



**ELEMENTARY
LARGE GROUP**

LESSON 2
PAUL'S CONVERSION

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: The Holy Spirit Changes Us

SCRIPTURE: Acts 9

GOD'S BIG STORY: Jesus confronts Saul on the road to Damascus and miraculously changes him from an enemy of Christianity into a Christ-follower through the Holy Spirit's transforming power.

WORD OF WONDER: Don't live the way this world lives. Let your way of thinking be completely changed. Then you will be able to test what God wants for you. And you will agree that what he wants is right. His plan is good and pleasing and perfect. —Romans 12:2

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Welcome Question: How does the sun change us?
- SMALL GROUP
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Responding in Worship
- Blessing Your Kids



INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: The Holy Spirit Changes Us

SCRIPTURE: Acts 9

WORD OF WONDER: Romans 12:2

My front porch is my most favorite place to talk to God—a cup of coffee and my prayer journal, and I am a happy girl. I spent many mornings praying similar prayers in a rough season of my life. My hurt from the actions of others had begun to morph into frustration with God. Why hadn't He disciplined those who had wronged me? Followers of Christ in the church had acted in sinful, hurtful ways, and I couldn't fathom why God hadn't already dealt out their consequences.

Writing out a prayer that I had been praying for months, the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart; the Spirit changed my heart. He reminded me “even if.” Even if my situation never changed, even if those who had wronged me never suffered any consequences, even if I didn't understand it, God was still worthy of my praise, not my frustration. The Spirit changed my heart with those two simple words.

What is the Holy Spirit speaking to you? The Spirit wants to change your heart and actions, but you have to listen. Look back at how Paul was changed in Acts 9:1–19. Paul wasn't looking for a heart change, but God made sure he listened. Spend some time listening to the Spirit this week. Let God speak to you and transform you to be more like Him.

—**Amber Pike**

Kidmin Leader and Author

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Saul was a prominent member of the Pharisees, elite Jews who were experts in rules of personal holiness. Sometimes the Bible uses his Roman name, Paul. Luke says that Saul had access to the high priest and had previously agreed with the stoning of Stephen, a Jesus-follower (Acts 9:1–2; 7:58; 8:1).

WHAT?

An encounter with God, called theophany, is transformative. Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other prophets were sent on special missions after having a vision of God. But Saul faced the presence of God in Jesus Himself, proving that Jesus is the Son of God.

WHERE?

Saul was on the road from Jerusalem—where the temple and priests were located—to the city of Damascus in the north. It would take about a week to traverse more than 100 miles on foot.

WHEN?

Luke introduces Saul as the spread of the gospel is continuing from Judea to Samaria and to the rest of the world, which fulfilled the words of Jesus (Acts 1:8). Saul became crucial in spreading the gospel among Gentiles in the 40s and 50s AD.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

Through the work of Jesus and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, God can wash a person's sin clean (1 Corinthians 6:11). Because the Holy Spirit dwells in followers of Jesus, Paul calls their collective body a temple (1 Corinthians 6:19).

Large Group

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: The Holy Spirit Changes Us

SCRIPTURE: Acts 9

WORD OF WONDER: Romans 12:2

As kids arrive...

Around 20 minutes before service begins, display series theme loopPlay high-energy music in the background.

LG Leader walks around the room on mic and greets kids by name as they enter the room. Be sure to move to their level and introduce yourself to any new friends. Welcome kids by name and greet them with enthusiasm. Be extra intentional about hearing and responding to what they say.

SLIDE: SERIES THEME LOOP

Welcome Question

Consider using a:30 or 2:00 Countdown to let leaders and kids know it's almost time to begin!

At Your Start Time...

SLIDE: WELCOME QUESTION

At your service start time, call attention to the Welcome Question on the screen and invite Small Group Leaders to begin:

"The sun is really bright, isn't it? Today in God's big story, we're going to learn about a man named Paul who saw an amazing light from heaven that was even "brighter than the sun" (Acts 26:13, NIV)!"

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Today's Wonder Truth is **THE HOLY SPIRIT CHANGES US**. We'll learn more about that starting in small group!"



Small Group

While kids are in small group, consider sitting in the groups for a few minutes each. Engage and interact as is appropriate.

Countdown

After about 15 minutes of small group, give a 5 minute warning and begin the countdown.

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN

"Hey everyone! Welcome to our Large Group Worship time! My name is _____ and I'm excited to take this time to worship God, review what we just read, and talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning about God! Everyone, let's stand up together!

There are so many amazing things in God's creation that change over time! Some only take a matter of moments to change. Others take years, or even centuries. Remember, today, we're going to learn how God transforms, or changes, us on the inside so we become more like Him each day.

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Today's Wonder Truth is **THE HOLY SPIRIT CHANGES US.**"



Declaring God's Wonder

SLIDE: DECLARATION

Read each line boldly and invite kids to repeat after you **Thank**

You, God, that You are good! (Kids repeat.)

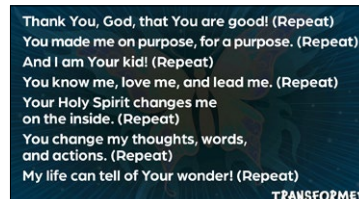
You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Kids repeat.) **And I am Your kid!** (Kids repeat.)

You know me, love me, and lead me. (Kids repeat.)

Your Holy Spirit changes me on the inside. (Kids repeat.)

You change my thoughts, words, and actions. (Kids repeat.)

My life can tell of Your wonder! (Kids repeat.)



Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here as an example:

God, thank You for bringing each kid here today. Thank You that Your Holy Spirit changes us as we choose to follow You. Open our hearts and minds to hear Your truth. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Worship

Consider sharing some about the songs you are going to sing. What they mean, why we sing them, why they are meaningful and important to you! Remember that some kids may have no idea why we worship or what we are doing!

WORSHIP VIDEOS: *Alive with You, Jesus Is Peace*

God's Big Story

SLIDE: TITLE SLIDE

Let kids know today's portion of God's big story comes from the book of Acts, which is in the second half of the Bible. **"Let's start by watching part of God's big story directly from the Bible. Afterward, we'll experience more of the story!"**



LESSON 2 PAUL'S CONVERSION

EXPERIENCE IT! SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: first-century costume, mini flashlights (1 per kid) or several regular-sized flashlights, chain and shackles (optional), spotlight (optional)

RESOURCES: *Paul's Conversion Experience It! Script* (1 copy)

Leader Tip: If you used a chain and shackles prop for Risen Lesson 5, consider reusing it again in this Experience It! Script. If you don't already have one prepared, consider creating a DIY chain and shackles prop. Cut strips of cardboard, staple them into a cuff shape that can go over wrists, and paint them black to use as shackles. Then attach the cardboard cuffs to a simple chain (like those used for hanging plants).

Ahead of time, invite an adult leader to play the part of Saul (also called Paul). Gather items for a first-century costume, or ask the adult volunteer to provide his own. The costume might include a simple tunic and a rope to use as a belt. This Experience It! Script calls for two roles: the leader (you) and Saul. Provide a copy of the Experience It! Script for the person playing Saul, and encourage him to familiarize himself with it ahead of time.

Gather kids together. If you have mini flashlights, hand one to each kid. If you have several regular-sized flashlights, distribute them to several kids. Instruct kids to keep the flashlights off and in their laps until the appropriate time in the story.

Leader Tip: Saul and Paul are two names for the same person! Remind kids of this as needed to alleviate any confusion.

Leader: "**After Jesus died on the cross, rose again, and ascended into heaven, God sent the Holy Spirit to His followers—the first Christians. The Holy Spirit gave them strength and boldness, and they shared the good news of Jesus throughout the region.**

Have you ever had an enemy who became a friend? Pause for kids to process and answer the question. **Even the first Christians had enemies, people who didn't like them and wanted to keep them from telling others about Jesus.**

The book of Acts tells about one of their worst enemies—a Jewish man named Saul who was sometimes called Paul. (Maybe you've heard of him!) Saul was devoted to God, but the things Saul knew about Jesus didn't match any of his expectations for a messiah. After all, would a king be killed on a cross? Saul persecuted the followers of Jesus and captured some of them as prisoners. Some followers of Jesus were even killed!"

"Saul" steps near the stage area with chain and shackles in hand, if available, to convey the idea that he is on the hunt to capture Christians.

"Did you hear that? Pause for kids to answer. **I think someone is coming. Saul steps onto the stage area, his face intense. Shhh ... it's Saul! Please stay quiet. We don't want him to know you are here!**

Leader: Nervously. **Um ... hey, Saul! Where are you off to?"**

Saul: **"I'm actually on my way to Damascus, but I'm on the lookout for those so-called Christians. I've been given permission to capture more of them. "**

Leader: **"I'm sure they're somewhere."** Signal to the kids to stay quiet.

Saul: **"Hmm ... well, if you see any Christians, please send a messenger to let me know."** Saul starts to walk away.

Leader: To the kids. **"Whoa, that was close! Saul continued on his way to Damascus. Saul keeps walking slowly across the stage area. Suddenly, he was blinded by a light that shone from heaven!"**

Invite kids to turn their flashlights on and shine them at Saul (but not directly in his eyes!). If a spotlight is available, shine it on Saul.

Saul falls to the ground. **"As Saul fell to the ground, a voice said, "Saul! Saul! Why are you opposing me?" (Acts 9:4)."**

Saul: *Crouch on the ground and look confused.* **"Who are you, Lord?" (Acts 9:5).**

Leader: **"'I am Jesus,' he replied. 'I am the one you are opposing. Now get up and go into the city. There you will be told what you must do'" (Acts 9:5).** Instruct kids to turn off their flashlights and place them back in their laps. Turn off the spotlight, if used.

There were others with Saul on the road, and they heard a voice but didn't see the blinding light. They led Saul into Damascus, for Saul had become blind. Invite two kids to the stage area to lead the now-blind Saul from one end of the stage to the other.

For three days, Saul wouldn't eat or drink anything, and he kept praying. Saul's two friends leave the stage area. *Saul kneels as though praying.*

While Saul was in Damascus, a follower of Jesus named Ananias was living there. He could have been one of the very same people Saul had planned to put in chains. But Jesus appeared in a vision and told Ananias, "Saul is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight."

Ananias couldn't believe Jesus wanted him to go to Saul, who was famous for hating Christians! But Jesus said to him, "Go! I have chosen this man to work for me. He will announce my name to the Gentiles and to their kings. He will also announce my name to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for me" (Acts 9:15–16).

Jesus had a plan to completely change Saul through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus would transform Saul into a missionary!

So Ananias didn't listen to his fear; he listened to Jesus. When he found Saul, Ananias greeted him saying, "Brother Saul ... you saw the Lord Jesus." *Saul looks up as though listening to someone, still unable to see.* "He appeared to you on the road as you were coming here. He has sent me so that you will be able to see again. You will be filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 9:17).

Placing his hands on Saul, Ananias prayed, and what looked like fish scales fell from Saul's eyes."

Saul: Standing up with eyes wide open. **"I can see again!"**

Leader: **"Instead of arresting the followers of Jesus, Saul was baptized and became a Christian himself. Saul went out to proclaim the good news that Jesus is the Son of God."**

Everyone who knew him was surprised that Saul—a famous enemy of Jesus’ followers—was now calling Jesus the Messiah. What a change! Saul, who was later called Paul, went on to write many of the letters we can read in the Bible. Because of Paul’s message, many, many people chose to follow Jesus.

The Spirit of God transformed an enemy into an apostle of Jesus. *Saul stands in front of the kids, a smile on his face.* The Holy Spirit turned Paul’s life around and made him a completely different person. In the same way, the Spirit of God can change us and make us new. Nothing we do can stand in God’s way. The Holy Spirit changes us."

Leader Tip: If time allows, encourage small groups of kids to reenact the story of Paul’s conversion using their flashlights and including as many details from the story as they can recall.

Collect the flashlights and thank kids and your adult volunteer for their help in telling the story.

Leader Tip: Kids may have different ideas (or none at all) of who the Holy Spirit is. Help them understand that the Holy Spirit is the presence of God in followers of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is part of the *Trinity*—three persons who are all one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God gives the Holy Spirit as a gift to every Jesus-follower!

Connecting the Wonder Truth

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Pose the following question to kids to help them connect the Wonder Truth to God's big story:

"Our Wonder Truth today is **THE HOLY SPIRIT CHANGES US**. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.

Years after Jesus encountered Paul on the road to Damascus, Paul wrote, "When anyone lives in Christ, the new creation has come. The old is gone! The new is here!" (2 Corinthians 5:17). The Holy Spirit is the one who changes Jesus-followers and transforms us into new creations! The Holy Spirit lives in us as Jesus-followers, and because of the Spirit's dwelling, Paul says that together our bodies are temples (1 Corinthians 6:19). What a change!"



Responding in Worship

SLIDE: RESPONDING IN WORSHIP

Talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning with next steps such as tithing, prayer, asking questions, and worship. Encourage kids to ask their SG leaders any questions they were wondering during the lesson.

***Introduce this next song and invite kids to respond and participate in worship. There are no motions to this video. Kids should still stand and leaders should model worship like they would in adult service. Please refer to the Worship Posture Tutorial on the resource page before leading.



WORSHIP SONG: YOUR GREAT NAME

Blessing Your Kids

Speak a blessing over your kids, Use your own words, with the blessing below as an example if needed.

Blessing: May the God who loves you perfectly change you by His Spirit to become more like Him today, tomorrow, and in the weeks to come as you seek to follow Him in your thoughts, words, and actions.