



Series: The Spirit Moves

Week 3: Paul's Change

Overview of the Lesson

Video: Be sure to check out the video above for a brief introduction to the study and some brief reflections on the passage.

Scripture: *Primary text:* Acts 9:1-22

Age Specific Breakdown:

- Preschool – Page 2
- Children – Page 3-4
- Avenue 56 – Page 4
- Youth – Page 5
- College – Pages 6-7
- Activity Pages – 8-11

Family Activity/Prayer: Today we invite your family to recite out loud Dr. Barnette's weekly benediction. As you know, the end is always tailored to the message from the sermon. So, we've added a little piece at the end related to Jesus's triumphal entry.

Depart now in the fellowship of God the Father.

And as you go remember:

That by the goodness of God you were born into this world,
And by the grace of God you have been kept all the day long,
Even until this very hour.

And by the love of God fully revealed in the face of Jesus Christ,
You have been redeemed and you are being redeemed

And so go,

With renewed fire for the message of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Preschool

Preschool: Paul's Change

Lesson: Please read the scripture from the Bible or a Bible Storybook, Acts 9:1-20 - **To use the (# attachments) please scroll down to the very end of all of the Weekly Word.** (see attachment #1 lesson/Saul on the road to Damascus) and (see attachment #2 teaching picture/Saul Sees Jesus)

Follow Up Questions: (The attached lesson **refers to Saul as Paul** in order to not confuse the children, but actually Saul is not called Paul until **Acts 13:9.**)

1. Why was Saul traveling from Jerusalem to Damascus?
2. Who spoke to Saul on the road?
3. What did Jesus tell Saul to do?
4. What happened to Saul's eyes?
5. Who did God send to help Saul?
6. What happened not only to Saul's eyes but to his heart?
7. How does Jesus speak to us?

Reinforcing Activities:

Encourage your child to color (see attachment #3 coloring page). Ask them to color the ray of light yellow, and then encourage them to put many little crosses on top of the yellow to indicate Jesus. When God told Ananias to go to help Saul, he was afraid because he had heard that Saul had come to town to arrest the followers of Jesus. But Ananias knew to STOP- PRAY- OBEY when God gave him something hard to do. Cut a piece of 8x11 paper in half lengthwise. On one half of the paper, make three circles using a glass, and then ask your child to create their own stoplight. Ask them for examples of hard things that God wants them to do for which they will need to STOP-PRAY-OBEY.

Family Activities:

2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things passed away; behold, new things have come". When Saul made Jesus Lord of his life, Jesus didn't do away with Saul using his good brain, working hard at his tasks, understanding the scriptures, and desiring to do what is right. But when Jesus gave Saul a new, clean heart, Saul used these attributes to do his best at his new job of spreading the good news about Jesus. During family time ask each family member to name a good attribute of the family member sitting to their right that they could use to tell others the good news about Jesus. For example, Susi likes to sing to her babies, so she can teach her friends the song "Jesus Loves Me". Another example, Bob works hard to wash his car once a week, so he could offer to wash an older neighbor's car. Then soon Bob can ask his new friend to visit church.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, PLEASE help us to make you the boss of our lives. THANK YOU that you gave us eyes to see all the wonderful things that you have created. We're SORRY when we do the things that make you sad, but THANK YOU that you will give us a clean heart and new beginning each day. In Jesus name, amen.

Children

Paul's Change (Acts 9).

Print out the picture of Paul at the end of the Weekly Word (see attachment) and, as you read the scripture, let your child listen for words describing Saul vs. words describing Paul. After completing the scripture, compare the list and ask how Paul was changed? Through Paul's conversion and work, we see that anyone can be changed and used to serve God. Read the scripture together in the following sections:

Acts 9:1-2 But on his way to attack and harm Christians, something remarkable happens. Jesus comes in and takes over the show...

Acts 9:3-9 What was happening? Even Saul's companions couldn't figure it out. Jesus was there taking control. Meanwhile, though, back in Damascus, there was a man named Ananias, who worked hard to serve God. One day, God shared something with Ananias:

Acts 9:10-16 Imagine being told that you need to go find and talk to the head of Isis, or the school bully, or your biggest enemy. It would be pretty scary! It might be tempting to laugh and refuse. That's probably how Ananias felt. Saul was hurting Christians. He was famous for it! Why would God tell anyone to go talk to him? What would you do? Continue with the story to find out how Ananias responded:

Acts 9:17-22 Ananias obeyed (it was GOD asking, after all...), and found Saul there just as promised. Immediately, he was healed, and realized that it was God who was responsible for the experience. Saul prayed and was baptized, and started to shock people right away by spreading the word around and teaching. He was changed. Not in a week or a month but immediately. Paul went on to become perhaps the most influential and important figure of the church spread and the new faith

Bible story review: Do the following activities to review the Bible story.

Review questions: Play "Fact or Fiction". Read a review question and let your child answer 'fact' or 'fiction'. If it is fiction, ask if they can answer the question correctly.

1. Saul was traveling to Damascus to visit his sick grandmother. (Fiction, he was traveling to Damascus to imprison believers.)
2. Saul saw a light brighter than the sun and heard a voice speaking in the Greek language. (Fiction, he heard the voice in Aramaic.)
3. Jesus asked Saul why he was persecuting Him? (Fact)
4. Saul was blind for three days. (Fact)
5. God told Sapphirra to go to Damascus and restore Saul's sight. (Fiction, Ananias)
6. Ananias was obedient and went to Saul and his sight was restored. (Fact)
7. Saul preached the Good News boldly and everyone loved him. (Fiction, some wanted to kill him)
8. God can transform a person's life when they believe in Jesus. (Fact)
9. God only has work for some followers to do. (Fiction, Believers are His workmanship created for good works.)

Live it out: Make a prayer box: Today's story teaches us that God's amazing love can change the life and heart of anyone; our job is to share that love with others and pray for them as well. Find any small box (shoe box, tissue boxes, or other small container) and gather whatever materials you have at your house to decorate the box (paper, wrapping paper, stickers, or just markers/crayons). Decorate the box together and cut small strips of paper to add names of people for whom your family will pray. Keep the box nearby so you can add to and update with answered prayer as needed.

Pray: Close with prayer and reminder of God's work in our lives. Thank God for giving us Jesus and helping us to serve Him first with all of our hearts.

Avenue 56

Paul's Change: Read Acts 9:1-22. Encourage your student to read the following portions of the scripture out loud and help with words or phrases about which they might be confused. Ask the 2 W and an H Questions as you read:

Acts 9:1-9 – Ask your student why Saul was on his way to Damascus. Who did Saul meet on the road and what happened. Why do you think it happened.

Acts 10-16 – Why was Ananias afraid to go see Saul? What would YOU do in that situation?

Acts 17-22 – What happened to Saul when Ananias found him? How was Saul changed?

Finally, ask your students HOW this story applies to their life today? HOW can God use **anyone** to help change the lives of people. After Paul met Jesus, he became the most determined follower of Christ. He shared Jesus with people all round the world! He was beaten, put in prison, even almost murdered—but he continued to share the Gospel just like Jesus had called him to do. Jesus gave him a new identity and a new purpose. Paul spent the rest of his life trying to fulfill the purpose that Jesus had given him. HOW can God use YOU?? (serve at church; share your testimony with friends at school; create opportunities to serve others in your community just to show them that Jesus loves them too.) Let your student make a list of the ways God can use them.

Pray with your student thanking God helping us transform into who God wants us to be. Ask God for opportunities to serve others and show them God's love.

Youth

Want to talk about a change? There is, perhaps, no greater change than what happened to Paul (formerly, Saul). While on his way to persecute the followers of Jesus, he encountered Jesus and his life was never the same. That's what happens when Jesus shows up. You know what happens, how Paul's writing now make up almost half of the New Testament! How amazing is God! He took someone out to destroy his followers and used him to build his followers for the last 2,000 years!

Introductory Questions:

1. What do you think of change? Do you like it? Are certain kinds of change better than others?
2. What do you know about Paul? Take a minute and see what all you can remember?
3. Have you felt like Jesus has changed your life? How so? Have you seen how Jesus has changed someone else's life? What was that like?

Digging Deep: Read Acts 9:1-22

Ask:

1. After reading the story, what stands out to you? Are there any details you found surprising? Encouraging? Interesting?
2. What was Paul/Saul going to do at the beginning of the passage? What city was he headed to?
3. How did Jesus encounter Paul on the road? What do you imagine that scene looked like?
4. What do you think it was like for the people who were with Paul? What would you have thought if you saw this happen?
5. How would you have reacted if you were Ananias and God told you to help this person who was originally out to hurt you?
6. What does God say he has in store for Paul? How do we see that play out in Paul's life? (you may even skim ahead in Acts to see!)

Reflect: As you wrap up today, take a moment and be still. Simply ask the Holy Spirit to sit with you. Listen. What is God trying to tell you? Now, take a few minutes and give to God your fears, worries, or concerns. Ask God to strengthen your faith. Ask God to help you claim the power of the Spirit today.

College

The Spirit Moves: Saul's Change

Read Acts 9:1-31

Reflection:

Do you remember your "conversion" experience? For me, I think of a handful of these experiences. First, I remember the day I was baptized. I was only 7 at the time, but there are parts of it that I remember that feel like yesterday. My second experience was on a retreat I attended in 9th grade. I remember sitting around a campfire with my friends, and something just felt different. I couldn't explain it really other than that I felt a sense of peace but at the same time being shaken to my core. As I reflect back on this time, I always say this was when "I made my faith my own." Finally, on a study abroad trip my sophomore year of college, I sat by the pool at the hotel where I was staying. Something had changed *again*, but this time, I knew exactly what I felt. What was once an afterthought hit me like a ton of bricks. The Holy Spirit was moving me to pursue *vocational ministry*. I felt free but without a whole lot of clarity at the time. But I did know vocational ministry was what the Lord was impressing upon my heart.

Saul's conversion story is not just about Saul's conversion. That might sound weird, but hear me out. I believe wholeheartedly that Saul's conversion allows us as faithful followers to enter into Saul's story with each of our own stories. Paul recounts his conversion in Galatians 1, where he makes it clear the gospel of Jesus Christ he received was not taught, but received by revelation from Jesus (1:12). And then, he says, "But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles..." (1:15). Then, Paul goes on to recount the details of his own story. The point is not to compare our story, or testimony, to Paul's (or to anyone else's for that matter!) but to receive the gift we've been given in having new life in Christ. Like Paul, we've been changed, and that is extraordinarily good news!

Saul's change should help us think back and see our own. And Saul's change should help us to know, believe, and trust that God will write our stories all day and every day. There's no way Paul could have known the impact of his life story because of his encounter he had with Jesus on the road to Damascus. Paul traveled the world to proclaim the good news of the Gospel. He forfeited the status, wealth, and privilege he enjoyed as a pharisee to sit outside near synagogues to make tents. He shepherded believers, like Timothy, to faithfully follow the Lord's call. He testified to Jesus before some of the highest political rulers of his day. And when it was all said and done, Paul believed that everything was worthless when compared to encountering, and gaining, Jesus over and over again (Philippians 3:8).

I really enjoy the fact that we so often hear a "grace along the journey" during worship at BBC. I hope that as you read the account of Saul's conversion, you'll remember the people, places, and experiences that have formed you. And by doing so, I hope you'll believe that God wants to work in the same way to keep writing your story, even if you don't fully understand it yet. Because by Saul falling to his knees and coming to faith in Christ, he, too, entered God's story of redemption, despite all of his faults and failures. And you, too, have entered that great story of redemption. The question becomes: what will we do with it? What will you do with this story you're a part of? I hope and pray that you will go and live this good news wherever and however God has called you!

Questions:

1. Who was Saul? What is his backstory before his conversion here in Acts 9? (Acts and Galatians are very helpful for letting us in on Paul's backstory)
2. Recall a time that you have had a strong personal encounter with Christ. What happened? Why was it so significant to you and why is it still significant for you today?
3. How did Paul's life change immediately after having his encounter with Jesus? What should change look like for us as we encounter Jesus on a daily basis?
4. Why is Ananias significant to Paul's story? Would you have fulfilled Ananias' role for Saul if you were in his shoes? Why or why not?
5. Who is someone that has been like Ananias to you? In what ways did they help you make sense of how the Lord was working in your life?
6. Why was it important that Saul spend "several days with the disciples in Damascus?"
7. What is Barnabas' role in the story?
8. Like Barnabas, how can you come to the aid of someone who needs to be heard, supported, or included? What would that look like for you?
9. Why do you think Luke includes the detail that the church enjoyed peace and was strengthened in verse 31? How does that connect with Saul's conversion?

Introduction

Turn on flashlight. **What are some other things that make bright lights?** Volunteers answer. **Listen to hear what happened when a man saw a very bright light.** (Hold your Bible open to Acts 9 as you tell the following story.)

Paul Shows Anger

The Bible tells us that many people loved Jesus. But other people did NOT love Jesus. Paul was one those people who were angry that so many people loved Jesus! Paul heard that many of the people who loved Jesus lived in a faraway city. "I will go to that city," Paul said. "I'll stop them from talking about Jesus. When I find people who love Jesus, I'll put them in jail!" So Paul and his helpers traveled to the faraway city.



Paul Meets Jesus

On the road near the city, Paul suddenly saw a very bright light. Paul was so surprised! He fell to the ground. The light was so bright that Paul could not see ANYTHING! Then Paul heard a voice! "Paul, why are you hurting Me?" the voice asked.

"Who are You, Lord?" Paul asked.

The voice said, "I am Jesus, the One you are hurting." Paul must have been even more surprised! Then Jesus told Paul to go to the city. Paul's helpers led him to the city. For three days, Paul didn't eat or drink anything. Paul still couldn't see. He prayed to God.

Ananias Obeys Jesus

While Paul was praying, Jesus spoke to another man in the city. The man's name was Ananias. "Ananias, go to see Paul and pray for him," Jesus said.

So Ananias obeyed Jesus and went to see Paul. Ananias prayed for Paul, and suddenly Paul could see again! Now Paul loved Jesus. Paul wanted to show others that God loved them, too. Paul told others that Jesus is God's Son.

Conclusion

God showed His love to Paul by helping Paul believe in Jesus and by sending Ananias to help Paul. God loves us, too. Our Bible says, "God's love for us is great." (Optional: Review story by using pages 467-472 in *God's Story for Me* Bible storybook.)

Creative Bible Storytelling Idea

Dress in a Bible-times costume and tell the story as if you were one of Paul's friends. Use as much expression as possible.





Jesus talks to Saul.

Acts 9:1-19

Directions: As you listen to the story being read from the Bible, list words that you hear that describe Saul/Paul. Write the words that describe Saul on one side of the picture and the words that describe Paul on the other side. Compare both sides to see how following Jesus changed Paul's life.

