

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 15 MIN

Compare Conversion Accounts

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker
- ✓ Bibles for the class

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

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

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 10 MIN

Conversion

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ monarch butterfly life cycle photos (<http://www.monarch-butterfly.com/>)

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

7. ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Saul and Jesus

SUPPLIES:

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

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 20 MIN

Classroom Drama

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ flat sheets, towels, and ropes to create a few simple costumes for the main characters

TOTAL 90 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.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Conversion

The word “conversion” literally means “to turn.” This word is used several times in the New Testament to describe a person’s turning away from sin. In Matthew 18:3 we read, “Unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” In 1 Thessalonians 1:9, the word is used to describe the Thessalonians turning from idols to serve God. When we say that a person is converted to Christ, we are simply saying that person turned away from a sinful life and is now following Jesus.

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 15 MIN

Compare Conversion Accounts

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker
- ✓ Bibles for the class

Compare the three accounts of Saul’s conversion and harmonize them (come up with one complete story). The conversion can be found in Acts 9:1–19; 22:1–21; and 26:12–23.

Use the Acts 9 passage as the base story. Read aloud through the Acts 22 and Acts 26 accounts and list details on the whiteboard that don’t appear in the Acts 9 account.

Use this exercise to talk about the conversion of Saul and the commission God gave him to reach the Gentiles. Help the children see that it was God who authored Saul’s mission to reach the Gentiles. God, in his kindness and in fulfillment of his promise to reach all nations, converted the most ruthless of all the Pharisees for that purpose.

TEACHING/DISCUSSION

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

OBJECT LESSON 2 **10 MIN**

Conversion

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ monarch butterfly life cycle photos (<http://www.monarch-butterfly.com/>)

Use the transition from caterpillar to butterfly in the life cycle of the monarch butterfly to illustrate conversion. The monarch is particularly interesting because its chrysalis is transparent, allowing the change to be observed. When the butterfly first pupates, the chrysalis is bright green, revealing the old body parts of what was once a caterpillar. In time, the orange and black of the wings begin to form. Then, just before emerging, we see the complete transformation (metamorphosis).

Use 2 Corinthians 5:16–19 to describe the conversion that takes place in our lives. Use the following questions to draw out the class:

- **How was Saul like a monarch caterpillar?**
(Saul devoured the church, just as a caterpillar devours leaves. When Saul was converted his life became a testimony to God’s glorious grace—like the butterfly that becomes a thing of beauty. What was once ugly and despised—the caterpillar—now flits and flies with grace and beauty—the butterfly!)
- **What did Saul do differently with regard to the church?**
(Instead of persecuting the church, he began to proclaim the gospel and helped the church to grow! His conversion was convincing evidence that Jesus was alive and able to change men [Acts 9:22].)

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**

Saul and Jesus

SUPPLIES:

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

Draw a picture of Jesus appearing to Saul and knocking him to the ground.

CLOSING PRAYER **5 MIN**

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

BONUS OBJECT LESSON **20 MIN**

Classroom Drama

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ flat sheets, towels, and ropes to create a few simple costumes for the main characters

Act out a drama in four scenes. You can narrate as the children do the acting. Don't spend a lot of time on details. Just move along and have the children ad-lib as you go. After going through the drama once, if time permits, take it "on the road" to a younger class. Have the extra children play Jews traveling with Paul.

SCENE 1: Saul speaks murderous threats asking the high priest to go after the Christians.

SCENE 2: Saul is knocked down on the road to Damascus.

SCENE 3: Saul is blinded and led to Ananias.

SCENE 4: Saul preaches in the synagogue.

Use the drama to help the story come alive for the children. Then draw them out about Saul's conversion and why the Christians, at first, might have been skeptical of any change in Saul.