



Fearless

Bible Story: Fearless (Ananias Helps Paul) • Acts 9:10-31

Bottom Line: Knowing Jesus can help you face your fears.

Key Question: What are you afraid of?

Memory Verse: *Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being sure of what we do not see.*
Hebrews 11:1 (NirV)

Life App: Faith—Trusting in what you can't see because of what you can see

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

Story: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways (Large Group, 35 minutes)

Engage kids' hearts through a dynamic and interactive Bible story, worship, and prayer experience in a Large Group setting.

SFX: Play high-energy music as kids enter.

CG: Theme Slide

Host enters.

Welcome

Host has lots of energy as he or she welcomes everyone to [Name of Environment]. Host is relatable and inviting. Host can talk about something that happened culturally throughout the week like a big sporting event (NBA and NHL Finals), movie opening, a viral video on YouTube, etc. Host tells them how excited he or she is that they're there and briefly runs through what they can expect. This is especially helpful for first-time guests to make them feel like they know what's happening.

Opener

HOST: “What’s going on, everyone?! So great to be with you today as we think about what it means to FOCUS and take a closer look. And speaking of focus, today starts with an awesome game that requires some hyper focus. I’m not sure if you’ve ever heard this before, but when you aren’t able to use one of your senses, it ‘heightens’ your other senses. Let’s test that theory a bit and focus on our sense of hearing. I’ll play a sound. Then as a small group, write down on your answer sheet what you think the sound is. *(Make sure every group has a piece of paper and pencil.)* We’ll reveal it, and you can either mark it right or wrong. Make sense? Okay here is our first sound.”

SFX: Sound 1 (Toilet Flushing)

Play each sound two or three times. Tell everyone to write something down. To make this more difficult, you could play the SFX only once.

“Okay, everybody has something written down? And the answer was—yell it out—a toilet flushing!”

“Here’s our second sound!”

SFX: Sound 2 (Bowling pins falling over)

“(After playing two or three times) Write it down and . . . what was it? Bowling pins!”

“Here’s our third sound . . .”

SFX: Sound 3 (Microwave running)

“(After playing two or three times) Write it down and . . . what was it? That was a microwave!”

“Here’s our fourth sound . . .”

SFX: Sound 4 (Scissors cutting paper)

“(After playing two or three times) Write it down and . . . what was it? That was scissors cutting paper!”

“Here’s our fifth and final sound . . .”

SFX: Sound 5 (Cat purring)

“(After playing two or three times) Write it down and . . . what was it? That was a cat purring!”

“Okay let’s see who has the most right answers!”

Have groups announce their scores. If there is a tie, bring one person up from each tied small group and do a tie breaker. First person to say the right answer wins.”

SFX: Tiebreaker Sound (Trees falling over)

(After the game) You all did a great job! Now let's stand and worship together!"

Worship

Communicator enters Worship Leaders exit.

COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT

INTRODUCTION

COMMUNICATOR: "Hey, everyone! Glad to see you all here today. Let's get right to it. I'm wondering if this has ever happened to you: you made up your mind about someone and decided that he or she was—how should I say it—a little scary. But then, after you actually got to know the person, you realized he or she wasn't so scary after all."

Tell a personal story similar to the one below or consider using a "Imagine that" scenario.

"For example, for me, I was scared of the dentist (*or similar scenario*). Has anyone been scared of the dentist? Sure! The dentist has all those drills and pokey tools and scrapers . . . yuck! I just assumed that anybody who is a dentist must do it because he or she really likes to torture people. But then the strangest thing happened. I had a dentist appointment, and my dentist turned out to be a super nice person who made my hurting tooth feel way better!"

"How about you? Take a minute to turn and talk with the people next to you. Can you think of a time when someone turned out to be way nicer than you expected him or her to be?"

Give time to chat for a moment. Encourage several kids share their examples.

TENSION

COMMUNICATOR: “Let’s hear some of your stories. *(Pause for responses and comment.)* Yes! Those were some great examples! I have a feeling that you all shared those moments because they all turned out well. And it’s one thing to be scared of a situation, but being scared of a person is a bit trickier. Sometimes it’s actually hard to trust certain people. We might now know how best to respond in these situations? Do you ignore how we feel? Do you run from it? Or do you face the person? Figuring out what to do in this situation can be difficult. But here’s the thing: you’re not alone. All sorts of people have felt this way, even the people we find in the Bible. We can learn from how they responded back then in situations like this to help us make the wise choice today.”

TRUTH

COMMUNICATOR: “This morning, we head back to the book of Acts in the New Testament of the Bible. We pick up right where we left off last week. Anybody remember the name of the guy that was headed on a road to Damascus?” *(Pause for responses.)*

“That’s right, Saul, who also went by the name Paul. As we learned last week, Saul was a devoted Jewish man who thought he was helping God by putting a stop to the message of Jesus and His followers. But while he was on his way to Damascus to have even more Jesus followers arrested, Saul was met by none other than Jesus Himself Who spoke to Saul and asked, ‘Why are you opposing me?’ Saul had to face the fact that everything he had believed about Jesus was wrong and that he had actually been working against God this whole time!”

“Well, if you remember how the story ended last week, Saul stood up from his encounter, but there was a bit of a problem. Anybody remember what happened to Saul after he saw that bright light?” *(Pause for responses.)*

“Right, Saul couldn’t see a thing! He had been blinded. The men who were with him led him into the city of Damascus, to the house of a man named Judas who lived on Straight Street. Now, while Saul was having his encounter with Jesus, there was somebody else who had a bit of a life-changing encounter as well. His name is Ananias, and we meet him right where the story picks up.”

“(Read directly from Acts 9:10-11, NIV) ‘In Damascus there was a believer named Ananias. The Lord called out to him in a vision. “Ananias!” he said. “Yes, Lord,” he answered. The Lord told him, “Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street. Ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul. He is praying.”’”

“So there were two sides to this story. You had Ananias, a follower of Jesus here living in Damascus who had a vision from the Lord. And then you had Saul. But their stories were about to overlap. Check out the next verse.”

“(Read directly from Acts 9:12, NIV) “In a vision Saul has seen a man come and place his hands on him. That man’s name is Ananias. In the vision, Ananias placed his hands on Saul so he could see again.””

“In other words, Jesus told Ananias that Saul was expecting him . . . and that he would be used to restore Saul’s sight.”

“Well, maybe Ananias had never heard of Saul, right? Maybe he wasn’t aware of what kind of guy he was so this wouldn’t be that big of a deal. Not likely.”

“(Read directly from Acts 9:13-14, NIV) “Lord,” Ananias answered, “I’ve heard many reports about this man. They say he has done great harm to your holy people in Jerusalem. Now he has come here to arrest all those who worship you. The chief priests have given him authority to do this.””

“Saul’s reputation had made it to Damascus long before he ever did. And the people were terrified of him, including Ananias. And now Ananias was being told to go and FIND Saul to HELP him? I’m guessing Ananias was wondering if he was hearing right. Certainly, after what God told him next!”

“(Read directly from Acts 9:15, NIV) ‘But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! I have chosen this man to work for me. He will announce my name to the Gentiles and to their kings. He will also announce my name to the people of Israel.””

“Saul works for ME now! He is going to carry MY name to the Gentiles (non-Jews) as well as the people of Israel. Wow . . . this was quite the shocker.”

“Now, let’s play a little ‘What Did They Do Next?’ This is a pretty pivotal point in the story and Ananias had just been asked to do a pretty big thing. So . . .

CG: *What Did They Do Next? Title Slide*

“What Did They Do Next?”

CG: *Question 1 Slide*

“After the Lord told Ananias to go find Saul, did Ananias . . .”

“A. Turn up the music really loud and pretend that he hadn’t heard the Lord speaking . . .”

“B. Pack up quickly, move far away from Damascus, and change his name to Clarence . . .”

“C. Do what the Lord said and go to the house where Saul was.”

“What do you think? (*Pause for responses*). Let’s find out!”

CG: *Answer 1 Slide*

Though he may have wanted to do A or B, yes . . . he did C. Let’s keep reading.”

“(Read directly from Acts 9:17a, NIV) ‘Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. He placed his hands on Saul . . .’ But . . .”

CG: *What Did They Do Next? Title Slide*

“What Did They Do Next?”

CG: Question 2 Slide

"Ananias placed his hands on Saul and . . ."

"A. Told him all the terrible things he had done and called him a bunch of names I can't repeat here."

"B. Put him in a sleeper hold he had learned while watching professional wrestling."

"C. Retold the story of what had happened on the road and prayed for him to be filled with the Holy Spirit."

"What do you all think? (*Pause for responses*). Let's find out!"

CG: Answer 2 Slide

"Though a sleeper hold might have been tempting, yes . . . he did C. Retold the story of what had happened on the road and prayed for him to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Now, let's keep reading."

"(Read directly from Acts 9:17b-19, NIV) "Brother Saul," he said, "you saw the Lord Jesus. He appeared to you on the road as you were coming here. He has sent me so that you will be able to see again. You will be filled with the Holy Spirit." Right away something like scales fell from Saul's eyes. And he could see again. He got up and was baptized. After eating some food, he got his strength back."

"Just like Jesus had said, God used Ananias to restore Saul's sight. But things were just getting started. Now does anybody remember why Saul was coming to Damascus in the first place?" (*Pause for responses.*)

"That's right! Originally, he was headed there to go into their synagogues, which was the main meeting place, and to arrest any followers of Jesus and bring them back to Jerusalem. Well, Saul still went to the synagogues in Damascus. But check out the difference."

"(Read directly from Acts 9:19b-20, NIV) 'Saul spent several days with the believers in Damascus. Right away he began to preach in the synagogues. He taught that Jesus is the Son of God.'"

“He still went into the synagogues, but his message had completely changed. He began to prove that Jesus really is who He claimed to be. And the people were all shocked. Remember—just like Ananias, many of the people knew Saul’s reputation. This wasn’t what they were expecting! But Saul continued to prove that Jesus is the Messiah, to the amazement of the people.”

“This, however, did not go over so well with the Jewish leaders living in Damascus. Check this out. *(Read directly from Acts 9:23-24, NIV)* ‘After many days, the Jews had a meeting. They planned to kill Saul. But he learned about their plan. Day and night they watched the city gates closely in order to kill him.’ Woah. Intense. So . . .”

CG: “What Did They Do Next?” Title Slide

“What Did They Do Next?”

CG: Question 3 Slide

“When Saul learned about the plot to kill him . . .”

“A. He revealed that the whole thing was a setup and that he wasn’t really a follower of Jesus . . .”

“B. He called into action the elite band of camels he had secretly trained to defend him . . .”

“C. His followers lowered him in a basket through the city wall under the cover of night . . .”

“What do you all think? *(Pause for responses)*. Let’s see!”

CG: Answer 3 Slide

"I know, all of these sound kind of crazy but, yep . . . it is actually C! His followers lowered him in a basket! Check it out!"

"(Read directly from Acts 9:25, NIV) 'But his followers helped him escape by night. They lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall.'"

"So where did he go then? They wanted him dead in Damascus? Well, Saul headed back to Jerusalem. But remember, the last time he had left Jerusalem, he had been completely against the followers of Jesus, terrorizing them and everything they stood for. How would they receive him? In other words . . ."

CG: "What Did They Do Next? Title Slide"

"What Did They Do Next?"

CG: Question 4 Slide

"When Saul tried to join the believers in Jerusalem, they . . ."

"A. Received him warmly and were thankful for the amazing work God had done . . ."

"B. Handed him back over to the leaders of Damascus to suffer the consequences . . ."

"C. Were all afraid of him and didn't believe he was really a follower of Jesus . . ."

"What do you all think? (*Pause for responses*). Let's see if you're right."

CG: Answer 4 Slide

“That one was a bit tricky. I’d like to say it was A, but actually . . . it is still C. They didn’t receive him. They were terrified and didn’t believe he was actually one of Jesus’ followers. That was until a man named Barnabas bravely spoke up for him. We read it here . . .”

“(Read directly from Acts 9:26-27, NIV) ‘When Saul came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the believers. But they were all afraid of him. They didn’t believe he was really one of Jesus’ followers. But Barnabas took him to the apostles. He told them about Saul’s journey. He said that Saul had seen the Lord. He told how the Lord had spoken to Saul. Barnabas also said that Saul had preached without fear in Jesus’ name in Damascus.’”

“And because Barnabas spoke up for Saul, the believers in Jerusalem accepted Saul as one of their own. *(Read directly from Acts 9:28, NIV) ‘So Saul stayed with the believers. He moved about freely in Jerusalem. He spoke boldly in the Lord’s name.’”*

“In fact, Saul went on to spread the message of Jesus all over that part of the world. He started churches and wrote those church’s letters. Those letters became books of the New Testament in the Bible. God used Saul to do some amazing things, and God invited others like Ananias and Barnabas to be part of it, too.”

APPLICATION

COMMUNICATOR: “Saul’s life was definitely a drastic story of change. I think that is why so many people had trouble believing it at first. How does a man who is that opposed to Jesus all of the sudden have his life turned around? Ananias had to face that question. What God was asking Ananias to do was terrifying. And for Ananias, it took an incredible amount of trust. He was basically asking himself, ‘Do I believe that God could really change Saul like this and that now God wants to use me to help him?’ That was a real fear Ananias had to face.”

“The believers living in Damascus and Jerusalem had to face that question, too. They had heard and maybe even seen the effects of Saul’s terror, and now they were supposed to accept him as a fellow follower of Jesus? To work alongside of him? To . . . love him? What if this was an inside job? What if this was just part of his wicked plan to take down the church? This was a real fear that these believers had to face.”

“I’m amazed at the courage of Barnabas in this story, too. In a moment when everybody was looking for clarity on what to believe, Barnabas stepped up on behalf of Saul and shared what he had seen happening in Saul’s life. That took some courage! And it ended up making all of the difference.”

“It is easy for us to make impressions about people or to believe that someone is too mean, too unkind, too rude, too whatever to change. In those cases, it’s important to remember Saul’s story and be amazed at what God can do when He gets a hold of a life.”

“It is easy to let fear drive our decisions, but think about what we see in Saul’s story. When we understand who God is and just what He is capable of, that can give us courage in the face of some really difficult situations.”

LANDING

COMMUNICATOR: “Today as you go to groups, I think about this question:

CG: Key Question Slide

“What are you afraid of?” What are the situations where you feel scared? Who are the people who cause you to pause and wonder if you can trust them? Everyone has fears. Thankfully, we don’t have to face these fears on our own. When we understand the truth about who God is and what He is capable of, we can find courage to face what and who scares us. You’ll talk about this more in Small Group, but before you head there, let’s pray and be thankful we can trust God no matter what might make us scared. Let’s pray.”

Communicator leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard. After prayer, Communicator dismisses kids to Small Group.

SFX: Play high-energy music as the kids exit.