

“These people are servants of the Most High God! They are proclaiming a way of salvation to you!” (Acts 16:17b)

## Paul Is Changed – Acts 9:1-20

### Prepare to Wonder

#### Faith Word: PROCLAIM

Though born in Tarsus, a major center for Greek education and culture, Paul was a Jew and had studied in Jerusalem with Gamaliel, a leading teacher of the Law of Moses. Paul, whose Hebrew name was Saul, was a Pharisee. The Pharisees were a group of Jewish leaders who believed that the best way to serve God was to strictly obey the Law of Moses.

When we encounter Paul in Acts, he is living out these beliefs. His strong beliefs resulted in his determination to make trouble for the followers of Jesus. As Paul traveled to Damascus to do this, Paul had an encounter that changed his life; he met Jesus. Paul is blinded and has to be led into Damascus by others! As a result of his meeting with the risen Christ, Paul is changed. Paul ultimately shows the same determination in recruiting followers of Jesus as he had previously shown in persecuting those followers.

Paul's conversion story is an example of God's ability to use anybody to carry out God's work. With his history of persecuting Christians, Paul seemed an unlikely candidate to spread God's word. When Ananias, a follower of Jesus, received instructions to go and talk to Paul, he questioned this direction, saying, "Lord, I have heard many reports about this man. People say he has done horrible things to your holy people in Jerusalem." But God had a plan to use Paul to spread the news of Jesus to the Gentiles and the people of Israel. God was able to use Paul's zeal and determination in a positive way. Prior to his encounter with Jesus, Paul was living out his beliefs; after his encounter, Paul lived out his belief in Jesus and shared the news of Jesus' love with others.

### Spiritual Practice for Adults

This month's unit is about proclaiming the good news of God's love. To do this, we have to find our voices, and sometimes our voice is a creative medium. This week find some time to do something creative. Let that be a prayer for the power to proclaim God's love to all.

# Come Together

## Come Together

**Supplies:** *Class Pack, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Wonder Box, white cloth, battery-operated candle, butterfly*

**Prepare Ahead:** *Set up a Wonder Table (see p. 3) with a white cloth, battery-operated candle, and a Wonder Box (see p. 3). Display the Unit 3 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 9 & 16) and Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 21). Place a butterfly inside the Wonder Box.*

- Point to the Unit 3 Faith Word Poster, and invite the children to wonder about what the word *proclaim* means.
- Invite the kids to join you in a circle.

**SAY:** This month we are hearing stories about a man named Paul. Paul is called the great evangelist because he shared God's love with so many people.

**ASK:** Who shares God's love with you?

- We recommend reading a story each week from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Allow an elementary kid to read, "Paul is Changed" (pp. 278–9), from the storybook.

**PRAY:** Dear God, help us share your love with everyone we meet. Amen.

## Paul is Changed – Preschool

**Supplies:** *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons*

**Prepare Ahead:** *Photocopy "Paul is Changed" (Reproducible 9A) for each preschooler.*

- Invite the preschoolers to use crayons to color the picture. Invite elementary kids to help the preschoolers follow the directions on the pages.

**SAY:** Paul was walking to the city of Damascus when all of a sudden he was surrounded by light! Paul heard Jesus' voice and his heart was changed.

**ASK:** What do you think happened next?

## Memory Verse Puzzle – Younger Elementary

*Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons, colored pencils, kids' scissors*

*Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Memory Verse Puzzle" (Reproducible 9B) for each child.*

- Invite the kids color their papers.
- Help the kids cut out the puzzle pieces.
- Encourage the kids to put their puzzles together.
- Help the kids read the Bible verse.

**SAY:** This month we will be learning about Paul. He has an encounter with Jesus and begins following Jesus. Paul taught so many people about Jesus and his love.

## Coded Message – Older Elementary

*Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils, CEB Bible*

*Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Coded Message" (Reproducible 9C) for each child.*

**SAY:** In today's Bible story, Paul is changed! He went from hurting followers of Jesus to becoming a follower of Jesus. Solve the coded message to find out what he did after he changed into a follower of Jesus.

- Invite the kids to use the decoder to solve the puzzle.
- Encourage the kids to read Acts 9:20 if they need help with the puzzle.

## Proclaim the Good News – All Ages

*Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons or markers, kids' scissors, glue sticks*

*Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Proclaim the Good News" (Reproducible 9D) for each child.*

**SAY:** Paul proclaimed the good news about Jesus' love. You can proclaim the good news, too.

- Invite the kids to color the megaphone.
- Help the kids cut it out.
- Encourage the kids to glue it together.
- Set the megaphone aside to dry.

**SAY:** You can use your megaphone to help you proclaim the good news of God's love for everyone.

# Wonder Time

## Interactive Bible Story

*Supplies:* Reproducible Kids' Book

*Prepare Ahead:* Photocopy today's Take-Home Pages from the Reproducible Kids' Book, 9F–9G. Display the Unit 3 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 9 & 16).

- Invite several readers to take turns reading the story, one section at a time.

**WONDER:** Why do you think Jesus appeared to Paul on his way to Damascus?

## Share a Story

*Supplies:* Celebrate Wonder DVD, TV, DVD player

- Invite the children to join you, and to sit in a circle on the floor.
- Watch the Session 9 video (Celebrate Wonder DVD).

## Wonder with Me

*Supplies:* Class Pack, Wonder Box, scissors

*Prepare Ahead:* Lay out the Unit 3 Wonder Story Mat (Class Pack—pp. 7 & 18). Cut out the Unit 3 story figures (Class Pack—p. 3).

- Place the Wonder Box on the Unit 3 Wonder Story Mat.

**SAY:** Today's Faith Word is *proclaim*.

- Show the children the Unit 3 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 21).

**SAY:** Proclaim means to share out loud what you believe about your faith.

- Point to the portrait of Paul.

**WONDER** together:

- What is your favorite part of this story?
- How did you share God's love this week?
- How will your words proclaim God's love?
- Add the portrait of Ananias to the poster.
- Open the Wonder Box to reveal the butterfly.

**WONDER:** Why do you think there is a butterfly in our Wonder Box this week?

# Experience Wonder

## What Has Changed? (Game)

**Supplies:** a variety of dress up items such as colorful scarves, sunglasses, large jackets, belts, and so forth

**SAY:** We are going to play a game to see how good you are at detecting change.

- Invite several children to dress up using several of the items provided.
- Once the children are “dressed” have them stand in front of the other children and model their outfits.

**SAY:** Take a good look so you can remember how each child is dressed.

- Have the children leave the area and have each child change one thing about her or his appearance. For example, a child may change to wearing a different colored scarf or take off sunglasses or add a belt.
- Invite the children to model the outfits once more.
- Have the rest of the children figure out what has changed about each child’s outfit.
- Invite several new children to dress up and play the game again.
- If the game becomes too easy, have the children change multiple things about their outfits.

**SAY:** You did a good job detecting these changes. In our Bible story today, we heard about how Paul changed the way he treated people.

## Examine the Bible Verse

**SAY:** Our Unit 3 Bible verse is Acts 16:17b. Find it in your Bibles.

**ASK:** Is the Book of Acts in the Old or New Testament? (*New*) Where is Acts located in the New Testament? (*right after the gospel books*) In what chapter of Acts is our verse located? (*16*) What is the verse number? (*17*)

- Gather the kids around the Unit 3 Bible Verse Poster. Read it together.

**ASK:** What is the reference for our verse? (*Acts 16:17*)

**SAY:** Our Bible verse is from one of the stories we will hear this month. Paul and Silas heal a woman and this is what she says!

## Peaceful Place

**Supplies:** copies of the Unit 3 Faith Word (Leader Guide—p. 115); Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook; suggested book: *Ada's Violin: The Story of the Recycled Orchestra of Paraguay*, by Susan Hood; paper; crayons or markers; flashlights

**Tip:** All of the supplies/activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional.

- Assist the children, as needed, as they interact with the items provided.
- Encourage the children to color the Unit 3 Faith Word coloring page.
- Invite the children to improvise a sermon to share with the group.

## Go in Peace

### Spiritual Practice – Exploring Proclamation Through Preaching

**SAY:** A spiritual practice is something we do to help us connect to and spend time with God. It doesn't have to be the same thing every time, but it can be. A spiritual practice can be praying silently or out loud, dancing, singing, walking, breathing, drawing, chanting, or speaking blessings.

- Guide the children through a spiritual practice and invite them to repeat after you:
  - LEADER SAYS: My voice is important.
  - CLASS SAYS: My voice is important.
  - LEADER SAYS: My voice matters.
  - CLASS SAYS: My voice matters.
  - LEADER SAYS: Thank you, God, for my voice.
  - CLASS SAYS: Thank you, God, for my voice.

**PRAY:** Dear God, help us proclaim your love in all we say and do. Amen.

- Bless the children before they leave. Touch each child on the hand as you say this blessing: "You are important. You matter."

### Family Spiritual Practice

**SAY:** Let's take a look at your Take-Home Pages for today (*Reproducibles 9F–9G*). Ask your family to participate in this week's spiritual practice and share some love with each other this week.

# Supplemental Activities

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## Preschoolers – Paul Says Game

*Supplies: none*

**SAY:** Paul travelled to many places preaching and teaching about Jesus. Paul wrote and spoke a lot of words! A big part of our Bibles are letters written by Paul!

**ASK:** What would you say or write about Jesus?

- Invite the kids to play Paul Says.
- Choose one child to be “it”.
- “It” will instruct the group to mimic their actions. “It” will say things like, “Paul says touch your toes.” The group will then touch their noses.
- If “It” doesn’t say “Paul says” before an instruction, the group should not mimic “It”.
- Keep playing until everyone has gotten to be “it”.

## Early Elementary and Older Elementary – Obstacle Course

*Supplies: items to make an obstacle course—chairs, boxes, hula hoops, jump ropes, etc.*

**Prepare Ahead:** Create an obstacle course either outside or in an open space inside your church.

**SAY:** In our Bible story, Ananias had to trust Paul not to hurt him and help Paul because Paul couldn’t see. That took a lot of faith! To help us remember this story, we’re going to go through an obstacle course in pairs. One person in the pair will have to close their eyes. The other person in the pair will help get the pair through the obstacle course.

- Divide the group into pairs.
- Invite the pairs to go through the obstacle course one pair at a time.
- While the remaining pairs wait, invite them to encourage the pair moving through the obstacle course.

## Intergenerational Activity – How Have I Changed?

*Note: Each week we will feature a special intergenerational activity. Plan to invite youth and adults to join you for these activities.*

*Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, pens and pencils*

*Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "How Have I Changed?" (Reproducible 9E) for each person.*

**ASK:** Today we heard about Paul. What do you remember about today's story?

- Invite children to take turns sharing something about the story, continuing until the story has been retold.

**SAY:** Paul's encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus changed him on the inside and that made him change the way he acted toward others. We can make changes to our physical appearance, by cutting our hair or changing our clothes. When we make a change inside it is not as easily visible.

- Give each child a copy of "How Have I Changed?" and a pencil.

**ASK:** Do you look the same now as you did when you were 2 years old? (No)

- Invite the group to draw or write a description of themselves at age 2 and now in the boxes provided on the page.

**ASK:** How has the way you look changed from the time you were 2 years old?

**SAY:** Just as your physical appearance has changed since you were 2, you have changed on the inside, too.

- Invite the group to draw or write some ways they acted when they were 2 and the way they act now in the boxes provided.

**SAY:** When we follow Jesus, it doesn't change the way we look, it changes the way we act.

**ASK:** How does believing in Jesus change us on the inside?

- Encourage the group to draw or write down their ideas on the page.
- Invite the group to share their ideas with each other

**PRAY:** God of change, we give thanks for the many ways we have changed during our lives, on the outside and the inside. Help us remember that believing in you changes the way we treat other people. Help us to look for opportunities this week to share your love. Amen.