Paul's Conversion and Baptism

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BIBLE PASSAGE: Acts 9:1-25

MAIN POINT: Jesus saved Saul from his sins.

KEY PASSAGE: Acts 1:8

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How do people hear about Jesus? God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus.

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Leader BIBLE STUDY

Saul was no stranger to religion. He grew up in a religious household. He was a devout Jew who was born in Tarsus (Phil. 3:5) and inherited his Roman citizenship from his father. So when people began talking about this man named Jesus and claiming that He was the promised Messiah, Saul was defensive.

Saul believed strongly in the Jewish faith of his ancestors. He violently persecuted God's church and tried to destroy it. (Gal. 1:13-14) He dragged believers from their houses and put them in prison. He approved of the stoning of Stephen, the first Christian martyr. Saul thought he was doing the

right thing by defending Judaism, but God's purposes could not be stopped.

As Saul was on his way to arrest believers in Damascus, the Lord stopped him in his tracks. Jesus revealed Himself to Saul, and Saul was never the same. He was struck blind and led into Damascus, where a believer named Ananias placed his hands on Saul. Suddenly, Saul could see again. Saul was convinced that Jesus is Lord. Saul later described the experience as being like dying and receiving a new life. (Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 5:17)

God had a purpose and a plan for Saul. He had set Saul apart before Saul was even born. (Gal. 1:15) God said, "This man is My chosen instrument to take My name to the Gentiles" (Acts 9:15).

Jesus changed Saul's life. As you teach preschoolers, clarify that conversion happens when a person recognizes his sin, repents, believes in Jesus, and confesses Jesus as Savior and Lord. Jesus changes a person's heart, and as a result, his life is changed too.

Jesus appeared to Saul and changed him inside and out. Jesus called Saul, who was once an enemy of Christians, to spend the rest of his life telling people the gospel and leading them to trust Jesus as Lord and Savior.

MINISTRY GRID
training made simple

The BIBLE STORY

- **Act it out:** Invite the preschoolers to close their eyes for part of the story. Ask them what it was like to not be able to see.
- **Use lighting:** Enlist another leader to dim the lights and flash a bright light at the appropriate moment in the Bible story.

Paul's Conversion and Baptism
Acts 9:1-25

In the early days of the church, **a man named Saul worked hard to stop people from telling about Jesus. He did not believe that Jesus is the Son of God.** He thought that people who believed in Jesus should be put in jail or be killed. Many believers left the city to get away from Saul.

Saul decided to go to the city of Damascus (duh MASS kuhs) to arrest believers there. He **was traveling** along **when** all of a sudden, **a very bright light came down from heaven. It flashed around Saul, and he fell to the ground. Then Saul heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why are you against Me?"**

"Who are You, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus," He said. Jesus told Saul to go into the city and wait for more instructions.

Saul got up and opened his eyes, but **he couldn't see anything! So the men who were traveling with Saul led him into the city.**

A man named Ananias (an uh NIGH uhs) lived in the city. Ananias **loved Jesus. God** spoke to Ananias in a vision and **told him to go visit Saul.** Ananias knew that Saul was an enemy of Jesus, but God had a plan for Saul. **God said, "I have chosen Saul to tell many people about Me."**

Ananias obeyed God. He **went to Saul and said, "Jesus sent me here to help you." Then Ananias put his hands on Saul, and Saul could see again. Saul got up and was baptized.**

For the next few days, **Saul** stayed in the city with other people who believed in Jesus. He **went to the synagogues** to tell people about Jesus. **"Jesus is the Son of God!"** Saul

said. The people were amazed. They knew Saul had been an enemy of Jesus, but now he loved Jesus!

The Jews did not like what Saul was saying, so they made a plan to kill him. The other believers helped Saul sneak out of the city at night.

Later, Saul started using the name Paul.

Christ Connection: Saul was an enemy of Jesus and His followers, but then God changed him. Jesus came to earth to save sinners like Paul. (1 Timothy 1:15). When we trust in Jesus, He changes us from the inside out.

WANT TO DISCOVER GOD'S WORD? GET *MORE!*

Invite preschoolers to check out this week's devotionals to discover how God's Word can help them grow in the gospel. Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out *www.lifeway.com/ devotionals.*

Introduce THE STORY

SESSION TITLE: Paul's Conversion and Baptism

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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How do people hear about Jesus? God uses
Christians to tell others about Jesus.

Welcome time

- "Children of the Kingdom" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert download
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play the unit theme song in the background as you greet
preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures.
Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an
appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a
few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- "Things that Change" activity page, 1 per child
- pencils or crayons

Guide preschoolers to draw a line connecting the thing(s)
on the left to what the thing changes into on the right.

SAY • A baby boy changes to become a big boy. An acorn
changes to become a tree. Ingredients change to
become chocolate chip cookies. A caterpillar changes
to become a butterfly. All these things changed on
the outside. In today's Bible story, a man named Saul
changed on the inside. Listen to our Bible story to
hear how God changed Saul.

LOW PREP

Play a stop and go game

- red construction paper
- green construction paper
- marker
- tape

Write *STOP* on a sheet of red construction paper and *GO*
on a sheet of green construction paper. Tape the sheets of
paper back-to-back so that the words are displayed. Invite
preschoolers to line up side by side at one end of the room

facing you. When you hold up the GO sign, preschoolers will move toward you. When you hold up the STOP sign, preschoolers must stop in place. Continue flipping between STOP and GO until preschoolers reach you. Allow preschoolers to take turns holding the sign and play again.

SAY • In the early days of the church, a man named Saul worked hard to stop [*hold up the STOP sign*] people from telling about Jesus. He did not believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Many believers left the city to get away from Saul. Even though Saul did not love Jesus, Jesus loved Saul and had a plan for him. Let's discover how Jesus changed Saul in today's Bible story.

Play a voice game

Use an electronic device with an audio recording function to record each preschooler saying a sentence. Be prepared to offer suggested sentences. Play back the recordings to the group and invite preschoolers to guess who is speaking.

• audio recorder

SAY • In today's Bible story, a man named Saul was traveling to the city of Damascus. Someone spoke to Saul while he was traveling along. Saul did not recognize the Person's voice. Let's find out who spoke to Saul in today's Bible story.

Transition to tell the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, flip off the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Call each child by name to come to Bible study.

• countdown video (optional)

Tell THE STORY

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Christians to tell others about Jesus.

Introduce the Bible story

Ask preschoolers what *saved* means. Give time for responses.

SAY • We talk a lot about "being saved" at church. When
we say Jesus saves someone, we mean that Jesus
rescues that person from sin. We are separated from
God because of our sin, but Jesus died on the cross
to take the punishment for sin. Listen to hear whom
Jesus saved in today's Bible story.

Watch or tell the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- "Paul's Conversion and Baptism" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Place a bookmark at Acts 9 in your Bible. Invite a
preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • God's words are in the Bible, and God's words are true.
Today's Bible story really happened. We find today's
Bible story in the New Testament in the Book of Acts.

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided
storytelling helps. Use the bolded version of the Bible story
for young preschoolers.

Talk about the Bible story

- Main Point Poster
- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

SAY • Saul was Jesus' enemy, but **Jesus saved Saul from his
sins** and Saul changed. Instead of being Jesus' enemy,
now Saul loved Jesus and wanted to tell everyone

about Him.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline or big story circle as you ask the following review questions:

1. Did Saul love Jesus at the beginning of the Bible story? (*no*)
2. Who spoke to Saul while he was walking to Damascus? (*Jesus*)
3. What happened when Saul opened his eyes after speaking with Jesus? (*He could not see.*)
4. What did Ananias do for Saul? (*put his hands on Saul so he could see again*)
5. Why were the people amazed by Saul? (*They knew he had been an enemy of Jesus, but now he loved Him.*)
6. What was Saul's other name? (*Paul*)

Learn the big picture question

SAY • Our big picture question is, ***How do people hear about Jesus? God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus.*** After **Jesus saved Saul from his sins**, Saul went to the synagogues to tell people about Jesus. God wants us to tell the good news about Jesus to others too.

• Big Picture Question Poster

Practice the key passage

Open your Bible to Acts 1:8. Read the key passage aloud several times. Sing together the key passage song.

SAY • A *witness* tells about what he or she has seen, heard, or experienced. Our key passage tells us that Jesus' followers are His witnesses. We get to tell people what Jesus has done for us!

• Key Passage Poster
• "You Will Be My Witnesses" song

Transition to experience the story

Experience THE STORY

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Sing a song

LOW PREP

Sing the following lyrics to the tune of "Mary had a Little Lamb."

> "Jesus saved Saul from his sins,
> from his sins, from his sins.
> Jesus saved Saul from his sins;
> Jesus was His Lord.
>
> Saul said, 'Jesus is alive,
> is alive, is alive!'
> Saul said, 'Jesus is alive!
> He's the Son of God!' "

SAY • Jesus saved Saul from his sins. Saul was an enemy
of Jesus and His followers, but then God changed
him. Jesus came to earth to save sinners like Paul.
When we trust in Jesus, He changes us from the
inside out.

Walk blindfolded

• blindfold
• painter's tape

Use painter's tape to make a path. Clear any obstacles. Ask
a volunteer to walk the path blindfolded. Choose two other

preschoolers to lead the blindfolded preschooler along the path. Ask for a new volunteer and play again. Preschoolers who do not wish to be blindfolded may simply close their eyes.

SAY • Saul could not see anything after Jesus spoke to him on the road. The men who were traveling with Saul led him into the city. Later, Ananias put his hands on Saul, and Saul could see again. **Jesus saved Saul from his sins.** Saul was an enemy of Jesus and His followers, but then God changed him. Jesus came to earth to save sinners like Saul and you and me.

Sequence events

Print and cut apart the "Sequencing Cards" printable. Mix up the cards. Guide preschoolers to arrange the cards in chronological order.

SAY • **Jesus saved Saul from his sins.** Saul was an enemy of Jesus and His followers, but then God changed him. Jesus came to earth to save sinners like Paul. When we trust in Jesus, He changes us from the inside out.

• "Sequencing Cards" printable
• scissors

Experiment with light

Cut out a few circles from black construction paper and post them around the room. Dim the lights. Invite preschoolers to aim the flashlights at the different circles around the room.

Show preschoolers a mirror. Ask them to predict what will happen when they shine the flashlight on the mirror. Demonstrate how the light is reflected to another part of the room when light is shone on a mirror. Show preschoolers how to shift the mirror and the flashlight to

• black construction paper
• scissors
• tape
• flashlights
• nonbreakable mirrors

Tip: Make sure the flashlights you plan to use are strong enough to complete the activity.

move the light around the room. Challenge preschoolers to make the light hit the circles using the mirrors. Make sure preschoolers do not shine light into each other's eyes.

SAY • Saul was traveling along when all of a sudden, a very bright light came down from heaven. It flashed around Saul, and he fell to the ground. **Jesus saved Saul from his sins.** Saul was an enemy of Jesus and His followers, but then God changed him. Jesus came to earth to save sinners like Paul. When we trust in Jesus, He changes us from the inside out.

Dot your name

• paper
• marker
• heavyweight paper
• paint daubers
• pencil

Write *Saul* and *Paul* on separate sheets of paper. Display the signs for preschoolers. Ask children to tell you what is different about the two signs. Remind preschoolers that later Saul started using the name Paul. *Saul* starts with an *S*, and *Paul* starts with a *P*.

Use a pencil to neatly write each child's name on a sheet of heavyweight paper. Invite a preschooler to use a paint dauber to make dots to cover the letters of his name.

SAY • **Jesus saved Saul from his sins.** Jesus told Ananias that He was going to send Saul to tell people about Him. Some places where Saul traveled, he used his other name, Paul. When we trust in Jesus, we usually do not change our names, but Jesus does change us from the inside out. He makes us love Him and other people, and He gives us hearts that want to do what He says.

Snack

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Guide preschoolers to clean their areas. Take a restroom break and wash hands. Gather preschoolers for snack time. Thank God for the snack.

Serve a snack preschoolers may eat with their hands. Remind children that Ananias put his hands on Saul, and Saul could see again. Better than being able to see again, **Jesus saved Saul from his sins.** Saul was an enemy of Jesus and His followers, but then God changed him. Jesus came to earth to save sinners like Paul.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- snack food
- paper cups and napkins

Transition

When a child finishes his snack, guide him to throw away any trash. He may select a book or puzzle to examine, play quietly with play dough or a favorite toy, or color the Bible story coloring page.

Offer the journal page and invite preschoolers to draw a picture of themselves. Remind preschoolers that when we trust in Jesus, He changes us from the inside out. Our bodies do not change, but the actions we do with our bodies do. Jesus changes us to love Him and to want to do what He says. Pray for the children.

SAY • God, thank You that Jesus came to earth to save sinners like Paul and us. Thank You for changing us when we put our trust in Jesus. Make us love You and others more. Help us to tell others the good news about Jesus. Amen.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- books
- puzzles
- play dough
- Journal Page printable, 1 per child
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- *Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers*