

Saul to Paul

Lesson At-a-Glance

Scripture Reference
Acts 9:1-20

Lesson Focus
God can change us.

Bible Memory Verse
“Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen. . .” Acts 9:15

Gather (10 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Arrival Activity Kids will play Red Light, Green Light with a twist.	Spark Activity Pages, Spark Coloring Pages	Colored pencils
Circle Time Kids will be introduced to the theme of God changing us.	Spark Song CD, Spark Songbook	Music source
Opening Prayer Kids will pray about change.	None	None

Open the Bible (15 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Saul to Paul Story Kids will hear Paul's conversion story and learn what he did afterward.	Spark Story Bibles, Spark NRSV Bible	String, scissors
Change Is Hard! Kids will play a familiar game with changed rules.	Leaflets	Pencils

Activate Faith (15 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Saul to Paul to Every Port of Call! Kids create paper boats to remind them of Paul's change.	Leaflets, Spark Bible Stickers	Scissors, toothpick, bar of soap that will float (1 per kid)
New Name, New Game Kids will play a name change game.	None	Sticker name tags, marker

Send (5 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Closing Conversation Kids will review what they learned and be directed to the Faith on the Go! options.	Leaflets	None
Closing Prayer Kids will move their feet during the closing prayer.	Spark Family Pages	None

Bible Background

Saul was a man to be feared in the early days of Christianity. Believing that he was protecting the God-given directions for worship and faithful life, he attempted to stomp out the early followers of Jesus, thinking them to be a perversion of Jesus' own Jewish faith. Paul dragged believers from their homes and into prison, even approving of their deaths. But the Lord called Saul and changed him so dramatically that he would become one of the most important people in the history of the Christian faith. His missionary travels and writings continue to transform the world today.

Why This Story Matters

Just as in the early years of the church, the continuation of the faith has been handed to believers, the visible body of Christ on earth. The kids in Sunday schools across the world will be the ones who pass the faith on to another generation and invite new people to church. As much of the western world experiences a cultural shift away from church affiliation and worship attendance, the role of these kids cannot be overestimated.

Gather (10 minutes)

Arrival Activity

If some kids arrive earlier than others and you need a lesson-based activity, make copies of the Activity Page and Coloring Page and set them out for kids to try.

Play Red Light, Green Light, but with a twist.

In a space safe for fast walking, station one kid at each end of the playing space to be the traffic cops. Direct players to an imaginary center line, then face one end. The traffic cop they are facing will turn their back to the group. When they say "Green light," players try to speed-walk to the finish. When the traffic cop says "Red light" and turns around, they try to catch players in motion. When caught, kids must return to the center line. Instruct the traffic cop to occasionally yell "Change!" instead of "Red light." Players will then reverse directions, trying to get to the finish line at the other end, with the traffic cop there doing the same actions as the other. The player who crosses the finish line at either end will become the new traffic cop on that side.

Spark Resources

[Spark Activity Pages](#)
[Spark Coloring Pages](#)

Supplies

Colored pencils

Circle Time

When everyone has arrived, group into a circle. **Welcome! Don't say any names, but think for a moment about your answer to this question: Have you ever had someone you've known who was at first really, really mean to you or others and then changed and became a friend? Without saying any names, can anyone share a situation where that has happened?** Invite a couple kids to give real-life examples. **Sometimes we can be pleasantly surprised when people really do change. We're going to hear about someone like that today!**

Spark Resources

Spark Song CD
Spark Songbook

Supplies

Music source

MUSIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Song 1: "I Am a C (H-R-I-S-T-I-A-N)" (tracks 9 and 26 on Spark Song CD, page 50 in Spark Songbook)

Song 2: "Go, Let's Go!" Look up this peppy song by David Heath-Whyte online, searching for "Go, Let's Go: Paul's Missionary Journeys."

Opening Prayer

For our opening prayer, when I clap twice, you clap twice and say, "Change!"

Jesus, you were often challenging people to think differently and to (clap, clap) (clap, clap, "Change!").

But (clap, clap) (clap, clap, "Change!") **can be really hard! Sometimes we don't even like to** (clap, clap) (clap, clap, "Change!") **our socks, much less our lives. God, sometimes we try to resist** (clap, clap) (clap, clap, "Change!"), **even when it's good!**

Help us, we pray, as Mother Teresa said, to be the (clap, clap) (clap, clap, "Change!") **we wish to see in the world. Amen.**

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

None

Open the Bible (15 minutes)

Saul to Paul Story

Who remembers the names of the four Gospels in the New Testament? (*Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.*) **The book of Acts comes right after the four Gospels, and it is written the same author as Luke's Gospel. Acts tells the story of the early church right after Jesus' time on earth. It was a really scary time! Jesus' followers were being thrown in jail and even killed for following his teachings. How would you feel about coming to church if you had to risk being thrown in prison to come here?** Invite kids to ruminate on that for a moment.

Today I'm going to read Acts 9:1-20. Let's find that together in the older buddies' Bibles. It is on page 1214 of the Spark NRSV Bible. **I'd like two volunteers to act**

Spark Resources

Spark NRSV Bibles
Spark Story Bibles

Supplies

String, scissors

out the parts of Ananias and Saul as I read, using your best dramatic ability. Find two volunteers, probably older ones, to act out what you read. Give acting cues as you read as needed.

When finished, invite buddy pairs to find Saul to Paul in the Spark Story Bible on pages 514–519. Invite them to read it together.

When kids have finished, invite them to read and discuss the Bible Bits together.

If you have extra time, invite kids to turn to pages M14–15 in the back of the Spark NRSV Bible. **When Paul was alive, there were no cars, no trains, no motorized boats. After God changed Saul, Paul spent parts of fourteen years traveling around the known earth to tell others about Jesus' love. How far did he go? Use a length of string and the distance key to estimate the distance he traveled.**

Bible Memory Verse

“Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen. . .” Acts 9:15

Let's look up the Bible Memory Verse for today: Acts 9:15. It is on page 1214 of the Spark NRSV Bible. Ask kids to repeat the verse in two chunks.

Go, for he is an instrument (kids repeat)

Whom I have chosen. . . (kids repeat)

Ask kids to pretend to play a musical instrument when they say the first half of the verse. **Musical instruments can make beautiful sounds. Paul also made beautiful sounds when he told people about the love of Jesus.**

Invite younger buddies to help older buddies place an “I Memorized It!” sticker on page 1214 of the Spark NRSV Bible.

Change Is Hard!

Invite kids to check out the tic-tac-toe boards on the front of the leaflets. To remind them that change can be really hard, ask them to play by the altered rules listed in their instructions: different letters than X and O, and the point of the game is trying to avoid getting three in a row while forcing your opponent to have three consecutive letters. **Did anyone have a difficult time playing according to these new rules? Did the new rules become easier to remember the longer you played?**

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
Pencils

Activate Faith (15 minutes)

Saul to Paul to Every Port of Call!

Paul's change was huge! He went from being the biggest enemy of the Christians to the biggest example of a Christian! His remarkable change was what changed Jesus' followers from a small band of believers to a worldwide movement. Let's make a fleet of boats to help this new Paul get on his way! Encourage kids to work with their buddies to write an important message about Jesus on the side of their boats. Then they can cut out the boats and place the boat on a bar of soap. Stick a toothpick through the boat and the soap. Kids can even add a sail to the toothpick mast using a leftover scrap of paper. **When you get home, consider putting your boat in a bathtub, swimming pool, or sink and tell the Saul to Paul story to a friend or family member.**

Ask for volunteers to read the Did You Know? items aloud. Invite kids to place a sticker or special mark next to the item they found the most interesting.

Spark Resources
Leaflets
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies
Scissors
Toothpick
Bar of soap that will float
(1 per kid)

New Name, New Game

In the Bible story, Saul's name was changed to Paul as a sign of the changes within him. I'd like you to change your name for the rest of our time together, but with one catch—you won't know what it is! I'm going to ask everyone to line up facing away from me and I'm going to put your new name on a name tag on your back! You are going to try to figure it out by asking questions, but only ones that can be answered with a "yes" or a "no" by the other players. For instance, you can ask if it starts with the letter "z," or if it is an old-fashioned name that not many kids now have.

Think of new names for the kids in your group and write those names on stickers behind kids' backs, placing them gently between their shoulder blades. Invite one older kid to give you a new name on a name tag also. Play until everyone has figured out their new name, or as long as time allows. Once older buddies figure out their new name, they may need to assist younger buddies.

Spark Resources
None

Supplies
Sticker name tags, marker

Send (5 minutes)

Closing Conversation

Paul was a most-feared person to Christians, but God changed him! How might God change you in the next few years? It's good to remember that no one is without hope; who knows who might be part of God's plan to spread the good news of Jesus! Let's look at the Faith on the Go! options for the week ahead. Which ones will you try? We should all try to invite a friend to church!

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
None

Closing Prayer

Distribute Spark Family Pages to kids and invite them to read the "Live It" suggestion on praying for bullies. Encourage kids to talk to parents about what they've seen and to lift it in prayer as well.

Spark Resources
Spark Family Pages

Sitting in a circle, invite kids to add movement to the closing prayer. **As I pray, I'd like you to gently walk your feet in place.**

Supplies
None

**Gracious God,
You turned Saul to Paul,
Showing your love was for all.
You change us too.
Who knows what we might do?
We might put miles on our feet,
Or walk down our own street
To tell all we see
That Jesus' love is for everybody.
Amen!**

As you say goodbye to kids, make sure they take home the leaflet and Family Page.