

33. Jesus Changes Paul



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Leader Notes:

- View [this session's focus](#), faith nurture goals, leader devotional, and story symbol (click on the story symbol to download or print).
- For the full set of DWELL Flex story symbols use the link in the sidebar.
- Need this as a PDF? Just [print this page](#) and choose to save/print as a PDF.

Take a few moments to greet the children and let them know how glad you are to see them.

I love exploring God's story with you. Let's get ready to do that together.

Breathe

Use this time to focus your attention on God.

Do this with me: calm your head, heart, and hands as you slowly breathe in . . . and out. *(Demonstrate a few deep "in and out breaths" with eyes closed.)*

Tell and Wonder

Let's enter God's story together. Here's the story symbol for the part of God's story that we'll be spending time in today. I wonder what clues it gives us about the story we're about to hear? *(Show the story symbol. Accept any answers without giving away whether or not the kids have guessed correctly.)*

Listen closely as we read the story together to see which story our symbol represents.

Read "Jesus Changes Paul" aloud (below), pausing throughout to allow children to answer the wondering questions. NOTE: It's always a good idea to read through the story beforehand so you'll be able to tell it well.

You can also read the story from a children's Bible or a simplified translation of Scripture like the New International Reader's Version (NIRV). Remember to pause throughout to allow time to wonder.

Pray

Conclude your time together with prayer, thanking Jesus for loving you and wanting you to be his friends and followers, like Paul was.

See [5 Ways to Pray with Kids](#) for other ways to pray.

Respond

Select and do one or more of the response activities from God's Big Story card #148 or check out [5 Ways to Retell a Bible Story with Kids](#) for some fun ways to retell this story. Include older kids in the retelling by having them read the story aloud while the younger children act it out.*

**God's Big Story cards can be ordered from FaithAliveResources.org.*

Easy Extra

Ahead of time, paste [this picture of Jesus](#) to a piece of posterboard. Show the children the picture and have someone read what it says. (If you don't have any readers in your group, read it aloud and have them repeat it after you.) Tell your group that you are going to complete your poster to include a picture on it of every person in your group.

Distribute half sheets of drawing paper and markers and have each child draw a picture of themselves to add to the poster. Be sure to draw a picture of yourself too. As the children finish their self-portraits, give each one a chance to glue it to the poster and sign it. (If space on the poster is limited, you could trim off the white space around each figure before attaching it to the poster.) Hang your poster on the door to your room facing outward into the hall so everyone who passes knows that the people in your classroom are Jesus' friends!

If you're meeting virtually, invite each child to draw and send you a self portrait. Then print them and attach them to your poster. The next time you meet, show the group the completed poster, and consider hanging it behind you so that the children can see it on your video each week.

Story: Jesus Changes Paul [Acts 9:1-19](#)

Begin by telling your group to imagine that you're Paul telling them about the day he met Jesus.

Hello, my name is Paul. Just between you and me, I don't have the greatest reputation around Jerusalem. In fact, most Christians run and hide at the mention of my name . . . but I'm hoping that's going to change.

You see, I've been changed, completely changed! I used to try to hurt Christians—but now I serve Jesus! This is how it happened. . . .

I had just received letters from the high priest to the places of worship in Damascus. These letters gave me permission to arrest any people who claimed to be followers of Jesus and to take them to jail in Jerusalem. I couldn't wait to get there! I hated those Christians so much! What they said seemed very wrong to me. I was convinced that anyone who believed in Jesus was turning away from God and deserved to be punished.

But just as we got near the city, something strange happened. A very bright, very white light flashed from the sky right into my eyes. That light was so bright it knocked me right to the ground! "What's happening?" I wondered. But the strangest part of it was that my friends couldn't see the light. And they couldn't imagine what was happening to me!

Then a loud voice came out of nowhere. But I was the only one who could understand it. The voice said, “Paul! Paul! Why are you trying to hurt me? I am Jesus. The people you want to put in jail are my friends. Please don’t hurt them! Now get up and go to the city and wait for another message from me.” **Can you imagine how I felt when Jesus spoke to me?** *(Pause for responses.)*

I could hardly believe my ears! It was the voice of Jesus, the one I had hated. I knew I had to obey him now. So I got up and rubbed my eyes, but I couldn’t see a thing! My friends had to help me—they took my arms and guided me all the way to the city. They helped me find a place to stay. **Do you think I arrested anyone there?** *(Pause for responses.)* No way! I just sat and waited for another message from Jesus.

For three days I remained blind. I sat in the darkness that whole time—and I sure did a lot of thinking! I thought about Jesus’ words: “Why are you trying to hurt me, Paul?” I began to feel sorry . . . and I knew then that Jesus had changed my heart. Jesus had changed me from his enemy into a friend—his friend.

After three days Jesus sent Ananias, another friend and follower, to visit me. At first, Ananias was afraid of me. **Do you know why?** *(Pause for responses.)* Right! He knew how much I had hated Jesus and his friends. But he obeyed Jesus and came anyway.

When Ananias put his hand on my head, something amazing happened. It felt like something fell off my eyes and I could see again. Jesus healed my blind eyes! But that’s not all. Something more wonderful happened—Ananias baptized me to show that I really, truly belonged to Jesus now. Now, when people ask me if I’m a friend of Jesus, **I’ll bet you can guess what I tell them!** *(Pause for responses.)*

Do you ever wonder how Jesus can love people who don’t love him? Aren’t you glad that he does? *(Give kids time to respond.)*

Looking for More Activities for This Story?

Click below to access the full age-specific *Dwell* session for this story:

- [Preschool: Jesus Changes Paul](#)
 - [Kindergarten-1st Grade: Jesus Changes Paul](#)
 - [4th-5th Grade: Saul's Conversion](#)
 - [6th-8th Grade: Only by Faith](#)
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