



Life Changer – Lesson 4

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.

Only One

Supplies:

Brown paper shopping bag (one per bin)
Ball (one per bin – in the paper bag)
Set of items representing things people worship (such as a CD or headphones, toys, money, craft supplies) (one per bin – all in the paper bag)

Have the children sit in a circle. **We are learning about Paul and how God used Paul's changed life—Paul would go out into the world and tell other people the Good News. God wants us to know him and love him. He wants us to love him more than anything else in the whole world. In the Bible lesson today, we will learn about people who worshiped idols. An idol is something people worship instead of God. We also struggle with this sin in our lives.** Show the children the bag and explain that inside, there are things that we might think are special. Take out the ball. Ask them what it is. (A ball) Ask them who loves to play ball. **Many people love to play ball; however, sometimes we love these things too much and spend all of our time, money, and energy on them. There is nothing wrong with loving people and things. But they should never become more important than God.** Choose a child to reach in the bag and pull out another item. Have them tell the group what it is and if they like the item. Talk about the item and how people can love it too much like you did with the ball. **People**

end up worshiping things. But God is the only one who deserves all the glory and praise. He is the only one we should worship. God made the world and everything in it. He created you and me. He is generous and gives us all we have. He sent his Son Jesus to die so that we can have a relationship with him, now and forever. He is the only one who can change our hearts and lives.

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 17:16-34)

We have been learning about how God changed Paul's life. God used Paul's changed life to tell many people about how Jesus could change their lives, too. God called Paul to go and teach others this Good News. Not everyone wanted to hear the Good News about Jesus, but Paul continued to do what God called him to do. After Paul went to prison he continued to talk to everyone about Jesus. He wanted everyone to know that God loved them.

(Open your Bible to Acts 17:16-34.) **As Paul travels, he goes to a city called Athens. He sees idols everywhere. Have you heard the word "idol"? An idol is something people worship instead of God. The people in Athens have made rock and wood statues and worship them. As he looks around the city, he notices that one of the idols has a sign that says, "TO AN UNKNOWN GOD."**

Paul begins speaking to the people there about the one true God. He is preaching the Good News about Jesus, telling them that Jesus has risen from the dead. The people of Athens think that Paul has some strange ideas. They have never heard of this God before. Paul speaks to them and tells them, “I looked carefully at the things you worship and found an altar to an ‘unknown god’ you worship. Now I am going to tell you about this ‘unknown god,’ the God you do not know.”

He begins to tell the people, “He is the God who made the world and everything in it. He is the Lord of heaven and earth. He gives life and breath to all people. He also gives them everything else they have.” Paul tells the people that God commands people to turn away from their sin and explains how they can know this God who raised Jesus from the dead.

Some people laugh at Paul and make fun of what he is saying. But others become followers and believe in Jesus. Jesus is not an unknown god to them any longer. They know the real God. He is the only God and is worthy of being worshiped and the only one who can change people’s hearts and lives.

Again, God uses Paul’s changed life to speak to others about Jesus. More lives are changed as people hear the truth about who God is. God is a Life Changer. He can change our lives, too. When we allow God to work in our lives, he molds us and shapes us. He changes our hearts and actions and makes us brand new on the inside.

Remember what our memory verse tells us: “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.)

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.

God, thank you for sending Jesus to die on the cross for our sins. Thank you for showing your power over death and raising Jesus from the dead three days later. Help us as we tell others about this Good News of your perfect love for us. Help us to be open to you as you work in us and change and mold us to make us new. Amen.

Mold Me and Make Me New

Supplies:

Play-Doh (in room)

Gingerbread man cookie cutters (four per bin)

Have the children take turns trying to make a mold of themselves with Play-Doh, using just their hands. Say something like, “**Whenever we try to live life on our own, doing things our own way, we end up with a big mess.**” Have them flatten the clay with their hands onto the table. Talk with them about how God works in our lives. When we believe in Jesus, He makes us brand new on the inside. Then he takes our lives and shapes it into whatever he wants us to be. Give them the cookie cutters and let them cut their dough into the shape of a person. When we put ourselves in God’s hands and let him shape us into what he wants us to be, God is able to use our lives for great things. God has a plan for each of our lives that will bring glory and honor to God. He will use our lives to tell other people about his great love when we allow him to mold us and use us. That is what God did with Paul. God changed Paul’s life and then he used Paul’s life to tell other people about him. (Please be sure to put the Play-Doh back in the cans with the lids tightly sealed.)

***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. What was the name of the city Paul was visiting in today's lesson?** (Athens.)
- 2. What did Paul see everywhere in Athens?** (Idols made of wood and rock.)
- 3. What were the idols for?** (People worshiped them.)
- 4. What did Paul tell the people in Athens about?** (The one true God worth worshiping and the Good News of Jesus' death and resurrection.)
- 5. What happened when Paul told the people about God?** (Some of them believed and their lives were changed.)
- 6. What happens when we allow God to work in our lives?** (He molds and shapes us. He changes our hearts and actions and makes us brand new on the inside.)

I Can Tell Others

Supplies

Set of pictures: preschool class, home, grocery store, church (campus specific) (one set per bin)

Play four corners. Tell the kids that each corner is a different place they go. One corner is home, one is preschool, one is the grocery store, and the last is church. Hang up the pictures of each of these, one in each corner. Choose one child to sit and cover their eyes and help them count to ten. Have the other children move to whatever corner they would like and tell them to stay there. When the child is finished counting to ten, all the children should be in the corner of their choosing. Then, have the child who was counting pick one of the four corners while their eyes are still closed (church, home, store, or preschool). The children in that corner will then say the memory verse telling the rest of the children God's truth. "Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" When God changes our lives, we want to tell others how amazing his love is for us, just like Paul did. God wants us to share the Good News about him to the entire world. Continue playing, choosing a new child each time to count and pick the corner to share the memory verse.



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