



Saul Meets Jesus Near Damascus Acts 9:1-20

Your students may think they understand what it means to have a changed life. They hear about sports stars and celebrities proclaiming one life change after another—and then getting into trouble again sometime later. Kids don't often see a life change that lasts—at least not in Hollywood or the sports world. Because of this, kids may wonder whether it's possible for real, lasting change to occur. Use this lesson to help students understand that the change in their lives can be permanent and it can permeate every area of their lives.



► Bible Point



Jesus changes our lives.

Key Verse

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Weaving Faith Into Life

Kids will experience real life change through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

LESSON	WHAT KIDS DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	Swap Shirts <i>(about 15 min.)</i> Play a game in which they learn about change.	1 button-down shirt per person, CD player Teacher Pack: CD	
2 Bible Exploration	Biblical Prosecution <i>(about 20 min.)</i> Participate in a mock prosecution of the Apostle Paul.	Bibles, pens, Bible Buzz Teacher Pack: Bible Timeline 	Tear out the Lesson 7 pages from each Bible Buzz student book.
	Old vs. New <i>(about 15 min.)</i> Discuss the differences between our old selves and our new selves.	Bibles, pens, Bible Buzz Teacher Pack: "Body Outlines" poster 	

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.



LESSON	WHAT KIDS DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	Option 1: Poetic Change <i>(about 15 min.)</i> Write poems or letters about the change that God can make in us.	Bible Buzz, paper, pens, CD player, copies of the lyrics (at the end of this lesson) Teacher Pack: CD	
	Option 2: Sponge Symbols <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Create symbols that represent how they want God to change their lives.	Bible Buzz, 1 sponge and 1 pair of scissors per person, markers, newsprint, CD player, copies of the lyrics (at the end of this lesson) Teacher Pack: CD	
4 Lasting Impressions	Daily Challenges <i>(about 5 min.)</i> Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word.	Bible Buzz	
	Weaving Faith at Home <i>(about 2 min.)</i> Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.		

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.



Saul Meets Jesus Near Damascus

Acts 9:1-20

BIBLE BACKGROUND
FOR LEADERS

Saul Encounters Jesus on the Damascus Road

Saul was traveling to Damascus to arrest Christians when Jesus met him on the road. A light he later described as “brighter than the sun” (Acts 26:13) flashed out of heaven, and he dropped to the ground. When Jesus questioned Saul, Saul’s question in return was genuine. The term *lord* can refer simply to a person of superior standing. It seems that Saul really didn’t know who was addressing him. When Jesus told him who he was, the truth of all that had happened must have swept through Saul like a flood. All that Saul had believed about Jesus was wrong, and in his zeal for God, he had been persecuting those who believed what was true!

Blinded Saul Is Told to Wait for Instructions

It’s interesting that Jesus told Saul that he was to go into the city and wait for instructions and that Saul was blinded and remained that way as he waited in Damascus for three days. We can only speculate on what went through Saul’s mind during that time, but he must have been going through all the Old Testament Scriptures stored in his memory, sorting out how Jesus could be the Messiah in spite of Saul’s earlier belief. God gave him time to think!

Ananias Helps Saul

Saul’s meeting with Ananias introduces another aspect of the story. Imagine the faith it took for Ananias to seek out the man he probably knew was coming to town to arrest him and other Christians. How better could the Christians there and around Judea have found out about the change in Saul? God definitely knows what he is doing!

Why did God choose Saul? God could have used anyone. Perhaps he chose Saul to be a supreme example of how a life can be changed when God enters it. It is often suggested that Saul of Tarsus became Paul after this conversion. The truth is that “Saul” was his Jewish name but “Paul” was the Roman equivalent by which he became better known.

The Jesus Connection

Maybe you haven’t experienced that kind of “Road to Damascus” conversion, and that’s okay. The road that brought you to a relationship with Jesus doesn’t matter. What is important is whether or not you are making the most of your journey with him.

Think of one person you can share your Lord with. Pray that God will help you show that person the light. You can write your prayer here.





Swap Shirts Supplies

1 button-down shirt per
person
CD player
Teacher Pack
CD: “Fast-Paced
Fanfare” (track 15)

1 GETTING STARTED

Swap Shirts

What You’ll Do ■■■■■■

Welcome kids warmly as they arrive, and ask them how their week went. When all students have arrived, have them sit in the center of the meeting room.

Say: **Today we’re going to talk about change. Now I bet all of you are really good at changing your clothes. Well, today we’re going to see how good you are. I’m going to give each of you a shirt. When you’ve all put your shirts on, I’m going to play music. When I stop the music, you have to find a partner to trade shirts with you.**

Have each person don a shirt. If you have an uneven number of kids, participate to make an even number, or have one student operate the CD player. Start the game by playing the “Fast-Paced Fanfare” (track 15 on the CD). Play and pause the music a few times.

Say: **Now we’re going to make the game interesting. I want you to put your button-down shirt on backward. Get a partner to help you button up your shirt. When you’re ready, I’ll play the music again. When I stop, you must remove your shirt by unbuttoning it. Then throw it across the room, find another shirt on the ground, and put it on the right way. You can’t let anyone help you take off your button-down shirt. Let’s see who can accomplish this challenging task.**

Play the game a few times by playing and pausing the music. Then collect the shirts, and have students sit in the center of the meeting room.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- Were you able to take off your shirt by unbuttoning it? Why or why not?
- How is trying to take off a backward shirt like trying to change a bad habit or a wrong attitude in our lives?
- What did you learn about change from this game?
- Why is it so hard for people to change how they think, act, or feel?

Say: **Lots of people are always trying to change things about themselves or their lives. With great effort, we may be able to change our behavior or even the way we think. But when we let Jesus come into our lives, he changes us from the inside out. He makes us into totally new creations. Today we’re going to explore how Jesus changed one person’s life in the New Testament. This story will help us discover how ► JESUS CHANGES OUR LIVES.**



2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

Biblical Prosecution

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Hold up the Bible Timeline and show kids the “Saul Meets Jesus” picture.

Have students form groups of three or four and turn to the “Making the Case” section of Bible Buzz.

Say: **Many of you probably know a lot about the Apostle Paul. He’s well-known for being a Pharisee who met Jesus and had a life-changing experience. To learn more about how Jesus changed Paul’s life, I’d like you to pretend that you’re a lawyer on an elite legal team during Paul’s life-changing experience. Half of you will prosecute Paul and try to prove that his experience was false; the other half will defend him and his experience. I’d like you to read Acts 9:1-20 and think about Paul’s transformation. Write in your Bible Buzz the facts that you find.**

Distribute Bibles and pens. Assign half of the groups to be prosecutors and the other half to be defenders. Give groups three to five minutes to read the passage and search for evidence they can use for their prosecution or defense. Encourage groups to look up the additional verses provided in the Bible Buzz to help them prepare their cases.

Say: **I’d like the prosecutor groups to gather on my left and the defender groups to gather on my right. Using the notes you’ve collected, I’d like your group to prepare a speech. If you’re defending Paul, I’d like you to prepare a speech that attempts to prove that Paul’s change was real. If you’re prosecuting, I’d like you to prepare a speech that tries to prove that Paul’s change wasn’t real.**

Have each group prepare its speech. Encourage kids to allow each group member to present a portion of the group’s speech. When groups are ready, have the prosecution go first. (You can turn up the heat for this activity by having opposing groups stand facing each other as they give their speeches.) When groups have finished, gather everyone in a circle.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- Which speech do you think was most convincing? Explain.
- Why do you think Paul had so many enemies—both Christian and non-Christian?
- How did Jesus change Paul’s life?

Say: **Sometimes we think that Jesus can’t change us. But just as Jesus changed Paul’s life and used him for his kingdom, he can do that in our lives, too.**



Biblical Prosecution Supplies

.....

Bibles
pens
Bible Buzz
Teacher Pack
Bible Timeline

Biblical Prosecution Easy Prep

.....

Tear out the Lesson 7 pages from each Bible Buzz student book.





Old vs. New Supplies

Bibles
pens
Bible Buzz
Teacher Pack
“Body Outlines” poster

Old vs. New

What You’ll Do ■■■■■■

Have kids remain in their groups.

Say: **Can you believe the incredible change that happened in Paul’s life? Just imagine, Paul actively searched for and persecuted Christians. Then one day, when looking for more Christians, Paul was confronted by Jesus.**

Ask:

- **What would you have done if you had met Paul before Jesus changed him?**
- **Would you have felt comfortable hanging out with Paul after what Jesus did in his life? Why or why not?**

Say: **The changes that occurred in Paul were amazing. We know what Paul was like before Jesus changed him, but what are most people like before and after Jesus changes them? Let’s talk about that.**

Direct students to the “Outlining the Change” section of Bible Buzz. Have groups brainstorm what people are like before Jesus changes them and write their thoughts by the body outline labeled “Before.” Then ask groups to brainstorm what people are like after Jesus changes them and write their thoughts by the outline labeled “After.” Give groups several minutes to brainstorm their ideas. When they’re ready, ask groups to choose their top two ideas from each side.

Show students the “Body Outlines” poster from the Teacher Pack. Ask groups to send a representative to the poster to write their top two “Before” and “After” ideas on the poster. When they’ve finished, read aloud the responses the representatives wrote on the poster.

Say: **I’d like your group to choose one of the ideas from the “Before” outline on the poster and one idea from the “After” outline. Then I’d like your groups to present a slow-motion instant replay to show the transformation from the “before” quality to the “after” quality. For example, your instant replay might show someone walking alone, appearing to be lonely, and then looking up to heaven and smiling as Jesus comes to live in his or her heart.**

Give groups three or four minutes to create their instant replays. When they’re ready, have groups present their slow-motion replays to the rest of the class.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What does it mean for our lives to be changed? Explain.**
- **Can everyone’s life be changed? Why or why not?**
- **How does Jesus change our lives?**





Say: **It's easy to think that the change Paul experienced is rare. We often think Paul was an exception and that Jesus changes only a few people. Actually, Jesus longs to change all of us. We don't have to be a well-known persecutor in order for Jesus to reach us. Jesus loves us as much as he loved Paul, and ► JESUS CHANGES OUR LIVES, too.**

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Option 1: Poetic Change

What You'll Do ■■■■■■


Give kids paper and pens.

Say: **Now that we know what it means to be changed by God, let's think how that change affects the way we live.**

Have kids find and read the Key Verse, 2 Corinthians 5:17, in Bible Buzz: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"

Say: **Listen to a song based on our Key Verse.**

Pass out copies of the lyrics, and play "A New Creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17) (track 16 on the CD), referring to the lyrics pages.

 **If anyone (if anyone)
Is in Christ (is in Christ),
He is a new creation (a new creation);
The old has gone (the old has gone),
The new has come! (The new has come!)
He is a new creation (a new creation);
We have been made new!**

(Repeat from the beginning.)

We have been made new!

"A New Creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17) by Carol Smith. © 2003 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

Encourage kids to think about the words of the song and then write a poem or letter about how Jesus can change their own lives and make them new.

Say: **We've all experienced change in our lives. But the change that is most important is the change Jesus makes in our lives. I'm going to play the song again.**



Option 1: Poetic Change Supplies

- Bible Buzz
- paper
- pens
- CD player
- copies of the lyrics (at the end of this lesson)
- Teacher Pack**
- CD: "A New Creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17) (track 16)





Option 2: Sponge Symbols

Bible Buzz

1 sponge and 1 pair of scissors per person

markers

newsprint

CD player

copies of the lyrics (at the end of this lesson)

Teacher Pack

CD: "A New Creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17) (track 16)

As I play it, I'd like you to spend a few moments praying. Ask God to help you change some things in your life, or thank God for the change that he's made in your life.

Play "A New Creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17) again, and give students time to pray silently.


Option 2: Sponge Symbols

What You'll Do

Say: **We've all experienced some type of change in our lives. We've changed schools, hobbies, or homes. The change that we're talking about today is entirely different. God wants to change us the same way that he changed Paul.**

Have kids find and read the Key Verse, 2 Corinthians 5:17, in Bible Buzz: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"

Pass out copies of the lyrics, and play "A New Creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17) (track 16 on the CD), referring to the lyrics pages.

 **If anyone (if anyone)
Is in Christ (is in Christ),
He is a new creation (a new creation);
The old has gone (the old has gone),
The new has come! (The new has come!)
He is a new creation (a new creation);
We have been made new!**

(Repeat from the beginning.)

We have been made new!

"A New Creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17) by Carol Smith. © 2003 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

Ask:

- **How does this verse show you how Jesus changes our lives?**

Give each student a sponge and a pair of scissors. Instruct students to cut their sponges into symbols that represent the change they want Jesus to make in their lives. For example, a student might cut out a heart to represent a desire to love Jesus more.

Place a sheet of newsprint on the floor. When kids have finished, ask them to gather around the newsprint.

Say: **I'm going to play the song again. During the song, I'd like you to use your sponge symbols to decorate the newsprint.**



Distribute markers, and have students color one side of their sponge symbols. Replay “A New Creation” (2 Corinthians 5:17) and encourage students to decorate the newsprint with their sponge symbols. When they’ve finished, ask students to explain the meaning of their symbols.



4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

What You’ll Do

Say: **Let’s each choose a Daily Challenge for the week to help us remember that ► JESUS CHANGES OUR LIVES.**

Have kids find this week’s Daily Challenges on the Bible Buzz pages and choose one to do this week. They can choose one or more of these three options:

- **Take a walk in your neighborhood and pray for Jesus to change your neighbors’ lives.**
- **Share with a friend at school how Jesus changed your life.**
- **Keep a journal this week, and write down every change in your everyday life, big or small, that traces back to your faith in Jesus.**

Make sure you choose a Daily Challenge as well, and tell the kids what you chose. Kids will be more inclined to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What’s a practical way you’re going to do your Daily Challenge? Include a time, a place, and other ideas.**

Say: **► JESUS CHANGES OUR LIVES. Let’s see how he does as we follow through on our Daily Challenges this week.**

Weaving Faith at Home

Encourage kids to talk with their parents about the Daily Challenges they chose and what they learned about how Jesus changes us. Kids can also do the activities in the “HomeConnect” section of their Bible Buzz pages with their families.

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church’s families. Available at group.com/digital.

Close with prayer.

Daily Challenges Supplies

Bible Buzz



**Lyrics** ■■■■**A New Creation (2 Corinthians 5:17)**

If anyone (if anyone)
Is in Christ (is in Christ),
He is a new creation (a new creation);
The old has gone (the old has gone),
The new has come! (The new has come!)
He is a new creation (a new creation);
We have been made new!

(Repeat from the beginning.)

We have been made new!

"A New Creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17) by Carol Smith. © 2003 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

! **OK**
■ **TO COPY**

