

LESSON 50

Saul Is Knocked to the Ground

ACTS 9:1-19



BIBLE TRUTH

NO ONE CAN RESIST THE CALLING OF GOD

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Acts 8:26—9:25 from the Scriptures or read story 128, “Saul is Knocked to the Ground,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

Saul: Before And After

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ flat sheet and belt for a Saul costume
- ✓ paper rolled up like a scroll

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 10 MIN

A Little Drill Practice

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a large cross cut out of brown construction paper
- ✓ a large white tablet and easel (or movable whiteboard and dry-erase marker)
- ✓ masking tape

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

7. ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 50—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 15 MIN

Three Sauls

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ three flat sheets and belts for Saul costumes
- ✓ three volunteers to play the role of Saul

TOTAL 80 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

The Spirit of God led the disciples—The Christians in Jerusalem were scattered as a result of persecution by Saul and others. Those who left Jerusalem told the people they met about Jesus and how he died on the cross and rose again (Acts 8:1, 3–4). Philip, one of the men called to serve tables with Stephen (Acts 6:5), left Jerusalem during this time and proclaimed the gospel in Samaria where many believed and people were healed. Then, an angel instructed Philip to travel south (Acts 8:26), where the Holy Spirit directed him to speak to an Ethiopian eunuch who was reading the scroll of Isaiah. Philip explained to him how the Old Testament pointed to Jesus and shared with him the good news of Jesus Christ (Acts 8:35). The Ethiopian was so affected by the gospel that he commanded his chariot to be stopped so that he could be baptized on the spot! After Philip baptized the eunuch, the Spirit of God carried Philip away to preach the gospel elsewhere.

Saul meets Jesus—Saul was headed to Damascus to arrest anyone who belonged to “the Way” (Acts 9:2). (The Way was a name given to early Christians who followed Jesus. In John 14:6 Jesus had identified himself as the “way.”) On the way Saul met someone he never expected to meet: Jesus appeared to him. Although Saul thought he was serving God by stopping the Christians, he was in fact fighting against God.

Jesus confronted Saul and blinded him so that he had to be led into the city. For three days, he remained blind until God sent Ananias to pray for him and to prophesy that Saul was God’s “chosen instrument” to carry the message of the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15). Ananias reluctantly obeyed and prayed for Saul and laid hands on him. Immediately, Saul’s sight was restored. Like the Ethiopian eunuch, Paul was baptized. Once the truth about Jesus was revealed to Saul, the scales of unbelief fell to the ground.

The gospel conquered Saul’s sin and transformed his life—Immediately after his conversion Saul proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues (Acts 9:20) demonstrating a radical repentance from his former life of sin. People were amazed because he was a Pharisee who had been persecuting the followers of Jesus. His dramatic conversion served to confound the Jews. This was further evidence that Jesus was alive and could transform lives.

Jesus once said to his disciples, “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide” (John 15:16). Saul was a vivid illustration of these words. It was by God’s initiative that Saul met Jesus, understood the gospel, and was converted. Once the call of God pierced his heart, the fruit of his conversion was dramatic.

Where Is the Gospel?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Saul heard a voice asking, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" (Acts 9:4). He did not know who was speaking, so he asked, "Who are you, Lord?" To his amazement the response was, "I am Jesus." Saul knew that Jesus had been a teacher, and that he had died on the cross. But Saul did not yet know and believe that Jesus was Lord, the Son of God, raised in power!

We, like Saul, are sinners who do not know Jesus. Our experience in coming to know Jesus is similar to Paul's. While we are sinners God takes the initiative to move us toward himself. Saul was on his way to kill more Christians when Jesus revealed himself to him. Saul immediately realized that the stories of Jesus' resurrection were true. Jesus was, and is, alive!

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Acts 8:26—9:25 from the Scriptures or read story 128, "Saul Is Knocked to the Ground," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

Saul: Before and After

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ flat sheet and belt for a Saul costume
- ✓ paper rolled up like a scroll

Use the following suggested monologue as a guide. You don't need to memorize it. Study the flow and then use your own words to act out Saul's part.

For the first act, pretend to be Saul recruiting people to join him in the mission to capture Christians. The class represents potential recruits.

People of Jerusalem, the time has come for us to move swiftly and destroy these imposters who are spreading false rumors that Jesus has risen from the dead. They are drawing thousands away from the synagogue. They are using cheap manipulations like reaching out to them in friendship and giving away money to them.

These people may seem harmless, but they are spreading the same false teachings that Jesus himself spread. They are claiming that Jesus was the Messiah. Perhaps some of you had once hoped that Jesus was the Anointed One. But you know as well as I that he died and was buried. Rome remains our dominator. Jesus was no Messiah.

Since we have begun to clamp down on this sect here in Jerusalem they have scattered beyond the city. Now they are spreading their lies wherever they go. (*Wave the scroll above your head.*) I have received orders to chase them down and bring them back to stand trial. People of Jerusalem, will you join me?

Without warning, turn your back on the class and then face them again. This time you are playing the role of Saul preaching the gospel after his conversion.

People of Damascus, I am Saul, the very one who once persecuted the church. (*Hold up the scroll.*) I was even given orders to round up Christians here in this city. But as I traveled from Jerusalem something quite unexpected happened to me. Jesus himself appeared to me on the road and blinded me.

Jesus spoke to me, saying that I was not working with God's plan but against it. Then he sent me to a prophet who prayed for me. My sight was restored and the eyes of my heart were opened to see that Jesus is alive. Truly, he rose again from the dead. He was the promised Messiah. We expected the Anointed One to deliver us from the enemies of Rome, but Jesus came to deliver us from sin and death. Can't you see that all the sacrifices of our forefathers point to the Messiah, Jesus, who was the Lamb of God slain upon the cross, as our one-time, once-and-for-all, perfect sacrifice?

Join with me and believe in Jesus. I once persecuted the church, but now I have been transformed by Christ. Jesus is alive. Repent of your sins, turn your hearts to God, and believe.

Once you finish, drop out of character and talk to the class. Ask them the following questions:

■ **What did you think about Saul's conversion?**

(Draw out the class here.)

■ **What changed in Saul's life?**

(Saul went from persecuting the church to being a disciple of Jesus, called to preach the gospel.)

■ **Is God still converting people today?**

(Yes, God converts people every day. Each person that becomes a Christian turns from being someone who hates and sins against God to a person who loves and wants to follow Jesus.)

TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESON 2 10 MIN

A Little Drill Practice

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a large cross cut out of brown construction paper
- ✓ a large white tablet and easel (or movable whiteboard and dry-erase marker)
- ✓ masking tape

To help the children understand and remember what the word “conversion” means, organize them in ranks (rows and lines) as you would an army. Have them walk in one direction, and then when you give the command, “Class, convert,” they should all immediately turn and go in the opposite direction.

After you have practiced the drill a few times, move to the easel and paper. Begin to ask the class what we should repent from. If they say greed, draw some money or write the word greed. Do this for other sins as well. Then put the easel on one side of the room and tape the cross to the opposite side of the room. Now, do your drill once again. Explain to the class that

as unbelievers we are walking toward evil and sin and fighting God. Give the command to convert. Then explain that as Christians we are walking away from sin toward Christ.

Ask the following questions:

- **When we are converted, is sin completely removed from our lives?**
(No. Just as sin, represented by the paper on the easel, is still in the room, so sin is still present in our lives.)

- **Do Christians ever turn away from Christ to follow sin again?**
(Yes. Each time we sin we are turning back to it. But it is best to understand that our feet never change direction. From the day of our conversion, they always point toward Christ. Our heads, however, can turn away and look back toward sin. The author of Hebrews describes it as “looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith” [Hebrews 12:2].)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 50—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- **Why was Saul a bad man before he met Jesus?**
(Saul was arresting Christians so they could be hurt and even killed.)

- **Who knocked Saul down, stopping him from killing more Christians?**
(Jesus knocked Saul down and blinded him.)

- **Who spoke to Saul and what did he tell him?**
(Jesus spoke to Saul and told him he was going to use him to take the message of the gospel to tell others about Jesus.)

■ **What happened to Saul next?**

(He was blind and had to be led by the hand until Ananias laid hands on him and prayed for him.)

CLOSING PRAYER **5 MIN**

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's Scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON **15 MIN**

Three Sauls

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ three flat sheets and belts for Saul costumes
- ✓ three volunteers to play the role of Saul

Recruit three adults to play three Sauls. Have them put on the costumes and each read to the class one of Saul's (Paul's) accounts of his conversion in Acts 9:1–19; 22:1–21; and 26:12–23.

After hearing all three accounts, ask the class if the stories are all exactly the same. (They should say no.)

Ask them if they can pick out any differences. Then ask them which of the three actors is the real Saul with the real story. (This of course is leading them to a wrong conclusion. After some discussion, if no one guesses they are all correct, tell them.)

Then explain that Saul, who was renamed Paul, often told the story of his conversion as part of his gospel proclamation.

LESSON 50 - SAUL IS KNOCKED TO THE GROUND

