



WEEK
TWO
JUNE 2023

LARGE GROUP
PRETEEN

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

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

I Can See Clearly Now
Ananias Helps Paul
Acts 9:10-31

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

When have you faced a fear?

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

God can help you face your fears.

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 holding a covered platter.

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: "Welcome again to [Name of Environment]! Great to be here, and great to see all of your smiling faces once more. Is anyone out there a risk-taker when it comes to trying new foods? Anyone willing to try just about anything?"

Pause for a few responses.

"Not me. I'm pretty picky. The other leaders, however—I think they're pretty adventurous when it comes to trying out new foods. Let's invite some of our leaders up on stage to play a game called 'Don't Yuck My Yum!'"

SLIDE: "DON'T YUCK MY YUM"

Bring a few small group leaders up who can handle a variety of foods. Remove the cover to the platter, revealing different kinds of foods from different countries.



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"I have a pretty good selection of some exotic foods. Anybody scared yet? (*Leaders react*). Full disclosure, there is nothing wrong with any of these foods. They're all edible, and they're not rotten or spoiled. Honestly, people around the world actually enjoy them!

"The challenge is simple. We'll go one at a time. Choose a food, taste it, and give your honest opinion. Then when we've gone through all of the foods, choose one food out of all of them you've tried that you found harder to eat than others . . . and we'll pick someone from the crowd who's brave enough to try it out for themselves!

"Let's get started!

AUDIO: FUN BACKGROUND MUSIC

Do the challenge. Ask questions and provide commentary to build anticipation. After all the foods have been tasted and talked about and kids have been selected to try it out for themselves, lead everyone in applause for all volunteers.

HOST: "I applaud all of your culinary bravery—and I hope the bathroom isn't in your near future. In the meantime, let's lift up our voices and worship together!"



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COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Communicator enters as Worship Leaders exit.

INTRODUCTION

COMMUNICATOR: "I can't believe some of those leaders ate that stuff. Wow. You're braver than I am!"

"I'm not afraid to try out new things, like foods, but there are for sure other things I'm afraid of. What about you? Do you have any fears?"

Allow for a few responses. Comment and affirm each response.

"Yeah, I can see how those can be a bit scary! Let's try an exercise. On the screen, two 'fears' are going to appear. It's your job to pick the fear you'd rather deal with. To choose, move to one side of the room or the other. I'll point to let you know which option is which side! Ready?"

"Here we go! Would you rather . . ."

Help kids choose by indicating which one is which side of the room. Also, provide commentary for each slide, asking kids why they picked a certain one, and so on.

SLIDE: WOULD YOU RATHER SLIDE 1 (BASEMENT OR CABIN)

SLIDE: WOULD YOU RATHER SLIDE 2 (MATH OR HISTORY)

SLIDE: WOULD YOU RATHER SLIDE 3 (CLOWNS OR GYM TEACHERS)

SLIDE: WOULD YOU RATHER SLIDE 4 (SPIDER ON YOUR FACE OR YOU ATE A SPIDER WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING)

SLIDE: WOULD YOU RATHER SLIDE 5 (HUGE CROWD OR ALONE)

SLIDE: WOULD YOU RATHER SLIDE 6 (SPEECH OR SOLO)

"Interesting! Make your way back to your seats—and I've got one last one for you to ponder. You don't need to vote on this one.

As kids find their seats, put up the next slide.

SLIDE: WOULD YOU RATHER SLIDE 7 (IGNORE OR FACE THEM)

TENSION

"How should you respond when you're scared? Do you ignore it? Run from it? Or should you face it? What if it's a chainsaw-carrying, horror-story villain chasing you through a cemetery? Or what if it's standing at the edge of the high dive? Are all fears equal? Should you face all of your fears head on?"



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“These are interesting questions. Maybe you know what you think you should do, but maybe when you’re actually in the situation, it’s a different story. Thankfully we have lots of stories that can help with questions like these. Stories collected in this book right here. (*hold up Bible*) God interacted with people, and people were inspired to write it all down—and now, thousands of years later, we can read and learn and begin to understand answers to these types of questions!

TRUTH

COMMUNICATOR: “Before we pick up right where we left off last week, let’s catch up and remember where we’ve been.

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

“Over the past year, we’ve been making our way through the Bible—all the way from the very beginning. We’ve seen how God sent Jesus to be our Savior. We’ve seen how Jesus died on the cross and then came back to life!

(*Hold up Bible.*) “Now we’re here, in the book of Acts. In this book, we can read about the early church and how it grew. With the help of the Holy Spirit, the believers spread the truth about Jesus, and more and more people believed! Anyone remember the name of the guy from last week who was knocked on his knees on the road to Damascus?

Allow for a response.

“You got it—Saul. To recap, Saul was a devoted, intelligent, educated Jewish leader who believed he was doing God’s work by putting a stop to the message of Jesus and His followers. However, while he was on his way to Damascus to have even more Jesus-followers arrested, Saul encountered a powerful flash of light—and Jesus Himself.

“Jesus spoke to Saul and asked, ‘*Why are you opposing me?*’ (Acts 9:4 NIV). In that moment, Saul had to face the fact that everything he had believed about Jesus was wrong and that he had not been working for God but against Him this whole time.

“The story ended last week with Saul getting up off the ground and heading to Damascus, but there was a bit of a problem. Saul was blind. He couldn’t see a thing! 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 life-changing encounter as well. His name . . . was Ananias.

“To tell this story properly, I need some help. I need a few volunteers to be Saul, Ananias, and three religious leaders. Anyone up for it?

Choose volunteers. Only Saul and Ananias need to be on stage to start. The others can stay seated until called upon.

“Let’s welcome [Name of Host] as well!”



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The Host enters with a megaphone, taking on the personality of a hot-shot Hollywood director. Shouting out orders, overacting, and so on. They will act as the director, helping with arm movements, facial expressions, and acting.

HOST: "Okay, people, let's move it, we've got a show to put on! Let's make some magic!"

For this convention to work, the Host needs to "lead" people around the stage, encourage them to "say it again, this time with more feeling," and generally be over-the-top. Most of the Host's interactions are ad libbed, but some specific spots are written out in the script.

COMMUNICATOR: "Okay! Let's start with Saul. Saul has made his way to Damascus, but remember— he can't see. Once in town, he was led to a house on Straight Street owned by a man named Judas. Once he got there, he began to pray.

The Host "directs" Saul around the room, encouraging him to remember that he can't see anything. The Host directs him to finally stop on the left-hand side of the stage.

"At the same time, also in Damascus, there was a follower of Jesus named Ananias. Introduce yourself, my friend!"

The volunteer introduces themselves as Ananias. The Host can take this opportunity to have them introduce themselves again, only this time sad, or hungry, or scared.

Open the Bible to Acts 9:10-11 (NIRV) and read.

"The Lord called out to him in a vision. "Ananias!" he said. "Yes, Lord," he answered."

Prompt the volunteer to repeat the words Ananias said.

"The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street. Ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul. He is praying."

The Host leads Ananias around the stage, prompting him to act things out, asking around for Judas, looking for Saul, and so on. The Host leads this volunteer to end up on the right-hand side of the stage.

Indicate to each volunteer as you talk about them.

"Two men. Two sides. Two stories, happening at the same time. You have Ananias (points to volunteer), a follower of Jesus here living in Damascus who has a vision from the Lord. And then you have Saul (Host directs Saul volunteer and puts a pair of sunglasses on him = blind), blinded and humbled and praying.

"These two stories are about to overlap.

"[Name of Host], hold off on directing them, and let me set the scene first! Let me share a little more of what God told Ananias."



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HOST: *"(into megaphone) You got it, boss!"*

Open the Bible to Acts 9:12 (NIRV) and read.

COMMUNICATOR: *"'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.'*

"Remember, Saul had no idea, really, where he was or who he was with. He couldn't see, and he had just been through a crazy experience. And now he was having visions of someone he never met, laying hands on him and healing his sight!

"And on the other side, Ananias had a vision of meeting someone named Saul at Judas' house. The vision told Saul that Ananias was coming, and the other vision told Ananias to meet Saul. In other words, Jesus told Ananias that Saul was expecting him . . . and that he would be used to restore Saul's sight (point to sunglasses).

"Just one problem with that, though. Saul had a bit of a reputation, especially with followers of Jesus.

Read Acts 9:13-14, and the Host prompts the volunteer to mime-act all of this out. Below is an example of how the "directing" might go but Host can feel free to improvise.

""Lord," Ananias answered, "I've heard many reports about this man.""

HOST: *(To volunteer) "Okay, you're worried, you're pacing, you're reading reports, hearing things . . ."*

COMMUNICATOR: *""They say he has done great harm to your holy people in Jerusalem.""*

HOST: *(To volunteer) "That's it, that's it, now you're in despair!"*

COMMUNICATOR: *""Now he has come here to arrest all those who worship you. The chief priests have given him authority to do this.""*

HOST: *(To volunteer) "You're scared! Show me your most terrified face! Aaaaand . . . Scene!"*

COMMUNICATOR: *"It seems that Saul's reputation made it to Damascus long before Saul did. And the people were terrified of him, including Ananias. And now Ananias was being told to go and find Saul to help him? Ananias was probably wondering if he misinterpreted the vision.*

Open the Bible to Acts 9:15 (NIRV) and read.

The Host directs Ananias through this part as well.

"'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.'"

"God basically told Ananias that Saul worked for Him now and that he would do some pretty amazing things. Saul. The same guy who had been persecuting followers of Jesus!"



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HOST: "Talk about a plot twist!"

COMMUNICATOR: "Right? Jesus asked Saul to carry the message of Jesus to the Gentiles, which is another way of saying people who are not Jewish. There's just one issue. Ananias was probably terrified of meeting Saul.

For this next exchange, it's quick, and the Host directs each volunteer accordingly.

"Saul was terrifying! He had hurt many followers of Christ!

"Ananias was scared! He didn't know what to do!

"But Saul had been humbled—and now couldn't see!

"But Ananias didn't know that! He was faced with a choice!

"That's the main conflict of this story, guys. Ananias must have been scared—and faced with a choice. How many times in our lives have we been in a similar situation? Scared and faced with a choice? Run away . . . or do what God asks us to do.

Open the Bible to Acts 9:17-19 (NirV) and read.

The Host directs each volunteer.

"Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. He placed his hands on Saul and says, "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."

The Host directs all of this, adding in encouragement to "sell out to the role of your lifetime," and "make it Oscar-worthy."

"Right away, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes."

HOST: "The sunglasses! Cast them off!"

COMMUNICATOR: "Saul could see again! He was healed!"

HOST: "That's it! Now that a miracle has occurred, how do you react??"

Wait for reactions from the volunteers playing Ananias and Saul.

"Amazing!"

COMMUNICATOR: "'[Saul] got up and was baptized. After eating some food, he got his strength back.'

The Host unveils the same platter from the Opener, and offers the volunteer playing Saul an exotic snack.



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“Not surprisingly, this happened exactly like Jesus told Ananias it would. God used Ananias to restore Saul’s sight! But things were just getting started. Remember, Paul was headed there to round up Christians and put them in jail, or worse. Originally, he was planning to go into their places of meeting, their synagogues, and to arrest any followers of Jesus and bring them back to Jerusalem. Saul still went to the synagogues in Damascus. But check out the difference.

Read Acts 9:19b-20. The Host pulls out an empty chair and motions the volunteer playing Saul to stand upon it.

“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.”

HOST: “You’re excited! You’re confident! Tell them all about Jesus!”

Allow “Saul” to playact a bit.

COMMUNICATOR: “He still went to the synagogues, but Saul was singing a completely different tune. In a complete one-eighty—Saul wasn’t there to punish followers of Jesus. Instead, he was trying to convince people that Jesus is the real deal! And the people were all shocked. Remember, just like Ananias, many of the people knew Saul’s reputation. This was not what they were expecting! Saul continued to preach that Jesus was the Messiah, to the amazement of the people.

“The leaders, however . . .

Host brings the volunteers playing the religious leaders up. Ananias can be seated.

“. . . were not so happy.”

HOST: (to the volunteers) “You’re not happy. Let’s see it on your faces!”

Communicator opens the Bible to Acts 9:23-24 (NIRV) and reads.

The Host directs the volunteers to act all of this out.

COMMUNICATOR: “After many days, the Jews had a meeting. (Host has leaders huddle.) 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.”

“Talk about intense! How would he get out of this one?”

Open the Bible to Acts 9:25 (NIRV) and read.

“But his followers helped him escape by night. They lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall.”

HOST: “(holding up laundry basket) Get in!”



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“Saul” gets in the basket, while the Host continues to give him acting interpretation on how he should curl up.

COMMUNICATOR: “So where did Saul go now? Well, after Saul snuck away, he headed back to Jerusalem—where he started out. The last time he had been in Jerusalem, he had been putting the followers of Jesus in jail or to death, terrorizing them and everything they stood for. How would they receive him upon his return?”

HOST: *(to the rest of the Large Group, talking in the megaphone)* “Alright people, this is a large scene with lots of extras. Can I count on you all to be the crowd? And several of you can be Jesus followers, does that work?”

The Host directs kids to get into groups, some standing, some sitting, offering ideas of what they could be acting out, like shopping in a marketplace, praying, or riding donkeys.

The Communicator opens the Bible to Acts 9:26a (NIV) and reads.

The Host directs the reactions and action.

COMMUNICATOR: *“When Saul came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the believers. But they were all afraid of him.”*

“Everywhere Saul went, people either avoided him or ran the other way! No one would look at him because they were all afraid.

“Saul tried to tell them that he was now a believer . . . but they still didn’t listen. They didn’t believe he was a follower of Jesus. Everyone turned away from him—except one person.

The Host chooses one person out of the Large Group to play Barnabas.

“Barnabas didn’t turn away. Barnabas believed him. In fact, let’s pretend that Barnabas went right up to Saul and gave him a huge high five! And they made up an awesome handshake right there!

“Barnabas took Saul to the apostles. He told them all about Saul’s journey. He said that Saul had seen Jesus and heard Jesus’ voice and received a mission to share Jesus with the world. Barnabas went on to say that he saw Saul preach without fear in Jesus’ name in Damascus.

“It was hard to believe Saul was actually a follower of Jesus now because he had been so AGAINST Jesus before. Thankfully there was one who wasn’t afraid—or at least he didn’t let his fear silence him. Barnabas spoke up for Saul. He told them all about what Jesus had done. And because Barnabas spoke up for Saul, the believers in Jerusalem accepted Saul as one of their own.

Open the Bible to Acts 9:28 (NIV) and read.

“So Saul stayed with the believers. He moved about freely in Jerusalem. He spoke boldly in the Lord’s name.”

HOST: “And that’s a wrap, people! Can we give it up for our esteemed actors please? Let’s hear it!”

The Host leads the Large Group in applause, then all volunteers sit.



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APPLICATION

COMMUNICATOR: “Never a dull moment when [Name of Host] is around, am I right?”

“And speaking of never a dull moment, Saul’s encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus is pretty amazing! His story is definitely a drastic story of change. I think that’s 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 so quickly?”

“Ananias had to face that question. So did the believers in Jerusalem when Saul came back. Both Ananias and the rest of the believers had to consider the possibility that Saul was lying, a trick to get them to lower their guard so he could arrest them.

“They had heard—maybe even seen—the effects of Saul’s terror and now they were supposed to accept him as a brother in Christ? To partner with him? To . . . love him? What if this was an inside job? What if this was just part of his wicked plan to take them down? Thankfully, Ananias trusted God and helped Saul to safety.

SLIDE: GOD’S BIG STORY TIMELINE

SLIDE: WEEK 2 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.

“You know, sometimes it’s easy for us to make impressions about people or to believe that someone is too mean, too unkind, too rude, too—you fill in the blank—to change. However, God can change them in a flash. Literally.

“It’s also easy to let fear drive our decisions, but like in Saul’s story, when we understand who God is and what God can do, we can have faith and find the courage we need to face some really difficult situations.”

LANDING

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

SLIDE: KEY QUESTION

“When have you faced a fear? Was it difficult? How did you do it? What options did you see in the situation? What helped you face this fear? We’ll dig into these questions more when we get to our Small Groups, but before you head out, let’s pray and ask God to help us see people the way that Ananias and Barnabas were able to see Saul . . . and for God to give us the faith and courage we need to face of our fears. 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