

LESSON 46

New Believers

ACTS 2:42-47



BIBLE TRUTH

THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL IS EFFECTIVE TO
SAVE AND CHANGE SINFUL HEARTS

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 2:36–47 from the Scriptures or read story 124, “New Believers,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 **15 MIN**

Transformation Testimony

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ one or more people from church to share their testimony (see details below)

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 **10 MIN**

God Opens Our Eyes and Ears That We Might Hear, See, and Believe

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ blindfold
- ✓ hearing protection (earphone style) or ear plugs
- ✓ large poster board with the following sentence printed on it in large letters: “Jesus died on the cross for your sins and rose again to new life so that if you believe and trust in him you can be forgiven.”

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY **5 MIN**

7. ACTIVITY TIME **10 MIN**

Worshiping Together

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils

8. CLOSING PRAYER **5 MIN**

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON **10 MIN**

Where Is the Fruit of the Spirit?

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ Bibles for the class

TOTAL 70 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

The Spirit is a gift for all generations—Peter’s audience was undone by the message of the gospel. They asked Peter, “What shall we do?” Peter told them to repent of their sins. He told them that the promised Holy Spirit was for them too. Peter continued by explaining that the promise now extended to them, their children, and “all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself” (Acts 2:39). We fall into the category of all who are far off. What a blessing to know that we too can be transformed and receive the Holy Spirit just as these early believers did.

The gospel reaps a harvest—Jesus told the disciples that they would do greater things than he did (John 14:12). When we read these words, our minds may first think about more incredible miracles. What Jesus meant, however, is that after he ascended, the Holy Spirit would work through the disciples to gather in the greater harvest. Jesus preached to the multitude, but never saw 3,000 converts! In fact, after all the miracles of Jesus, there were only about 120 believers who waited in the upper room for the promised Holy Spirit. Peter preached the gospel and 3,000 believed in just one day.

The gospel brings change—The 3,000 converts were added to the initial 120 believers, and together they were the first local church. Immediately we see the fruit of the Spirit at work in their lives. They willingly shared what they had, regularly praised God, were devoted to the preached word by the apostles, and continued to add more and more people to their number.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Repent

“Repent” means to turn around—to change course. It means that you recognize the way you are going and change for the better. It is as though we do not fully realize that the way we are going is toward the wrath of God. But once we do see it, we reverse course. It is the Holy Spirit who shows us that sin leads to destruction. He then gives us the grace to repent, turn around, and walk toward Jesus and everlasting life. If you think of military commands, think of the about-face command. Troops facing in one direction turn completely around to face the opposite direction upon hearing “about-face.”

Where Is the Gospel?

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

The behavior of the very first converts in the book of Acts shows us the fruit of the gospel through the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. These people were transformed from being mockers of Christ. In fact, some of them were probably in the crowd who had demanded that Jesus be crucified. Yet now, we see them selling their possessions to share with other Christians who had need. Peter, affected by this first dramatic gospel transformation, went on to exhort all new believers to reject their sinful past and live holy, upright lives (see 1 Peter 1:14–15).

The gospel takes someone’s worldly self-focus and turns their heart heavenward. The first converts went from hating Jesus to loving him. They served others and worshiped God through Christ. Only the Spirit of God can change hearts this way. The gospel continued to transform lives as more new converts were added each day.

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 2:36–47 from the Scriptures or read story 124, “New Believers,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 15 MIN

Transformation Testimony

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ one or more people from church to share their testimony (see details below)

Recruit one or more people from your church to share their testimony with your class. Look for people who experienced a change in their behavior after being saved—people who abandoned sinful behavior to pursue Christ. Have your guests read Acts 2 before coming to class to familiarize themselves with the lesson being presented. Encourage your guests to mention the Holy Spirit in their testimony.

It is important to show the children that the dramatic change experienced by the first converts in the book of Acts is still happening to people who become Christians today. The Spirit really is being poured out to all who are “far off” (Acts 2:39).

After the testimonies, ask the children what similarities they noticed between the testimonies of the guests and those recorded in the early chapters of Acts.

Finally encourage your children with a simple gospel presentation. We are born controlled by sin, unable to live without sinning. By God’s grace, once we are converted, the Holy Spirit goes to work on us, helping us do things motivated by a love for God instead of for selfish gain or pleasure.

TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

OBJECT LESSON 2 15 MIN

God Opens Our Eyes and Ears That We Might Hear, See, and Believe

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ blindfold
- ✓ hearing protection (earphone style) or ear plugs
- ✓ large poster board with the following sentence printed on it in large letters:
“Jesus died on the cross for your sins and rose again to new life so that if you believe and trust in him you can be forgiven.”

Use this object lesson to illustrate the activity of God that opens our ears and eyes to see and believe.

Ask for a volunteer to come forward and put on the blindfold and the hearing protection (ear plugs). She should be able to hear you if you talk loudly, but not if you whisper.

Tell your volunteer to do just what she hears. Whisper from across the room, “Read the sign and believe.” Have another person, representing our sinful nature, say in a loud voice, “Say, ‘No, I am going my own way.’”

Tell her in a whisper, “Repent. Go God’s way. Please, just read the sign.” Have the other person say in a loud voice, “Say, ‘I don’t need to read the sign. I have plenty of time.’”

Pray for the blindfolded student and ask God to open her blind eyes and let her hear and understand. Next have another person who is playing the Holy Spirit come and take off the blindfold and the ear protection.

Now whisper again, asking her to read the sign.

After she reads the sign, talk to the class about how God opens our eyes and ears before we can understand and believe. Talk about the new converts and how God changed their hearts. They went from crucifying Jesus to following him. Their blind eyes were opened by the power of God through the gospel.

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

Worshiping Together

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils

Draw a picture of a group of Christians praising God in a house together.

CLOSING PRAYER **5 MIN**

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

BONUS OBJECT LESSON **10 MIN**

Where Is the Fruit of the Spirit?

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ Bibles for the class

Have the students look at the lives of the new believers in Acts 2:42–47 and describe which fruits of the Spirit from Galatians 5:22–23 they see at work in the lives of these new Christians.

Discuss what this says about these early believers. Jesus said that you will know true believers by their fruit (Matthew 7:16–20).

Ask class members to consider what kind of fruit someone would see if they looked closely at their lives. Remind them we do not do good works to get to God, we do good works because God changed us. Those with no good fruit should not simply try harder to produce good fruit. Rather, they should repent of bad fruit and ask God to transform their hearts. Once that is accomplished, they will want to do good works.