

date: **7/2/17****Bible Passage: Acts 9:1–31**

(Paul's Conversion)

God's Son Changes Everything

REMEMBER VERSE

He provided redemption for his people; he ordained his covenant forever—holy and awesome is his name.

Psalm 111:9

Inspire

Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives

I grew up in a non-Christian home. Even so, I had a mysteriously intimate relationship with God. I talked with Him each night before bed, and I can remember specific things about conversations with Him. I asked my mom to take me to the bookstore so I could pick out a children's Bible. Amidst an upbringing that excluded God, I had a deep love for Him.

In contrast, my cousin's family was highly religious. Their family attended church every Sunday, rain or shine. They practically bragged that they were Christians. However, their actions rarely imitated Christ's. I will never forget an experience with my cousin at Christmas. While we played together, she asked, "Do you go to church?" "No," I responded. Coldly, she said, "Well, then you're going to hell." My heart broke. I ran out of the room, crying.

All of the intimacy I had experienced with God seemed to fly out the window. I couldn't understand how the God who told me He loved me would send me to hell. For almost 11 years afterward, I harbored distaste for Christians. I cut them down at every available opportunity. I couldn't reconcile the fact that Christians don't always act like Christ.

I still don't understand how God managed to get through to me. Despite all of my sin, bitterness, and the terrible things I said to Christians, God forgave me. Through Jesus, He healed me and set me on a new path. Knowing God's Son has changed everything.

*Erika Abdelatif***ROCKHARBOR Church**

Equip

Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage

When we think of Saul, later known as Paul, prior to his conversion, we oftentimes think of a fire-breathing, angry killer of God-fearing believers. In Paul's own words we're given a different image. Paul wasn't just a follower of God; he was "circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless" (Philippians 3:5–6).

Paul wasn't just a God-fearing Jew; he was the best of the best. We must not forget that there were devout believers in God in the Old Testament as well. Prior to the coming of Christ, belief in and devotion to God looked very much like the kind of life Saul led.

The conversion of Saul is a perfect picture of what was happening in this most crucial transition period of ages and stages in the outworking of God's redemptive plan. This was the shift from a pre-Messiah vision of the family of God to a post-Messiah envisioning. Significant shifts in mindset and outlook were required. For Jews, who had firmly entrenched ideas about who God was and what He was doing, this cosmic shift in ages required a seismic shift in attitude and outlook.

What Paul needed was the risen Lord to help him understand that righteousness came through faith, not through the keeping of the Law. Through Paul and his writings, the church universal would come to understand this truth. But before this happened, this change had to come in his own heart. With an encounter on the side of a road, God's Son changed everything.

Support

Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God's Word

Paul devoted his life to telling the story of how God's Son completely changed His life. This man who once persecuted believers in Jesus became a passionate disciple dedicated to proclaiming His story.

What is the story of your relationship with Jesus? Whether you had a dramatic conversion experience or have had a steady relationship with the Lord since childhood, think about the ways your story fits in with The Big God Story. This week, consider sharing the story of your relationship with Jesus with a friend or family member.

Pray for your children as you prepare to lead. Ask that God would dramatically impact their hearts and minds as He weaves their stories into His big one.

SMALL GROUP
SECTION

EXPLORE// 10 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity

about the day's portion of The Big God Story.

Newscasters

Today's portion of The Big God Story will be told in the style of a television news broadcast. Get your children in that mindset by helping them create their own microphones as they pretend to be newscasters.

SUPPLIES

- [Microphone template](#) (see Resources)
- Colored pencils or markers
- Scissors (for older kids, 1 per child)
- Cardboard rolls (toilet paper-sized, 1 per child)
- Tape

SET UP

Print a copy of the Microphone template for each child. For younger kids, cut out the microphones ahead of time.

RELATE

Invite each child to color a microphone. (Older kids can cut out their microphones; younger kids should have precut microphones.) Then each child should tape her microphone to a cardboard roll. Encourage the kids to interview each other, taking turns being the newscaster and the interviewee. They can ask each other about news stories they've heard, journalists they've seen on television, etc.

If you have time, ask the group: **What is the most amazing news you have ever heard or most amazing thing you have ever seen?** Then encourage kids to discuss their answers and thoughts.

LARGE GROUP
SECTION

DISCOVER// 30 min.

Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller

Children participate in discovering God's Word through Bible verse memorization, interactive storytelling techniques, and worship as response.

Traditions and Remember Verse

SUPPLIES

- [Remember Verse image](#) (see Resources)
- Mementos for your church Traditions (rocks, marbles, gum balls, etc.)

RELATE

Give the children mementos (such as rocks, marbles, or blocks) for accomplishments such as memorizing the Remember Verse or bringing their Bibles. Have them put the objects into a clear container or add them to a structure, and celebrate when it's complete.



This week's Remember Verse focuses on a character trait of God that's highlighted in today's portion of The Big God Story.

He provided redemption for his people; he ordained his covenant forever—holy and awesome is his name. Psalm 111:9

Connect

Question

If you could interview one person, who would it be and why?

The Big God Story

Bible Passage: Acts 9:1–31

Storytelling Technique: Acting Out the Narrative
God's Son Changes Everything

SUPPLIES

- Optional: [Storytelling video](#) (see Resources)
- [Timeline image](#) (see Resources)
- [Timeline animation](#) (see Resources)
- [News Broadcast script](#) (see Resources)
- [Images: Jerusalem #1](#), [Jerusalem #2](#), [Jerusalem #3](#), [Envelope](#) (see Resources)
- Bibles
- Microphone (real or pretend)

PREPARE AHEAD

Today's portion of The Big God Story will be shared in the style of a news broadcast. In addition to the Storyteller, you'll need actors to play the Reporter, News Anchor, Believer, Witness, and Saul. Print a copy of the script for each person. Optional: You might have the actors use puppets.

RELATE

Storyteller: **We have something really exciting to show you today. We found a news clip from all the way back in Bible times. Before we look at the clip, let's pray together.** Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

News Anchor: **This is Tom Petersen with the Bible Times News Network. We're taking a look at new developments around the temple in Jerusalem. Tech: Cue Jerusalem images #1–3. Right now, many Jews have begun to believe in Jesus Christ. Because of persecution from Roman and Jewish officials, these believers have fled north to the city of Damascus. John Johnson is on the scene in Damascus. John?**

Reporter (speaking into microphone): **Thank you, Tom. John Johnson here in Damascus with a believer who's fled Jerusalem. Why don't you tell us what happened?** John holds up the microphone to the believer when she speaks.

Believer: **Jesus is alive! It's the best news in the world! They tried to stop us, tried to keep us from**



praising God. They tried to arrest us and kill us, but we're praising God anyway! We're still spreading the good news!

Reporter: **Is that so? And what is this good news, exactly?**

Believer: **The good news is that Jesus Christ is God! He rose from the dead, defeated sin and death, and sent the Holy Spirit to live inside of us. God's Son has changed everything! Everyone can become God's child!**

Reporter: **Well, there you have it. Jesus Christ changed everything. And believers who have fled Jerusalem are still spreading the good news of Jesus Christ. Question is, what will the officials in Jerusalem do now? John Johnson reporting from Damascus. Back to you, Tom.**

News Anchor: **Thanks, John. Insider sources say religious officials in Jerusalem hired a man named Saul to round up the believers and bring them back to Jerusalem. Stay tuned to Bible Times News Network for more information on the struggle between believers and Saul.**

Storyteller: **Wow, that sounds dramatic! People who believe in Jesus have fled Jerusalem because they're being put in jail and killed for what they believe!**

One of the people in charge of all of the arrests and killings is a man named Saul. Saul and the religious leaders think Jesus was just a man and not God. So they think they're doing what God wants by getting rid of people who believe Jesus is God's Son. The high priest gave Saul written permission (*Tech: Cue Envelope image*) to find all of the new believers and bring them back to Jerusalem.

As we read the Bible, we also see Saul referred to by another name. What name is Saul also called? Invite kids to respond. Right! Most of us know Saul as Paul. But at this point in The Big God Story, people knew him as Saul. Let's turn in our Bibles to Acts 9 and follow along as we hear more.

News Anchor: **We have breaking news! Saul has been struck blind while traveling to Damascus! Let's go to the scene.**

Reporter: **John Johnson here at the scene on the road to Damascus. With me is Nathan Nathanson, one of Saul's guards. Nathan was an eyewitness to what happened. Nathan, what did you see?**

Witness: **It was the most amazing thing! We were walking along the path toward Damascus and "suddenly a light from heaven flashed around [Saul]" (Acts 9:3). It was so bright we had to look away! We heard Saul say something, but we couldn't make out what he said. When the light went away, Saul was on the ground ... and he couldn't see!**

Reporter: **Well, there you have it. Saul struck blind! Witnesses say Saul has been led away to a house in Damascus. We'll check back later for more updates on Saul's condition.**

News Anchor: **Thanks, John.**

Storyteller: **Wow! Saul was on his way to arrest new believers when he was struck blind. What do you think that bright light was? Invite kids to respond. Great thoughts. Let's hear more.**

Reporter: **John Johnson here for Bible Times News Network. I'm here with Saul in Damascus.**



Witnesses say a bright light flashed and then Saul couldn't see. Saul? What happened to you?

Saul: **Wow, John. Wow, wow, wow! It was amazing.**

Reporter: **What was amazing, Saul?**

Saul: **Jesus is God! I spoke to Him! It was incredible. I can't believe I was trying to arrest people who believed in Him. He's alive! I was wrong ... so, so wrong.**

Reporter: **Saul, can you tell us what, exactly, happened on the road to Damascus?**

Saul: **I was walking with my men when a light suddenly shone all around me. It was so bright I couldn't see anything. I fell on my knees and heard a voice say, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" (v. 4). I was confused, but ... somehow, I knew God was talking to me. I asked, "Who are you, Lord?" He answered, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting" (v. 5). Can you believe it? Jesus was God all along—and I had been trying to arrest people who believed in Him! Everything in my life has been turned upside down. Jesus has changed everything!**

Reporter: **What will you do now?**

Saul: **I'm going to wait for God to tell me what to do next.**

Storyteller: **After Saul heard from God, he was blind for three whole days. During that time, God spoke to a man named Ananias and told him to go where Saul was, place his hands on him, and pray that his sight would be returned. Ananias was scared, because he knew Saul had been a dangerous man, but he obeyed God anyway. And when Ananias placed his hands on Saul, "something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized" (v. 18).**

Saul went on to play a big role in The Big God Story. He also came to be known by another name. What name do we call him today? Invite responses. Right! Today we know him as Paul. If God could transform this man's heart, He can transform anyone's heart! And as we'll see in coming weeks, Saul—later called Paul—went on to spread the message of Jesus far and wide. He even wrote several books of the Bible! Clearly, God's Son changes everything. Share a personal story of how Jesus changed everything in your life.

SMALL GROUP
SECTION

RESPOND// 15 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children reflect on what the Holy Spirit is teaching them and respond through creative activities and games.

Reflect: God's Son Changes Everything

Encourage kids to look up the following verses in their Bibles.



Questions for Younger Kids

- Why did Saul want to arrest people who believed in Jesus? Acts 26:9–10
- Why did Jesus talk to Saul? Acts 9:5–6
- Where did God send Ananias? What happened there? Acts 9:10–19
- How did Jesus change everything in Saul's life? Acts 9:20–22
- Would any of you like to share which card you chose during our response time and why you chose that card?
- Has Jesus changed your life? How?

Questions for Older Kids

- Why did Saul want to arrest people who believed in Jesus? Acts 26:9–10
- How do you think Saul might have felt while he was speaking with Jesus on the road? Acts 9:4–6
- Where did God send Ananias? What happened there? Acts 9:10–19
- How did Jesus change everything in Saul's life? Acts 9:20–22
- How does Jesus still change people's lives today? Acts 3:19; Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 5:17
- Would any of you like to share which card you chose during our response time and why you chose that card?
- Has Jesus changed your life? How?

BLESS// 5 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing may be prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.

SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse cards (see Resources)
- At Home Weekly: Lesson 6 (see Resources)
- Bible

RELATE

Encourage the kids to hold their hands in front of them, palms up. Then open a Bible and read 2 Corinthians 5:17:

If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

May you be changed by God sending His Son. May you be transformed by knowing Jesus came to earth, died, and rose again for your sake. May you give your life completely to Him, because He changes everything.

