



WEEK
ONE
JUNE 2023

LARGE GROUP
PRETEEN

PRELUDE **SOCIAL** **STORY** **WORSHIP** **GROUPS** **HOME**

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

I'm a Believer
Paul Becomes a Believer
Acts 9:1-9

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

What do you know about Jesus?

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Knowing Jesus changes
how you see things.

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

**"Faith is being sure of what
we hope for. It is being sure
of what we do not see."**
Hebrews 11:1, NIV

MONTHLY VIRTUE

**Faith—Trusting in what
you can't see because of
what you can see**

BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what.

LARGE GROUP

ENGAGE KIDS' HEARTS THROUGH A DYNAMIC AND INTERACTIVE BIBLE STORY, WORSHIP, AND PRAYER EXPERIENCE IN A LARGE GROUP SETTING.

AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS STUDENTS ENTER.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP

Host enters . . .

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): COUNTDOWN (30- OR 60-SECOND VERSION)

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME

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 sports game, 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: "Hi, everyone! Welcome to [Name of Environment]! First week of June, hopefully you're done with finals, done with school, and ready to get up, get out, and get going. That sunshine isn't going to soak up itself, you know.

"For the time you're with us here at [Name of Environment], we promise a lot of Jesus, a lot of fun, and maybe some water to the face. Not necessarily in that order. Let's kick off the month right with a game, shall we?"

"Since this month our theme is 'Ready, Set, Move,' chances are you won't just sit there. And in true [Name of Environment] fashion, I've dusted off an old classic . . . with a twist!

"Now, I've heard to train cats you have to spray them in the face when they're climbing the curtains or licking the butter. And I figured preteens are the same, so . . .

Host reveals a full spray bottle and sprays a few times into the air, testing it out.



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“Not only that, but I’ve enlisted some friends as well.

All of the Small Group Leaders stand, reveal their water bottles, and spray in the air a few times, testing them.

“(sigh) Sometimes I love my job.

“The game is simple—it’s classic Red Light, Green Light. But instead of the normal version, we’re trying a wetter approach. This is: ‘Red Light, Green Light: Water Edition!’

SLIDE: “RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT: WATER EDITION”

“If you’re familiar with the game, you know that on ‘Green Light,’ you move. ‘Red Light’ you stop. If you move after I call out ‘Red Light,’ you’re out. However, when you’re stopped, if you laugh, you get sprayed. And you’re out.

“And all of the Leaders and myself will be trying to make you laugh. Don’t worry, one rule we have to follow is that we can’t touch you or push you in any way.

“It’s all All-Play, so let’s get ready, get set, and get moving!

AUDIO: FUN BACKGROUND MUSIC

Play the game. On every ‘Red Light,’ dance, make faces, tell Dad Jokes, do what you can to get kids to laugh.

Play until there is a winner or multiple winners. Play multiple times if time allows.

HOST: “I think the leaders had more fun than the kids on that one. Nicely done! Now let’s towel off and raise our voices—it’s time for some awesome worship to our amazing God!”



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COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Communicator enters as Worship Leaders exit.

INTRODUCTION

COMMUNICATOR: "Welcome, everyone! I promise . . . no spray bottles for this portion of the morning. Can't say the same for when [Name of Host] comes back, but for now, you're safe."

"I love optical illusions. You know, those pictures where you can see two different things, depending on where you look? Let me give you some examples."

SLIDE: OLD WOMAN/YOUNG WOMAN OPTICAL ILLUSION

"How many of you see an old woman? How about a young woman?"

SLIDE: SPINNING VORTEX OPTICAL ILLUSION

"This one is a bit trippy. If you stare, does the image move to you? Can you get it to stop? Try staring at the center, see if that changes things for you."

SLIDE: HORSES OPTICAL ILLUSION BY BEV DOOLITTLE

"How many horses do you see? (pause) What's wild is that the original painter won't even say how many!"

SLIDE: HIDDEN TIGER OPTICAL ILLUSION

"Do you see the tiger? And not the one right in the front."

SLIDE: CAT ON THE STAIRS OPTICAL ILLUSION

"Wait. Is the cat going upstairs or downstairs?"

TENSION

COMMUNICATOR: "Sometimes changing your perspective makes you see things that you didn't see before, right? Changing perspectives with pictures is one thing—like seeing the arrow on every FedEx truck between the "E" and the "X" that you can never unsee once you see it—

OPTIONAL SLIDE: FEDEX LOGO

"—but what about changing your perspective with people? You think you know someone, but when does your perspective change about them? What about mean people or people you don't get along with? Or even better, what about famous people? You think you know them or have an idea of what kind of person they are, but that perspective can all change with literally one YouTube video, right? What is it that actually changes your mind?"



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“These are great questions. And thankfully we’ve got a great resource to answer great questions like these. (*hold up Bible*) This. Hundreds of stories, thousands of verses, all helping us understand the answers to questions that, at first, may seem difficult to understand. And to help us understand the questions for today, let’s take a look at what Luke shares with us in the book of Acts.”

TRUTH

COMMUNICATOR: “We’ve been making our way through God’s Big Story this year.

If you’re using a Bible timeline on your wall, you can reference it here as you recap.

“We started all the way in the beginning, when Adam and Eve disobeyed God. We saw how God promised to save the broken world through Abraham’s family. When the time was right, God sent Jesus to be our Savior. Jesus did a lot of amazing things when He was on earth. Eventually He died for our sins and came back to life!

“After Jesus came back to life, He spent time with His friends and followers for 40 more days before He returned to heaven. Today’s story comes from the book of Acts, which shows us some of the amazing things that happened when the church was just getting started.

“With the help of God’s Holy Spirit, the church grew quickly. But the believers faced a lot of challenges, too. When they faced some trouble in Jerusalem, many of the followers of Jesus left Jerusalem and scattered. They took the news about Jesus everywhere they went.

“That’s where we start today and pick up in the book of Acts, found in the New Testament of the Bible. We meet a guy named Saul—and boy, is he a doozy. You may know him as Paul, but we’ll get to him in a minute.

“In the book of Acts, the author Luke tells the story of what happened immediately after Jesus died and rose again. His followers, the disciples, went out into the world with the mission to spread His message. That mission started small, telling those living locally in Jerusalem all about Jesus, about God, about His Kingdom, and about how to have a relationship with Jesus in order to live fully and forever with God!

“But a message like that tends to spread . . . like really spread, reaching more and more people with the good news of the Gospel.

“Many people accepted this message of Jesus as really good news. After all, they were waiting for hundreds of years for a Savior. However, there were some who saw the message of Jesus as bad news—as a threat—and they wanted to put a stop to the spread of it as quickly as possible.

“One of the worst of those people was a guy named Saul.”

SLIDE: SAUL #1

“When we first meet Saul, he’s doing what he has done for a long time: being horrible to new Christians.

SLIDE: SAUL #2



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“There was a man named Stephen, a fervent follower of Jesus. Stephen was dragged outside of the city by the religious leaders and put to death. As the people did this, Saul watched over their coats and cloaks. He stood there, silently giving his approval. We don’t know exactly what Saul was thinking, but you could guess that he thought this was the right thing to do. After all, this message of Jesus should be stopped, right? What better way than to publicly humiliate His followers?”

“Saul was also educated. A scholar, even. Not only that, he was Jewish.

SLIDE: SAUL #3

“Saul was educated by one of the most famous rabbis of his time. Saul wasn’t just some tyrant or some madman. He was actually a very smart, well-respected man who believed that he was doing the right thing. Since he didn’t believe Jesus was really the Messiah—the long-awaited King of Israel—he thought he was doing his people a favor by trying to put a stop to all of the nonsense. Actually, he probably thought he was even doing God a favor, believing this movement was hurting God’s reputation! He made it his personal mission to try to silence the message of Jesus once and for all. Check out how Luke begins the story:

Open the Bible to Acts 9:1a (NirV) and read.

“Meanwhile, Saul continued to oppose the Lord’s followers. He said they would be put to death.”

Saul wasn’t messing around. It was his plan to make life absolutely miserable for the followers of Jesus.

SLIDE: SAUL #4

“Threatening. Intimidating. Saul was clearly determined. But he was not settled on simply putting a stop to the message of Jesus in Jerusalem. He wanted to stop the message everywhere. Check this out.

Open the Bible to Acts 9:1b-2 (NirV) and read.

“He went to the high priest. He asked the priest for letters to the synagogues in Damascus. He wanted to find men and women who belonged to the Way of Jesus. The letters would allow him to take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.”

SLIDE: SAUL #5

“Saul got permission to shut down any talk of Jesus, anywhere he went—even outside of Jerusalem. He could arrest people and bring them back to Jerusalem for trials, if there even were any, or more likely, immediate punishment.

“Friends, let me say this again: Saul was not a madman. He really thought that what he was doing was the right thing. He thought that he was helping people by putting a stop to what he saw as a dangerous movement following a fake Messiah.

“With letters of authority in hand, Saul headed out to Damascus.

SLIDE: SAUL #6



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Open the Bible to Acts 9:3 (NIRV) and read.

“On his journey, Saul approached Damascus. Suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.”

SLIDE: SAUL #7

“It wasn’t stormy. The bright light wasn’t lightning, or torchlight, or anything he had experienced before.

Open the Bible to Acts 9:4 (NIRV) and read.

“He fell to the ground. He heard a voice speak to him, “Saul! Saul! Why are you opposing me?”

SLIDE: SAUL #8

“I don’t know about you, but I’d be terrified. It had to be some kind of light to actually knock him to the ground. And now a voice? Coming out of nowhere, and everywhere, at the same time? Saul frantically tried to determine who was talking. Let’s keep reading.

Open the Bible to Acts 9:5 (NIRV) and read.

““Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked.’

““I am Jesus,” he replied. “I am the one you are opposing.””

SLIDE: SAUL #9

“Can you even imagine this moment? All this time, Saul thought that this Jesus person he was against was a fake. A phony. And that His disciples were following a fraud. You can probably imagine what was going through Saul’s mind, too. Flashbacks of the things he had done. The followers he had imprisoned. The people he had killed.

“And now the Son of God had knocked him to the ground. Panic might have started to creep in. But Jesus wasn’t finished. He had some instructions for Saul.

Open the Bible to Acts 9:6 (NIRV) and read.

““Now get up and go into the city. There you will be told what you must do.””

SLIDE: SAUL #10

“Maybe Saul was just imagining this. Maybe it was all in his head, maybe he just fell off his donkey and was concussed. (pause) Nope. There were actually other people with him who heard this whole thing go down.

Open the Bible to Acts 9:7 (NIRV) and read.

SLIDE: SAUL #11



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“The men traveling with Saul stood there. They weren’t able to speak. They had heard the sound. But they didn’t see anyone.”

“Saul knew he didn’t have a choice. He had to obey. So he did just what Jesus told him to do. He got up and started back down the road—only there was a huge problem. Listen to this!

Open the Bible to Acts 9:8-9 (NirV) and read.

“Saul got up from the ground. He opened his eyes, but he couldn’t see. So, they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind. He didn’t eat or drink anything.”

SLIDE: SAUL #12

“After seeing Jesus for who He really was, Saul now couldn’t see anything else. For three days! Saul headed into Damascus, which was where he was headed to in the first place. However, in his current condition, he wouldn’t be able to do the things he set out to do in the first place.

APPLICATION

COMMUNICATOR: “When Saul left Jerusalem, he was absolutely convinced that he was headed the right way, doing the right things for the right reasons. As he neared Damascus, Saul was forced to face an important reality—forced right off of his ride and onto the ground.

“He hadn’t been doing God’s work. In fact, he had actually been working against God by opposing Jesus. If Jesus met Saul on the road to Damascus, it must mean that Jesus is alive, and if Jesus is alive, then everything Saul believed about Him was wrong.

“That day, on that road, Saul saw, maybe not with his eyes, but with a new perspective. And that new perspective changed everything.

SLIDE: GOD’S BIG STORY TIMELINE

SLIDE: WEEK 1 TIMELINE IMAGE

If you’re making a timeline of printed images on your wall, take this moment to place today’s timeline image on the clothesline.

“Things can happen the same way for us. Maybe not blinding light, but the sudden realization that we’re looking at things, situations, or people the wrong way? For sure. It’s happened to me, on more than one occasion.

OPTIONAL: Tell about a time when you had something completely wrong or you thought you knew who a person really was but then had your perspective completely altered.

“It’s possible that, like Saul, we’ve picked up some ideas about Jesus that just aren’t true. Or maybe we have developed some habits or unhealthy patterns, jumping to conclusions about others.



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“Maybe we’re too quick to be unkind to certain people, using our words to hurt or insult instead of heal. We need a new perspective from Jesus in these areas. Sometimes God can speak to us through the godly people around us. God can speak to us through the Bible. There are many ways God can get our attention, but like Saul, we have to be willing to respond—even if we can’t quite see where we’re headed at first.

LANDING

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

SLIDE: KEY QUESTION

“What do you know about Jesus?” Not just the correct ‘church-answer’ knowledge, but deep down. When you think about who Jesus is and what Jesus means to you, what, or who, has shaped your perspective? If you’re not quite sure how you’d answer that, no worries! You’ll talk more about it with your group. Before you head out, let’s pray and ask God to give us eyes to see Jesus for who He truly is! Let’s pray!”

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

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

AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS THE KIDS EXIT.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP