

TEACHER BIBLE STUDY

Paul's First Journey

Acts 13:1–15:35

Paul's first missionary journey began in Antioch of Syria—the third-largest city in the Roman Empire, after Rome and Alexandria. Antioch was about 20 miles inland from the Mediterranean Sea and nearly 300 miles north of Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit was working in the Antioch church. The Spirit led the believers there to send out Paul and Barnabas on a journey to preach. The church obeyed, and Paul and Barnabas went out.

Now Paul—the man who had devotedly persecuted Christians—was a missionary. A missionary is someone who obeys God's call to go and tell others the good news about Jesus. Paul and Barnabas traveled to several cities and all over the island of Cyprus, telling everyone about Jesus.

In each city, they went first into the synagogues. They told the Jews about Jesus. Some of them believed, but some of them were angry at Paul and Barnabas. They rejected the truth about Jesus. In some places, the Jews made plans to kill Paul!

Paul and Barnabas faced a lot of trouble because they told people about Jesus. So Paul and Barnabas went to the Gentiles, the non-Jews. This was the purpose to which God had called Paul. (See Acts 9:15.) When the Gentiles heard the gospel, many of them believed.

Help kids understand the meaning of the word *Gentile*. Gentiles are people who are not Jews. The gospel is not for a select group of people; it is for everyone! If Paul had not taken the gospel to the Gentiles, many of us would probably not be believers today.

Paul obeyed the Holy Spirit's call to tell the world about Jesus. Many of the Jews rejected Christ, so Paul shared the gospel with the non-Jews. Many of them believed in Jesus. God uses people to tell others about Jesus so that people all over the world can be saved from their sin by trusting in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

YOUNGER KIDS BIBLE STUDY OVERVIEW

Session Title: Paul's First Journey

Bible Passage: Acts 13:1–15:35

Big Picture Question: What is a missionary? A missionary is someone who obeys God's call to go and tell others the good news about Jesus.

Key Passage: Romans 1:16

Unit Christ Connection: God chose Paul to be a witness to all he had seen and heard of the risen Christ.

Small Group Time

Welcome time
Activity page (5 minutes)
Session starter (10 minutes)
Key passage activity (5 minutes)

Bible story review (10 minutes)
Activity choice (10 minutes)
Journal (5 minutes)
Prayer (5 minutes)

THE BIBLE STORY

Paul's First Journey

Acts 13:1–15:35

Paul and his friend Barnabas were with the church in Antioch. The Holy Spirit chose Paul and Barnabas for a special work. So they obeyed and left Antioch to do the work.

First, Paul and Barnabas sailed to the island of Cyprus (SIGH pruhs). They stopped in different cities and taught the good news about Jesus in the Jewish synagogues. **Some people believed the message they were telling.** Next, Paul and Barnabas traveled back to the mainland. **They went to the city of Antioch in Asia.** On the Sabbath Day, Paul and Barnabas went to the synagogue. The people invited them to speak, so **Paul began to preach the message of Jesus.**

Paul explained that people can be forgiven for their sins through Jesus. He said that believing in Jesus is the only way to be forgiven. **Keeping the Law of Moses cannot free someone from sin.** He urged the Jewish listeners to believe what he was saying. **When Paul and Barnabas got ready to leave, the people asked them to come back** on the next Sabbath Day. They wanted to know more.

So the next week, Paul and Barnabas went back to the synagogue. It was crowded! Not only had the Jews returned, but **almost everyone in the city—Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews)—had come to hear the message of Jesus.** The Jews saw all the people, and they **were jealous. They argued with Paul and Barnabas and shouted at them.**

“We told God’s message to the Jews first,” Paul said, “but you refuse to listen!” God had a plan to use Paul as a light for other nations— for Gentiles too. Paul would reach people all over the world and show them how to be saved. This was happy news for the Gentiles, and many of them believed the message of God. But **the Jews** were against Paul and Barnabas and **kicked them out of the city.**

Next, Paul and Barnabas went to the city of Iconium (igh KOH nih uhm). The same thing happened there! They spoke in the synagogue, and **many Jews and Greeks believed the message about Jesus.** But **the Jews who refused to believe stirred up trouble.** They planned to kill Paul and Barnabas, but **Paul and Barnabas** escaped. They **traveled to Lystra (LISS truh), and Paul healed a man there who was lame.** The people saw what Paul had done, and they **thought Paul and Barnabas were gods!** They began to praise them, but **Paul and Barnabas**

shouted, “No! We are not gods. We are men just like you! We want to tell you the good news of God.”

Then some people showed up from Antioch and Iconium. They caused trouble so that the people in Lystra turned against Paul and Barnabas too. They threw stones at Paul and dragged him out of the city. They thought he was dead, but the believers in Lystra gathered around Paul, and he got up.

The next day, Paul and Barnabas went to the city of Derbe (DUHR bih). They told people there about Jesus, and many people believed. Then they went back to Lystra and to Iconium. They encouraged the believers there to continue in the faith.

Finally, Paul and Barnabas returned to the church at Antioch. They reported everything God had done on their journey and how God had helped them share the good news with the Gentiles.

Christ Connection: Paul obeyed the Holy Spirit’s call to tell the world about Jesus. Many of the Jews rejected Christ, so Paul shared the gospel with the non-Jews. Many of them believed in Jesus. God uses people to tell others about Jesus so that people all over the world can be saved from their sin by trusting in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

SMALL GROUP OPENING

Session Title: Paul’s First Journey

Bible Passage: Acts 13:1–15:35

Big Picture Question: What is a missionary? A missionary is someone who obeys God’s call to go and tell others the good news about Jesus.

Key Passage: Romans 1:16

Unit Christ Connection: God chose Paul to be a witness to all he had seen and heard of the risen Christ.

Welcome time:

Arriving Activity: Favorite trips

Guide kids to stand in a circle. Ask each child to tell you about a trip her family has taken and her favorite activity on that trip. Maybe she went to the mountains and liked hiking, or to the beach and liked building sandcastles. Explain that she will do a motion to demonstrate that favorite activity and all kids in the circle will imitate her. After each child has had a turn, review each motion.

Say •You guys have been on some cool trips! Today, we are going to learn about a guy who went on a trip as a missionary. **What is a missionary?** We are going to answer this question today!

Activity page (5 minutes)

- “Crack the Code” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils

Guide boys and girls to complete the activity page.

Say • What does the code say? ***What is a missionary? A missionary is someone who obeys God’s call to go and tell others the good news about Jesus.*** We are going to learn more about Paul today. Paul was a missionary!

Session starter (10 minutes)

Option 1: Far from home

- newspaper or large sheets of paper

Explain that missionaries may go far from home to tell others about Jesus. This work can be very difficult. Guide kids to stand on one side of room and explain that they must get everyone to a faraway land (the other side of the room) to tell others about Jesus. They will use newspapers or paper to get there.

Give one sheet of paper for every six kids. Guide kids to place the sheets on the floor, crowd kids on them, and jump to new pieces. Tear the paper in half or take pieces as kids are traveling to make it more difficult. As you do so, you may explain an obstacle that a missionary might face.

Say • Paul went far from home to tell others about Jesus in our story. He’s a missionary. ***What is a missionary?*** We will find out more today in our Bible story.

Option 2: Explore the world

- globe or world map

Display a globe or world map, and guide kids to explore it. Ask kids to find where they live and where they might like to go one day. Explain that there are many different people in the world. Tell kids about how life might be different if they lived in the Amazon rainforest or in the Sahara Desert.

Say • It’s important that all people hear about Jesus! God calls people to go to new places, maybe far away from home, to tell about Him. A person who does this is called a missionary. In today’s story, Paul was a missionary.

SMALL GROUP LEADER

Session Title: Paul's First Journey

Bible Passage: Acts 13:1–15:35

Big Picture Question: What is a missionary? A missionary is someone who obeys God's call to go and tell others the good news about Jesus.

Key Passage: Romans 1:16

Unit Christ Connection: God chose Paul to be a witness to all he had seen and heard of the risen Christ.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- dry erase board and markers (optional)
- index cards
- marker
- luggage

Make sure the key passage, Romans 1:16, is visible for each child, either as the printed poster or written on a dry erase board. Read the verse together.

Say • Aren't you glad that anyone can be a part of God's family? Jesus paid the price for sin, so that anyone who loves and trusts Him is made righteous before God and has eternal life. Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for our sins. He took our place on the cross. This is the best news we could ever receive! We can tell everyone about this news!

Write each word of the verse on an index card. Place the cards in a piece of luggage and shake to shuffle. Guide kids to "unpack" the cards and arrange them in order. Then mix up the cards and try to do it more quickly if time allows.

Bible story review (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Small Group Visual Pack
- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster
- paper
- marker
- tape
- "Paul's First Journey Map"

Encourage the kids to find Acts 13–15 in their Bibles. Help them as needed.

Use the small group visual pack to show kids where today's Bible story is on the timeline. Tell

kids that Paul had once opposed Jesus' teachings and tried to hurt Jesus' followers, but Paul became a Christian when he heard from Jesus on the road to Damascus. Shortly after, the Holy Spirit led Paul to go on a journey.

Write the following on a separate sheet of paper and post around the room: *Antioch, Cyprus, Antioch in Asia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe*. Use "Paul's First Journey Map" to show kids where these places are on the map.

Review the Bible story provided using the bolded text, or summarize the story in your own words. Travel to each new city as it is mentioned by walking to the area of the room where the sign is posted.

Show the big picture question slide or poster.

Say • Paul and Barnabas were sent out as missionaries. It wasn't an easy task, but the good news about Jesus is too great not to share! ***What is a missionary? A missionary is someone who obeys God's call to go and tell others the good news about Jesus.***

We can go and tell others about Jesus, too. Where could we tell others about Him? We can also pray for missionaries and the people they serve, and we can give money so that more people can go to other countries to tell about Jesus.

Activity choice (10 minutes)

Option 1: Tell your story

- paper
- markers

Tell kids your testimony. Make sure to keep it short and kid- friendly. Explain that even kids who have not yet become Christians have a story about what God has done for them.

Say • Paul began to trust Jesus when Jesus spoke to Paul on the road to Damascus. Have any of you begun to trust Jesus and live for Him? Even if you haven't become a Christian yet, you can still tell about what God has done for you. Maybe He has given you a loving family, a house, the food you need, or great friends. Everyone can tell about what God has done. Missionaries tell people about what God has done for people through Jesus. ***What is a missionary? A missionary is someone who obeys God's call to go and tell others the good news about Jesus.***

Give each child a piece of paper and ask him to draw something that God has done for him. Give kids examples like God sent Jesus, gave us a church to be a part of, gave me a family, and so forth. Guide him to tell you or a partner about all the great things God has done for him, using his picture. Explain that this is good practice for when he has opportunities to talk to friends about Jesus.

Option 2: Airplane reminders

- clothespins, 1 per child
- craft sticks (2 large, 1 small per child)
- markers
- stickers
- strips of paper
- glue

Guide kids to glue the small craft stick horizontally onto the pin, about one quarter of the way from the pinching end. Glue one large craft stick to the opposite end of the pin, leaving space between the stick and the end. Flip over the pin and glue the other large craft stick to match. Guide kids to decorate their planes as they desire. Write *Pray for missionaries around the world!* on the slip of paper and secure in the clip as if it is a banner hanging from the plane.

Say • Each time you see this plane, remember to pray for missionaries who go all over the world to tell people about Jesus. Remember our big picture question? ***What is a missionary? A missionary is someone who obeys God's call to go and tell others the good news about Jesus.*** Let's pray for missionaries now.

Take some time to pray specifically for missionaries with whom your church partners and for the people whom those missionaries serve.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

- Journal Page, 1 per kid
- markers or crayons
- Bible Story Coloring Page

Distribute each child's journal page provided with this session. Guide kids to draw a picture of a person that they can tell about Jesus. Writers may make a list of people that they could tell and write out a prayer to God for them.

Say • God sent Jesus so that we could be made right with Him. This is great news! We can be missionaries to the people we see each day by telling them about Jesus! ***What is a missionary? A missionary is someone who obeys God's call to go and tell others the good news about Jesus.***

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the coloring page provided with this session. Pray, thanking God for the good news He gave us through Jesus. Pray for each child by name. Ask that the Holy Spirit would call kids to follow Jesus and would help them tell others about Him.

Dismiss to parents – Make sure to check security tags when dismissing children.



**I am not ashamed of
the gospel, because it is
the power of God that brings
salvation to everyone who
believes: first to the Jew,
then to the Gentile.
Romans 1:16**



What is a missionary?

**A missionary is someone
who obeys God's call to go
and tell others the good
news about Jesus.**



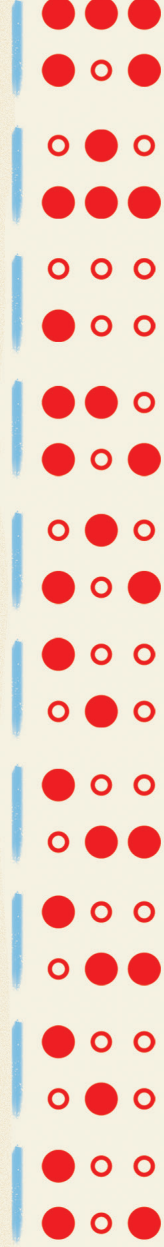
Crack the Code

Philippi Thrace Black Sea

Neapolis

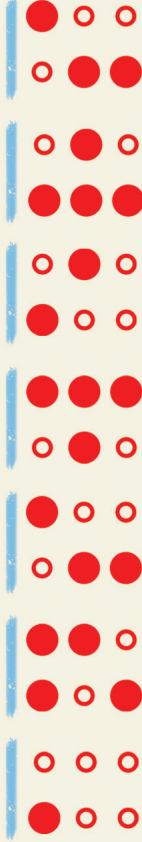
Instructions: Use the dot code to reveal a secret message.

A



is

someone who



God's

call to go and tell others the good news.

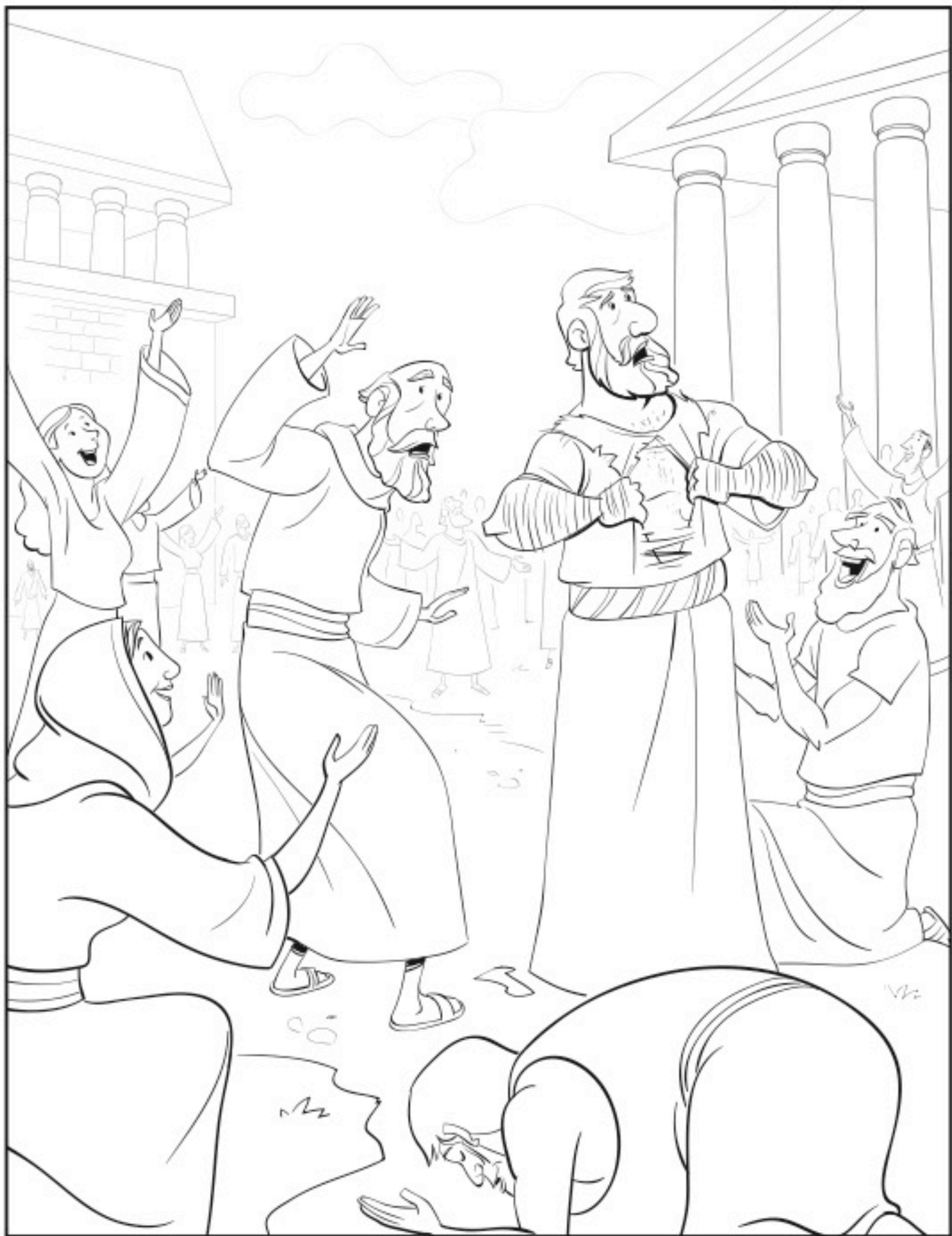


A E I M N



O R S W Y





ALLERGY ALERT



Today we will be tasting/
touching/sniffing:

Please notify the leader
if your child should not
participate.

Instructions: Print this poster. You may laminate it and reuse it throughout the quarter. Use a dry erase marker to fill in the necessary information. Display the poster where parents and kids can see it before class.

the

GOSPEL

GOD'S PLAN FOR ME

gos-pel – *noun*. good news. the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation.



GOD RULES.

The Bible tells us God created everything, including you and me, and He is in charge of everything. *Genesis 1:1; Revelation 4:11; Colossians 1:16-17*



WE SINNED.

We all choose to disobey God. The Bible calls this sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. *Romans 3:23; 6:23*



GOD PROVIDED.

God sent Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. *John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9*



JESUS GIVES.

He lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! *Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18; Ephesians 2:8-9*



WE RESPOND.

Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus. *John 14:6; Romans 10:9-10,13*

Paul's First Journey Map

Instructions: Print and use as directed in the leader guide.



Paul's Conversion and Ministry

Pop some popcorn and talk about how the heat source causes the popcorn kernels to change. Eat the popcorn together as you open your Bible to Acts 9 and briefly review Paul's conversion. Talk about how Paul's life was very different. Talk about how God changes Christians from the inside out to be more like His Son, Jesus.

Paul's Conversion and Baptism

Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-31

Preschool

Key Passage: Romans 1:16

Big Picture Question: What happened when Saul heard Jesus? Saul loved Jesus and told others about Him.

Christ Connection: Saul had hated Jesus and His followers, but then he met Jesus. Jesus came to earth to save sinners. (1 Timothy 1:15) Jesus changed Saul's life! Saul, also known as Paul, spent the rest of his life telling people the good news about Jesus.

Kids

Key Passage: Romans 1:16

Big Picture Question: How did Jesus change Saul's life? Jesus saved Saul from his sins.

Christ Connection: Jesus appeared to Saul and changed him inside and out. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. (1 Timothy 1:15) Jesus called Saul, also known as Paul, who was once an enemy to Christians, to spend the rest of his life telling people the gospel and leading them to trust Jesus as Lord and Savior.

