 CREATE A TEXTURE COLLAGE

Cut items of various textures into small pieces. Place the textured items, construction paper, and glue sticks on the table for preschoolers to explore. Talk about how the items feel. Invite preschoolers to create a texture collage by gluing the items to their papers. Place a key passage phrase label on the collage as well.

SAY 📖 The items on your paper all have a different texture that you can feel, even if you cannot see. Paul could not see for a few days after a bright light came down from heaven. Paul was an enemy of Jesus, but then God changed him. Our key passage phrase says, 'God sent His Son, Jesus, in the world to save people.' God saved Paul and changed his life. When we trust in Jesus, He changes us from the inside out. 📖

2 MISSIONS ACTIVITY



Set up a few cozy book nook areas in the room. Tell preschoolers to find a partner and go to a cozy area to read. Tell the preschoolers to take turns "reading" a book to each other, turning the pages, looking at the pictures, and telling what they see. After a few minutes, encourage preschoolers to trade books with other pairs to read and learn from other books. Display the photo of Betsey Stockton.

SAY 📖 Betsey Stockton became interested in learning and reading books in the library of the home she worked in. She also attended evening classes at a college to learn more. She learned about God and His Son, Jesus, at the college. Later, Betsey wanted to be a teacher to help children learn how to read and write. She also wanted to be a missionary to help them know more about Jesus. [Pray and thank God for people like Betsey Stockton who help others learn more about Jesus.] 📖

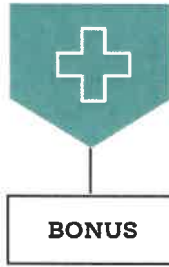
3 SNACK AND TRANSITION



Post an allergy alert. Serve the snack. As children eat, review and talk about the Bible story. When children finish their snack, lead them to complete the activity page. As they work, continue talking about the Bible story and emphasize the Christ connection.

SAY 📖 Paul was an enemy of Jesus, but then God changed him. When we trust in Jesus, He changes us from the inside out. 📖

Remember to communicate helpful information to the bonus teaching hour leaders. If parents are picking up children at this time, tell them something their child did well during the session. Distribute the big picture cards for families. Encourage parents to engage with the family discussion starters and family activities during the week.



TEACHING HOUR

BONUS Teaching Hour Group Time

1 SHIELD EYES FROM LIGHT

Invite preschoolers to use their hands or arms to pretend to shield their eyes from a bright light as they come to group time.

2 TALK ABOUT THE BIBLE STORY

Open the Bible to Acts 9 and talk about the Bible story using the summarized points below.

PAUL BECAME A CHRISTIAN

- In the early days of the church, Paul was against God. He tried to stop people from telling about Jesus.
- One day, Paul was traveling along a road when a very bright light came down from heaven. Paul fell down and heard a voice.
- “Who are You?” Paul asked. “I am Jesus,” the voice said. Jesus told Paul what to do. God had chosen Paul to tell people about Jesus.
- When Paul got up, he couldn’t see! The men with Paul took his hand and led him to the city.
- A man named Ananias visited him there. God sent Ananias to help Paul see again. Now Paul loved Jesus and told people all about Him.

3 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow.”

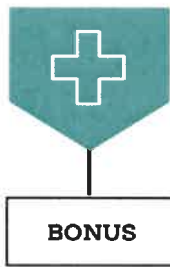
“God sent His Son, Jesus.
God sent His Son, Jesus.
God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to save people.”

4 SAY THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the key passage phrase marker at John 3:17. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Encourage preschoolers to stomp with the syllables of the key passage phrase as you repeat it several times.

5 PRAY

Pray. Thank God that He changes us when we trust in Him.



TEACHING HOUR

BONUS Teaching Hour Activities

6 GUESS WHO IS SPEAKING



Guide preschoolers to sit side by side, all facing the same direction. Choose one preschooler to be the “listener.” Invite her to stand or sit with her back to the other preschoolers. Choose a preschooler to say, “Jesus loves you.” Encourage the “listener” to guess who was speaking. Play several rounds, allowing boys and girls the opportunity to each listen and speak.

SAY “You guessed who was speaking by listening to their voice. You could not see your friend, but you knew who spoke. Paul could not see after a bright light came down from heaven. His friends had to lead him into the city. God sent Ananias to help Paul as well. Ananias put his hands on Paul, and he could see again. Paul got up and was baptized. God had changed him.”

7 MAKE A SOUND SHAKER

Place the materials on the table. Invite preschoolers to make a sound shaker with an empty water bottle, dried beans, rice, and sand. Demonstrate how to use the funnel to add the beans, rice, and sand to the water bottle. Encourage boys and girls to listen to the shakers and experiment with the different sounds they hear as they add the different ingredients. Tape the bottles closed. Some preschoolers may want to decorate their sound shakers with stickers.

SAY “I like the sound shaker that you made. If I listen closely, I can tell if you used beans, rice, sand, or all three in your shaker without using my eyes. Paul could not see after a bright light came down from heaven. God sent Ananias to help Paul. Ananias put his hands on Paul, and Paul could see again. Paul was an enemy of Jesus, but then God changed him.”

8 FOLLOW THE LIGHT

Dim the lights without turning them off completely, if possible. Shine a flashlight to gain the preschoolers’ attention. Encourage boys and girls to walk to where you shine the flashlight. Shine the flashlight on several areas of the classroom. Allow preschoolers to take turns shining the light for their friends. Remind boys and girls to shine the light on an area of the classroom, not in anyone’s eyes.

SAY “You followed the light. Paul was traveling along, trying to stop people from telling about Jesus when a very bright light came down from heaven. He heard Jesus say, ‘Why are you against Me?’ Paul opened his eyes, but he could not see. God sent a man named Ananias to help Paul. God had chosen Paul to tell many people about Him. Paul was an enemy of Jesus, but then God changed him. When we trust in Jesus, He changes us from the inside out.”

Release preschoolers to parents according to your church’s security procedure. Tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session.