assembly required

lesson 4
**power phrase**
I can choose God’s plan for salvation!

**memory verse**
Revelation 3:20a, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him.”

**supporting doctrines**
For supporting doctrines, see our Statement of Faith at www.novoministries.org/statement-of-faith.

**goals**
The child will...

- Understand that Jesus paid the price for his sins!
- Realize that Jesus is “knocking” and wants him to “open the door”!
- Choose to ask Jesus to forgive his sins and be the Lord of his life!

**reminders**
This series has a strong emphasis on the Gospel, wrapped in a fun, interlocking-building-blocks theme. Each lesson the children will put together the pieces of the Gospel. The emphasis of this lesson is on “What’s the Choice?” and how each of us has to make a choice to either ask Jesus to forgive our sins or continue to live separated from God. Not choosing is even a choice; it is rejecting God!

**acknowledgements**
We want to express our gratitude to the volunteers who contributed ideas toward the development of this lesson. All of our contributors are knowledgeable and have worked extensively with at-risk children. We thank them for the time they have invested in these children.

**a special thanks**
A special thanks to Joni Brown for her willingness to impact thousands of children with the Gospel by sharing part of her story of how God has worked in her life.

The stories and photos shared in the Gospel Presentation activities are used by permission of the individuals.

**additional resources**
All Large Group or Small Group activity visuals or supply items followed by an asterisk ( * ) may be downloaded for printing at www.novoministries.org/resource.
paul chose to follow God (bible story — acts 7-13)

Recommended Visuals
- Bible Story Visuals*, Key Word Signs*, Follow the Map Visual*

Recommended Supplies
- Bible, Bible Insert for Large Group*

Captivate #1 – Key Word!
- Identify several key words you will use in the Bible Story. Before telling the story, tell the children an action or sound effect for each of the key words. Make sure that as you tell the story you repeat these words often. An example would be that every time you say “Paul,” the children say “followed God.”

Captivate #2 – Follow the Map!
- Choose a child or leader to point on the map and follow along as you read about Paul’s journey and all he was able to do to spread the Gospel. Have the children repeat the names as you arrive at each stop on the journey.

Introduction
- Saul, a member of the Sanhedrin or Jewish high court, hated Christians and everything they believed in. When some people brought false accusations against Stephen, a follower of Jesus, Saul was there when Stephen was stoned to death. Saul then became zealous in persecuting those in the church in Jerusalem. He even went from house to house, dragging men and women from their homes and throwing them into prison.

Story
- Retell the story from Acts 7-13.
- See Bible Story Script.

Conclusion
- By looking at the path of Paul’s journeys, we can see how many places he stopped and remember how many lives were changed because of the Gospel he preached about Jesus. Paul’s messages about Jesus still touch lives today. Each time we open our Bibles, we can read from the letters that Paul wrote in the New Testament. Paul chose to ask Jesus to forgive his sins and be the Lord of his life!

testimony
- Share how you have had to make choices in your life and how you chose to ask Jesus to forgive your sins and be the Lord of your life.
- Share about a time you had a choice to make but you did nothing. What was the consequence of doing nothing?
Introduction

In our Bible Story, we learned how Saul's life was turned around on the road to Damascus. It was there that he experienced Jesus. From that day forward, Saul was a changed man. He even changed his name! He committed his whole life to serve God. He traveled, preached, and taught people about Jesus. He never gave up on his calling, even when it was difficult, even when he was imprisoned or about to die for his faith. Just like Paul, we can choose God's plan for salvation and live our lives for Him.

Key Points

I must admit I have sinned!
- Everyone has sinned. Everyone deserves punishment for his sins. The Bible says that punishment is separation from God in a place called hell.
- Will we admit that we have sinned? Sin is anything we think, say, or do that breaks God's laws.
- Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

I must believe that Jesus died as my Substitute!
- Jesus is the only One Who has never sinned and can take our place.
- Jesus endured so much, even death, so we could be forgiven.
- Romans 5:8, "But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

I have to choose to believe in Jesus!
- God gives us the choice. Will we believe that Jesus is perfect and the only One Who can take the punishment for our sin? Will we put Him first above everything else in our lives and follow Him?
- Acts 16:31a, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved."

What is your choice?
- It isn't enough to just know these things or just admit we have sinned. We need to give God first place in our lives above everything and acknowledge we need Him as our Savior.
- We need to give God control of our lives. God has a plan for our lives and we can trust Him with our futures. As we follow Jesus, everything we say and do should be to honor God.
- Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."
- Revelation 3:20a, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him."
Challenge (continued)

Conclusion
We can choose God’s plan for salvation! It is the most important and best decision we will ever make. Even though God has offered forgiveness for our sins, we have to choose to accept this gift. We also have to choose to put Him first in our lives.

Invitation
For the unsaved child:
- What is the most important thing in your life? Are you ready to ask God to take that spot? Are you ready to follow Him? You can make that choice today!
- Invite the children to stay behind and talk to a leader if they have any questions or would like to ask Jesus to forgive their sins and be the Lord of their lives.

For the saved child:
- Do you make God your top priority every day? Is your goal to honor Him in all you do? How can you grow in this area?
- Encourage children to stay behind and talk to a leader if they have any questions.
**Clean Heart Blocks (Arriving Activity)**

**Visuals**
- Clean Heart Blocks Visual*, Picture of substitute teacher*

**Supplies**
- Clean Heart Template*, Building Blocks Template (printed on white paper)*, white building blocks (optional)

**Instruction and Application**
- Ask the children what a substitute is? Show the picture of the substitute teacher. Ask the children when a substitute teacher is needed? They take the place of the teacher. What reasons might a teacher need to bring in a substitute? Maybe he is sick or is going on vacation. Maybe the teacher just had a baby and needs a long-term substitute while she is home with her baby.
- The substitute is there to take the teacher’s place. Today we will learn why we need a substitute. We are all sinners, and we need someone to be our substitute and pay the price for our sin so we can receive forgiveness.
- Show the children the Clean Heart Blocks visual. Explain that when we ask Jesus to forgive our sins and be the Lord of our lives, we are cleansed from our sins, white as snow, just like this white heart.
- Give each of the children the Clean Heart Template and Building Blocks Template. Have them cut out the squares and glue them to the template to create the shape of a heart. You can also choose to use white building blocks instead and have them assemble the shape as shown in the Clean Heart Blocks Visual. This visual will help us see that we have all sinned and need Jesus to forgive us.
- Review the Memory Verse with the children. Revelation 3:20a, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him.”
knock knock (memory verse)

Visuals
• Memory Verse Visual*, Illustrated Memory Verse Visual*, Picture of a person knocking on the door*

Supplies
• Bible, chalk/marker board, chalk or dry erase markers

A.G.A.I.N. Acrostic
A — Attention Grabber (Grab their attention with an interesting introduction and don’t let go!)
Show the children the picture of a person knocking on the door. Ask them if they have any rules at their house about answering the door. Are they allowed to answer if an adult isn’t home? Do they have to look first to see who it is before opening the door? Jesus says that He is standing at the door, knocking, waiting for us to invite Him in. He is not at the actual door to our house, but He wants us to invite Him to forgive our sins and be the Lord of our lives. It is our choice; we have to invite Him into our lives. He is waiting for us to ask.

G — God’s Word (Show them that the concept you are teaching them comes from the Bible.)
Revelation 3:20a, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him.”

A — Awareness (Make them “aware” of the words and concepts.)
Stand at the door — waiting
Opens the door — invites Jesus to forgive their sins and be the Lord of their lives
Come in — forgive their sins and be the Lord of their lives

I — In Their Lives (Teach them to apply the lesson “in their lives.”)

Unsaved child (questions to ask an unsaved child)
Do you know that Jesus is waiting for you to ask Him into your life? Do you want Him to forgive your sins and be the Lord of your life?

Saved child (questions to ask a saved child)
How can you let others know that Jesus is waiting for them and wants to forgive their sins? Have you let Jesus into every area of your life? Are you allowing Him to change your heart?

N — Number of Times (Repeat the content again and again until the children understand it.)
Read from Scripture. Repeat after me. Play the Memory Game three or four times.

Memory Game
Play Erase a Word. Write the Memory Verse on a board. Erase one word at a time while letting the children guess the missing word.
her story (gospel presentation)

Visuals
- “What’s Your Choice?” Foundational Gospel Truths Visual*, Picture of Joni Brown*

Supplies
- Bible, paper, writing tools

Instruction and Application
- Joni Brown grew up going to church. There she learned about God, but it wasn’t until she was in her early twenties that she made the choice to ask Jesus to forgive her sins and be the Lord of her life. She didn’t attend church any longer out of ritual or habit but because of her relationship with God! She grew closer to God as she read her Bible and spent time in prayer.
- In 1998 Joni was diagnosed with cancer. Her children were only 6 and 10 years old. God was with Joni through her journey with cancer and gave her a peace and strength through a difficult time. In 2000, Joni had a baby even though doctors said that she would not have any more babies!
- However, in 2006 Joni was diagnosed with cancer again — Stage 4 bone cancer. The doctors found a mass in her ovaries and cancer in her bones. God was again faithful to Joni, and she continued to be at peace and feel God’s presence. When the doctor did a scan later that year, the mass was completely gone. Joni continued to do chemotherapy through 2014 to treat the cancer in her bones. To this day there is no longer active cancer in her body!
- Joni chooses to trust God daily and knows that God can and will be glorified through her experiences. She has shared her story with many who have been encouraged and put their trust in God.
- God is using Joni to impact the lives of others. Just like Joni, we need to choose God in every circumstance, no matter what we face. Use the “What’s Your Choice?” Visual to review.

Discussion
- Older Team: Have the children discuss difficult things they face and how they can choose to let God guide them.
- Younger Team: Have the children play “Eeny, Meeny, Miny, Moe” and talk about choosing Jesus.
- Quiet Team: Have the children write a letter to God asking for help to make the right choices.
- Active Team: Have the children play Rock, Paper, Scissors. The winner tells his partner how he can choose to ask Jesus to forgive his sin and be the Lord of his life.
flashback (review questions)

Supplies
- Review Questions*

Large Group Story Review Questions
- Who did Saul hate? (Followers of Jesus)
- Who did Saul agree should be killed? (Stephen)
- Who did Saul get a letter from? (The high priest)
- What did the letter allow him to do? (Arrest believers in Damascus)
- What happened to Saul on the road to Damascus? (A bright light blinded him and Jesus spoke to him)
- What happened when Ananias spoke to Saul? (Saul was able to see again and was filled with the Holy Spirit.)
- What did Saul teach after this experience? (Jesus is God the Son.)
- Did people hate and want to kill Saul for what he taught? (Yes)
- How many mission trips did Saul take? (3)
- What was Saul’s name changed to? (Paul)
- What does Paul mean? (Little or small)
- Who are some of the people or groups of people that Paul wrote letters to? (Thessalonians, Galatians, Corinthians, Romans, Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, Timothy, Titus)
- Did Paul face persecution and prison for what he believed and taught? (Yes)
- Did that persecution keep Paul from teaching? (No)

Discussion Questions
- What persecutions do you face for what you believe?
- What are ways you can tell others about Jesus?
**story cube (craft)**

**Visuals**
- Craft sample*

**Supplies**
- Story Cube Template*, scissors, tape, coloring tools

**Instruction and Application**
- Give each of the children a Story Cube Template. Have the children color and cut out the template. Next, have the children fold, tape, and assemble the template as shown in the Craft sample.
- Remind the children that today we learned how Paul chose God's plan for salvation. His life was not always easy, but God was with Him and helped him to do great things for God. Just like Paul, we can choose God’s plan for salvation!
- Review the Memory Verse with the children. Revelation 3:20a, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him.”
**what’s the point (application activities)**

**Supplies**
- “What’s the Point?” card*, writing tools

**Activity #1**
- Give each child a “What’s the Point?” card. Have the children write what they learned about how they can choose God’s plan for salvation! We have to ask Jesus to forgive our sins and be the Lord of our lives. Have them fill out the “Put it to action!” portion by writing something they can do this week to apply what they learned. What choice do they need to make? Have they prayed and asked Jesus to forgive their sins and be the Lord of their lives? If they have, how can they talk to their friends and family about the choices they make and how they need to choose to ask Jesus to forgive their sins?

**Activity #2**
- Have the children take turns acting out different scenarios where they can make choices to honor Jesus. If you have a group that is more quiet, you could choose to have them draw a picture representing the choice they need to make or write a letter to God.

**now what? (additional activity)**

**Supplies**
- Additional Activity #1: Coloring Page
- Additional Activity #2: Fill-in-the-Blank Activity Page
- Additional Activity #3: Word Search Activity Page
- Additional Activity #4: The Big Take Away Key Chain*

**Instruction and Application**
- These activities are to be used with your team as time fillers while reinforcing the lesson concepts. The children can take these home each week or do them while they are listening to you teach during Small Group. These activities require little to no explanation and can be great for moments when you are transitioning or don’t have time to start another activity.