God’s Grace Changes Us

Bible Focus: Acts 9:1-20

Discovery Point: God’s grace changes us.

Worship Response: Kids will open their lives to being changed by God’s grace and praise God for his gracious work in them.

Key Verse: “This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

A Look at the Session

Mix and match to meet your needs. For more ideas, see “For-Extra-Time Activities” on page 98.

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<th>Session Sequence</th>
<th>What Kids Will Do</th>
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<td>Welcome! (up to 15 minutes)</td>
<td>Look for physical changes to begin thinking about change and how God’s grace changes us.</td>
<td>Sticking With God: Grasping His Grace CD or DVD, CD player or TV/DVD player</td>
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<tr>
<td>Let’s Explore! (up to 20 minutes)</td>
<td>Creatively show how God changed Saul, and do an experiment to see how God changes us.</td>
<td>Hands-On Bibles, bananas, toothpicks, paper, crayons</td>
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<td>Let’s Praise! (up to 15 minutes)</td>
<td>Understand that God gives us friends to help us through change, and praise God for working in their lives.</td>
<td>Sticking With God: Grasping His Grace CD or DVD, CD player or TV/DVD player, markers, drawings from Let’s Explore!</td>
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<td>Let’s Pray! (up to 10 minutes)</td>
<td>Thank God for changes he has made in their lives and pray for others who need to know Jesus.</td>
<td>Sticking With God: Grasping His Grace CD, CD player</td>
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BIBLE BASIS

Saul was on top of his game. He was a strong leader with a great family line, and he was committed to his cause. You name it—he had it going on. But on a journey to take care of what he thought was a problem, he had a major encounter with God’s grace. A light caused him to fall on his face, and the voice of Jesus came out of nowhere: “Hey, Saul, you’re not messing with some troublemakers. You’re messing with me.” That encounter with God’s grace changed Saul’s life and ultimately changed the world. Saul gave himself completely to Jesus Christ and became the Apostle Paul, the one God used to spread his message everywhere. From Paul’s story, kids can learn how important it is to allow God’s grace to change them—and ultimately the world!
Before This Session

- Make five somewhat obvious changes to your meeting space.

- Assemble Bible Exploration Kits (one per five kids): one Hands-On Bible, one banana, one toothpick, paper, and crayons.

- Review the “Inside Out” activity next to Acts 8 in the Hands-On Bible.

- **CD/DVD** Cue the Sticking With God: Grasping His Grace CD (1) or DVD (1).

- Huddle briefly with volunteers before the session. Answer questions they have. Encourage them, and pray for the session, the volunteers, and the kids.

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**TEACHER TIP**

Bible Exploration Kits are an easy way to give each group supplies. The Jabber Mat from Group Publishing is a great tool that can be used as a Bible Exploration Kit and as a space for a Bible Crew to gather. Check it out at group.com/jabbermat.
Welcome!

Supplies: CD player or TV/DVD player

1. Play “Into the Bible” (1) as kids arrive.

2. SAY: I’m so glad you’re here today. We’re going to have fun while we learn about God’s incredible grace! So let’s play a game.

   Gather kids into Bible Crews of five. SAY: I’ve made changes to our meeting area. Work together in your crew to find all five.

   After several minutes, point to crews randomly and ask each one to share one change. Keep going until all changes have been revealed.

3. SAY: Good job! Now introduce yourselves to the others in your crew and take a good look at them. Pause.

   When I say “Turn!” you’ll turn your back to the circle and try to change one quick thing about your appearance. When I say “Turn!” again, you’ll turn back and then take turns letting the others guess what you changed. The person who has the most pets will go first. The people to the right and left of whoever you’re guessing about should not guess (just in case they saw the person make the change). Each person gets three guesses. Then move on to the next person in the circle.

4. When crews have discovered the transformations,

   ASK:
   - What kind of changes do people go through?
   - What kind of changes are fun? Which aren’t?
   - What kind of changes do you think God might want to make in someone’s life?

   SAY: God’s grace saves us and cleans us and rescues us. But God’s grace might also do something that’s not easy but is equally important. GOD’S GRACE CHANGES US. Today we’re going to learn more about what that means.
1. SAY: Sometimes we think certain things about someone, but when we get to know the person better, we’re surprised to find that we were wrong. For example, you might have thought the new guy in school was stuck up, only to find out he was really shy. Turn to a partner, and share about one time you found out someone was different from what you thought. You have two minutes to listen and share. Go! If kids struggle to think of something, give a few examples from your own life.

2. After two minutes, have crews find Acts 9:1-20 in their Hands-On Bibles. Ask groups to read the passage together. SAY: Everybody stand up! Let’s think some more about this passage. When you hear what I say, use your body to make a sculpture to show what you think that moment looked like. After each sculpture, I’ll give you one minute to share with a partner why your sculpture looks the way it does.

Read each sentence aloud. Pause after each one to let kids share with a partner. Encourage them to find a new partner each time.

- Sculpt what Saul looked like on his way to Damascus before he met Jesus.
- Sculpt what Saul looked like when Jesus spoke to him.
- Sculpt what Saul looked like when he met Ananias.
- Sculpt what Saul looked like when he could see again.

3. ASK:
- Why did your sculptures change between each section?
- How were the people you heard about changed by God’s grace?

4. Direct Bible Crews to the “Inside Out” activity in their Hands-On Bibles, and have them find the banana and toothpick in their Bible Exploration Kits. Encourage crews to read the instructions together and then take turns gently poking the toothpick into the banana. Tell kids they can enjoy eating their banana slices without the chocolate mentioned in the activity.

While groups eat their bananas,
ASK:

• How was Saul like your banana?
• How does God’s grace make you like your banana?

5. SAY: Find the paper and crayons in your kit. Draw a picture of yourself that shows one way GOD’S GRACE CHANGED YOU. Think about how God has changed your life or how God might change your life in the future. You’ll have two minutes, and then I’ll ask you to share your picture with your crew.

After kids have shared their pictures, SAY: GOD’S GRACE CHANGES US. Saul was changed when he met Jesus on the road to Damascus. He gave his life to Jesus and became the Apostle Paul who spread Christianity throughout the world. Even Ananias was changed when he took a risk to believe God and face the man who previously had sought to take his life simply because he was a follower of Jesus. GOD’S GRACE CHANGES US. It changed Saul and Ananias, and it can change us, too.

Let’s Praise!

Supplies: drawings from Let’s Explore! | markers | CD player or TV/DVD player

1. Make sure kids have their drawings from the previous section, and SAY: Write your name on your drawing, and then trade pictures with another person. Pause. Change isn’t always easy, but God gives us friends who can help us. God sent Ananias to help Saul with his change, and God sends us to help each other. As we sing, hold your friend’s drawing and praise God for working in your friend’s life. Ask God to send his grace to help you change. Remember that GOD’S GRACE CHANGES US.

2. PLAY: CD/DVD
• “It Is by Grace” (Ephesians 2:8-9) (2)
• “Create in Me” (Psalm 51:10) (3)
• “A New Creation” (2 Corinthians 5:17) (6)
Let’s Pray!

**Supplies:** CD player

1. **Ask each crew to sit in a circle and hold hands.** SAY: During our praise time, I encouraged you to tell God that you’re willing to let his grace change you. Close your eyes and think of two people. Think of one person—maybe a family member or neighbor—who would be happy to know that you’ll let God’s grace change you. Maybe you haven’t always been kind or respectful. Pause. The second person is someone who needs you to explain how to become new by believing in Jesus. Pause.

Got your two people? You’re going to pray with your crew. You’ll take turns, but you’ll pray silently. The person wearing the most red will start. Take turns praying for the first person you thought of, the one who would be happy to hear about your commitment to change. Pray that you can show that person a real change. Then squeeze the hand of the person next to you.

The goal is not to race the squeeze around the circle, but to pray. Once the squeeze goes around the circle, send the squeeze around the circle again as you pray for your second person.

2. **Give Bible Crews time to pray together.** As they pray, play the instrumental version of “A New Creation” (2 Corinthians 5:17) (14).

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**High Fives**

**Supplies:** none

**SAY:** As you leave, encourage three people. To each person say, “GOD’S GRACE CHANGES US. Be changed!” Then give that person a creative high five.
### For-Extra-Time Activities

#### GRACE OVERFLOWING
**Supplies:** buckets of water | small paper cups | chairs | empty containers | newspaper

Ask crews to line up as you give each person a small paper cup. Put newspaper on the floor across from each crew. Place a chair on the newspaper and an empty container on the chair. Put a bucket of water at the start of each crew’s line. Tell crews the goal is to be the first crew to overflow its container. The first person in line fills the cup with water, races to the container, and then shares one way he or she can be changed by God’s grace while emptying the cup into the container. For example, children could ask God to help them be kind to their little brothers. Continue until one crew’s “grace” overflows.

#### PICTURES OF CHANGE
**Supplies:** paper | markers or crayons

Give each person paper and access to a pile of markers or crayons. Ask kids to spend a few quiet minutes with God, talking about how God’s grace can change them. After kids talk to God, they should draw what their lives could look and feel like as they allow God’s grace to work in their lives.

#### HIDING IT IN YOUR HEART
**Supplies:** newspaper color comics sections | container | white glue | liquid starch | spoon

Direct Bible Crews to open their *Hands-On Bibles* to the Key Verse, 2 Corinthians 5:17, and read it aloud. Have kids use the supplies to follow the directions for that activity. Talk about how God’s grace changes us when we believe in Jesus.

#### CREATE A BIBLE DICTIONARY
**Supplies:** paper | markers | dictionary

Ask kids to create one or more new pages, each with a new word, for the Bible Dictionary. Ask for ideas of new words from today’s session—persecute and change are two suggestions. Have them write each word on a sheet of paper in fun letters, add a definition, list Scripture references, and make illustrations. Add each page to a three-ring binder, and watch the dictionary grow!

#### THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE
**Supplies:** CD player

Ask kids to read the intro page for any book of the Bible and create a motion for that book. For example, kids could make a motion for rain for Genesis or do a beauty pageant wave for Esther. Play “The Books of the Bible Song” (8), and have kids do all the motions they have learned.
**Family Devotion**

**Bible Focus:**
Acts 9:1-20

**Discovery Point:**
God’s grace changes us.

**Key Verse:**
“This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

**Inside Out**
You can’t tell what a person’s like on the inside by looking at the outside. That was sure true for Saul in Acts! Read about his amazing change in Acts 9:1-20.

**Try this with your family!**

1. Poke a wooden toothpick through the skin of a banana about an inch up from the stem.
2. Move the toothpick back and forth in an arc shape inside the banana, from one side to the other.
3. Move the toothpick another inch on the banana, and do it again.
4. Keep moving up and repeating step 2 until you run out of banana!

The banana doesn’t look any different on the outside, does it? Peel the banana, and presto chango! The inside is already cut into bite-size pieces!

Dip the banana in chocolate sauce as you talk about these questions as a family:

- When have you discovered that someone was different on the inside than on the outside?
- How has God changed the members of this family?

Pray together, thanking God for using his grace to change each person in your family. Ask God to continue to make his grace shine on you so you continue to change into who he wants each of you to be.

**FAMILY CHALLENGE**

Gather an old T-shirt for each family member and a washable marker. Turn the shirts inside-out and pin them to a wall or bulletin board. Take time each evening to let each person write at least one thing on their shirt that they believe God is changing in their life. At the end of the week, praise God, and then throw all the shirts in the laundry to wash them clean again.