



Life Changer – Lesson I

4K and 5K

Divine Attribute: God is Life Changer

Heart Response: Believe in him

Memory Verse: 2 Corinthians 5:17

“Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!”

Points of Emphasis:

1. We are all sinners and need Jesus to change our lives.
2. Only God can change our hearts and lives.
3. When you believe in Jesus, you become a new person.
4. When God changes our lives, we want to tell other people.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

When reading through the book of Acts and examining the life of Paul, one thing is very clear: God is Life Changer. Following religious rules and doing and saying religious things is not sufficient. We cannot change our lives no matter how hard we try. But God is able to change our hearts and turn us towards himself. God sent his one and only Son to rescue us and bring us back into a relationship with him. The work has already been done for us, but we must choose to believe.

The Bible is clear that when we believe in Jesus, we are made new; the old life is gone and a new life is begun. When we choose to believe in him, we are admitting we cannot do it on our own. We are in desperate need of him and he responds. He gives us the Holy Spirit to work in our lives. When we seek him, he changes our hearts and the way we think. He replaces our unfulfilling, selfish desires with his own.

This brings change. Some of this change is immediate. When we encounter our holy God, his Spirit becomes alive in us. He opens our eyes to see with a new heart. Things that used to bring

pleasure are now recognized as sin and are no longer desirable. We become hungry for more of him and what he offers. This initial change of heart starts our new life of freedom, where the focus is no longer on us and our behavior, but on worshiping and bringing glory to God. As we allow God to work in our hearts, he continues to transform our lives to resemble more of him. As he continues to change us, we begin to see other people as God sees them. We want to share our story of life change with others so they can experience the same loving and personal God we know.

Over and over in the book of Acts, that is just what Paul did. Paul told his story of how God changed his life. There could be no other explanation for the turnaround that Paul experienced. The very person who was persecuting Christians for believing and proclaiming that Jesus was God's Son was now willing to go to jail and risk his own life to tell others the Good News! Paul's life was changed, and it wasn't because he tried harder or followed more rules. He believed and received God's great gift of grace and forgiveness and then passed it along to others out of the strength that only the Spirit can give.

As you read through the book of Acts and prepare to teach these lessons, seek God and ask him how he wants to use your own changed life. Ask God to show you the areas of your life that still need to be transformed to bring glory and honor to him. Pray for the strength that only God can give as you pass on what you have received from him to each child in your class.

CENTER TIME

10-20 minutes as the kids begin to arrive

To help the children transition into class, please use a center format at the beginning of each service. Set up three centers in your classroom to allow children options of activities. Ideas include, but are not limited to:

1. Read books on the floor.
2. Color at the table.
3. Play with blocks on the floor.
4. Play with puzzles at the table.
5. Play with Play-Doh at the table.

OPENING ACTIVITY

10 minutes at the start of service

The following activity is provided to begin engaging the children for the upcoming lesson. As the teacher of your class, you have an important opportunity to come alongside the parents of these children to teach them about God.

Memory Verse Poster

Supplies:

Memory verse poster (one per bin)

Piece of paper – already in room (one per child)

Hang the verse poster on the board. You can give each child a piece of paper to color as you go over the memory verse with them a few times. You may want to give them some direction on what to draw, based on the attribute/lesson.

BIG GROUP TIME

please check your classroom schedule

Please talk to your class about the purpose of this time—to have fun worshiping God together. Give your class practical ideas of what this means (obey the teachers up on the stage, sing and praise God with a happy heart, keep your hands to yourself, etc.). Teachers, you are crucial in helping create a peaceful, orderly environment to worship God during this time. Thank you for your help!

SMALL GROUP TIME

25-30 minutes

Bible Story

Supplies:

Bible (Acts 9:1-19, Acts 26:14-18)

Flashlight (one per bin)

(Open your Bible to Acts 9.) **A long time ago, there was a man named Saul. Saul was a Pharisee. Can**

you say “Pharisee?” (Allow children to repeat.) **Pharisees were a group of people who made a lot of rules about God and how to live. They felt that knowing and keeping their rules made God love them and made them special. Saul and the Pharisees wanted to make sure people around them were obeying the same rules that they obeyed. Saul didn’t feel like he needed help. He thought he was in charge. He knew the rules and he followed them.**

The Pharisees didn’t believe that Jesus was God’s Son. They did not worship Jesus. Pharisees thought that no one should worship Jesus. The Pharisees put followers of Jesus in prison. They thought this pleased God and believed it was the right thing to do.

Saul also did not believe Jesus was God’s Son. He thought following the rules was the right way. He believed that following Jesus was the wrong way.

Is it right to follow Jesus? YES! Is Jesus God’s Son? YES! Why should we follow Jesus? (Allow for responses.) **He is our creator. He made us, so he knows what is best for us. He also came to rescue us from sin and death because he loves us so much. Jesus is the only way we can be made right with God and have a relationship with him.**

Saul was not choosing Jesus. He was choosing his own way, and he hurt a lot of people. Saul decided to go to different places and stop other people from following Jesus. He was putting people in prison if they were following Jesus.

One day, Saul is on his way to the city of Damascus. He is looking for followers of Jesus to stop them from telling others the Good News that Jesus is God’s Son and that he died and rose again to rescue God’s people from sin and death. Suddenly, a bright light from heaven shines down on Saul. (Shine a flashlight down onto the ground.) Saul falls down onto the ground and a voice says, “Saul! Saul! Why are you working so hard against me?”

“Who are you, Lord?” asks Saul.

The voice replies, “I am Jesus, the one you are working so hard against.” Then Jesus tells Saul to go to the city and open the eyes of the people there. He says to Saul, “I am sending you to turn them from darkness to light. I want their sins to be forgiven. They will be forgiven when they believe in me.” Acts 26:17-18.

Saul gets up from the ground, and when he opens his eyes, he is blind. Blind means he cannot see anything—only darkness. So Saul’s friends lead him by the hand to Damascus.

When Saul gets to the city, a follower of Jesus named Ananias is there. Can you say “Ananias?” (Allow children to repeat.) **The Lord told Ananias in a dream to go speak to Saul. Ananias is afraid of Saul because he knows that Saul has been so mean to followers of Jesus. But the Lord tells Ananias that Saul is going to obey Jesus. So Ananias obeys God and goes to Saul.**

Saul has been blind for three days when Ananias goes to him. Ananias places his hands on Saul’s eyes. Ananias says, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here, has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

Instantly, something like scales falls off of Saul’s eyes and he can see again! God heals Saul’s eyes so he can see again. After that, Saul believes in Jesus and obeys God. He is baptized and he starts following Jesus and telling others about him.

God changes Saul’s life. He makes him brand new on the inside. Instead of hating Jesus and the people who follow him, Saul falls in love with Jesus. Do you remember our new memory verse? “Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!” 2 Corinthians 5:17. (Repeat with them a couple of times.)

When you believe in Christ Jesus, he changes your life and makes you a new person inside. “It is all a gift from God. He brought us back to

himself through Christ’s death on the cross. And he has given us the task of bringing others back to him through Christ.” 2 Corinthians 5:18.

God is the only one who can change us on the inside. We cannot do it ourselves by trying harder or following all the right rules. We all sin, but the Good News is, because of what Jesus did for us on the cross, we can belong to him. He loves us so much that he had a plan to save us. He can change our lives, and we can be made right with him.

Prayer

Prayer time may not be appropriate immediately following story time. If this is the case, we ask that you be intentional about praying spontaneously or formally with the children at other times during class.

Dear Lord, thank you for loving us. Help us to see that you can change our lives like you changed Saul’s life. When we believe in you, you will make us brand new. Thank you for sending Jesus. Help me to see I cannot be changed without you. Amen.

From Darkness to Light

Supplies:

Light switch plate (one per child)
Verse label (clear) - Acts 26 (one per child)
Star stickers (two per child)

Give each child a switch plate cover and two stickers with which to decorate the switch plate. Talk with them about how Jesus spoke to Saul on the road to Damascus and told Saul that he is sending Saul to talk to people to open their eyes. Jesus said, “I want you to turn them from darkness to light.” That is exactly what Jesus did for Saul. Saul was blind for three days, and then God healed him. He healed both his eyesight and his heart. Saul was living in the darkness and Jesus is the light. Jesus is the only way to have true life change. Have the children put the verse label on the switch plate. As they do, repeat the verse with them a few times. Tell the children to take their light switch plates home and have their

parents help put them in their rooms to remember that God turns our lives from darkness to light.

***Have fun and let them do the crafts themselves, as much as possible. This is a hands-on way for them to learn who God is and remember what they learn. It doesn't matter if they place the label or stickers in the wrong spot. What matters is teaching them who God is. ***

SNACK & ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

last 30 minutes

Please wash the children's hands before snack time and say a prayer thanking God for the food. As they are eating their snack, please take time to go over the review questions.

Review Questions

- 1. Where was Saul going when God caused him to be blind?** (He was on the way to Damascus.)
- 2. What did Saul plan to do in Damascus?** (Stop followers of Jesus from telling people the Good News and throw them in jail.)
- 3. What did Saul believe pleased God?** (Following the religious rules.)
- 4. How did God blind Saul?** (He sent a blinding light from heaven and things like scales covered his eyes.)
- 5. Who loved Saul and spoke to him?** (Jesus.)
- 6. When Saul believed in Jesus and the scales fell off his eyes, what happened?** (Saul could see. He was baptized. He started telling others about Jesus and how he changes lives.)

I Was Blind

Supplies

Bandana (one per bin)

Make a simple obstacle course with the classroom chairs or blocks. Take turns blindfolding one child at a time and having the other children help him or her through the obstacle course. Tell the children that when we go through life without Jesus, it is like we are blind. When we believe in Jesus and choose to follow him, he gives us the Holy Spirit to live in us. We cannot see his Spirit, but he is in us directing us and allowing us to "see." We can then love others with his love and tell others about his love and how he changed us inside. The way we act and talk changes because of God living in us. We cannot change ourselves. We need Jesus to transform us. Now have the children try to go through the course without the blindfold on.



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