

Paul's Faith Story

Bible Lesson: Acts 26:4-5, 9-18

PREPARATION

Objective

Students will understand that they are to share God's story with the people around them.

Outcomes

1. Students will use the model of Paul to explore what it means to be "in Christ ... a new creation."
2. Students will learn that the Christian life has a definite starting place, a radical change of direction from one kingdom to another, from Satan's to God's.

Directions

1. Arrange ahead of time with two students to put on a two to four-minute skit in which they portray a television commercial illustrating an obvious "before" and "after." It could be about weight loss, tooth brightener, make up, house renovation, etc. Give these parameters: The presentation should illustrate that there was a prior condition, an agent of change, and a difference after the change.



PREPARATION: 15 min.

TEACHING: 36 min.

Materials

- Bibles
- chalkboard or dry erase board
- chalk or dry erase markers
- several adult helpers (optional for large groups)

TEACHING (CORE)

PRE-LESSON ACTIVITY: BEFORE AND AFTER

Directions

1. Invite students to watch an “extreme makeover” skit. Let the students who prepared the skit present it to the group.
2. Ask: “*What are some other ‘extreme makeovers’ that people or animals experience in real life or fantasy?*” Allow responses. (Answers will vary: television commercials and programs, scientific examples of metamorphosis, fantasy and cartoon characters like Cinderella, Superman, etc.)
3. Summarize by saying, “*Some makeovers happen from the outside in. Others happen from the inside out. All bring about change.*”

BIBLE LESSON: PAUL, BEFORE AND AFTER

Directions

1. Say, “*Adam and Eve had an extreme makeover after God created them, but the results were decidedly negative. Who can describe some of the changes in their lives after they sinned?*” Allow responses. (from a perfect environment and regular communion with their creator to a life of shame, hard work, pain, sorrow, death, and separation from God: in other words, from life to spiritual and physical death.)
2. Ask, “*What did God do to provide for Adam and Eve?*” (he killed animals and fashioned skins to cover their shame and to replace their own self-efforts of fig leaf coverings, he promised a coming Savior)
3. “*The promised Savior came in the person of Jesus. Because of the death and resurrection of Jesus, there is an opportunity for an extreme makeover of a different kind, this time from sin to righteousness. This change has a definite before and after with a point of decision and faith effecting the change.*”
4. Have students turn to 2 Corinthians 5:17. Ask someone with a strong, confident voice to read: “*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old is gone, the new has come!*”
5. **Note:** If your group is very large, divide students into teams of five or six, each with an adult leader for the remainder of the Bible lesson.
6. Then say, “*The apostle Paul is a good example of this kind of extreme makeover. Let’s look at Paul’s testimony before King Agrippa in Acts 26 where he illustrates this verse. Let’s start with Acts 26:4-5 and 9-11.*”
7. Give students time to find these verses and read them silently. “*In your opinion, what was the most remarkable thing in Paul’s life before Christ?*” Write “Before Christ” on the board and record student responses. (Possible answers: even as a child he was very religious; he was convinced that Jesus was dangerous and his followers should be stopped; he cooperated with the heads of the Jewish religion to persecute the Jesus followers; he made it his full time occupation to hunt Jesus’ followers; he was obsessed and willing to go outside of Jerusalem)
8. “*Now read verses 12-15 silently.*” After a pause to allow for their reading this passage, say, “*Someone summarize what happened to change Paul’s*

Materials

- Bibles
- chalkboard or dry erase board
- chalk or dry erase markers

life.” Write “Meets Christ” on the board and record student responses. (answer should point out that Paul encountered Jesus – he had a personal meeting with Jesus in a very dramatic way)

9. “Let’s read verses 16-18 to ourselves.” Pause. “What did Jesus reveal in this encounter with Paul that prepared him for his life afterwards?” Write “After Meeting Christ” on the board and record student responses. (possible answers: Paul would be Jesus’ servant; Paul would witness to the Jews and Gentiles; Paul would tell people what he learned from Jesus; Paul and his message would meet opposition; Paul’s message would result in some people receiving forgiveness of their sins by faith in Jesus; God would use Paul’s message to open their eyes, turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God)

IN CLOSING: REVIEW AND RESPONSE

Directions

1. If you worked in small teams, bring them back together. Re-read 2 Corinthians 5:17 to the group: “*Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old is gone, the new has come!*” Paul’s kind of makeover only happens to people who are ‘in Christ.’”
2. Have students get with a partner or in groups of three. Then say, “*Your group needs to come up with a statement that describes what a person must do or believe to be found ‘in Christ.’ Your answer should reflect only what you read in these verses in Acts 26. You do not need to write down your answer, but be ready to share it with the larger group in a few minutes.*”
3. Give students five minutes to work. Then have each group share their answer. Erase the board and record the first answer. Record additions or clarifications as the remaining groups report. (answers should include: an encounter with Jesus where one puts his trust in Jesus and receives the forgiveness of sins; transfer from darkness [Satan’s rule or control] to light [God’s rule or control]; faith in God to sanctify [set apart as holy])
4. From student contributions, write one statement that best answers the question.
5. If there is time, allow students a time of personal reflection or discussion about the truths presented in this lesson.
6. Close in prayer.

Materials

- Bibles
- chalkboard or dry erase board
- chalk or dry erase markers



PRAYER ACTIVITY: REDEEMING CULTURE

Before the Activity Directions

1. Spread out the building supplies so students can access them easily.

Directions

1. Tell students that they will work together to build a small model city on a table or floor. Assign teams to build each of the following: a hospital, a school, stores and businesses, a jail, city hall, and homes.
2. When the model city is finished, have students gather around it. Have them sit if the model is on the floor. Say, *“As believers in Jesus bring the gospel to the peoples of the earth, they also bring Christ’s love. This love shows in the way they treat people, make decisions, and live.”*
3. Next, imagine what a city without Christian influence would be like.
4. Say, *“A majority of the hospitals in the world have been started by Christians, often by churches, to help meet people’s physical needs and teach healthy habits.”* Have a student remove the hospital from the model city. Then have students give examples of needs people might have that would not be met without hospitals.
5. Say, *“Christians have helped to educate people across the world, helping them learn to read, to think, to write, and to know God. Over time, many schools have slowly moved away from these Christian roots.”* Have a student remove the school from the model city. Then say, *“There would probably still be schools, just not Christian schools.”* Let students give examples of how a lack of Christian education would affect the children in that culture.
6. Then say, *“Christian businessmen have helped many countries grow strong by starting businesses that provide jobs for local workers. Christian businessmen have modeled honesty and fairness to bosses and workers.”* Have students point to the businesses on the model city. Then ask, *“What would it be like to work in a job where there was no honesty, no fair rules, and no fair pay?”* Let students share their thoughts.
7. Next, have a student point out the jail in the model city. Say, *“Christians are volunteering in jails all the time, praying for prisoners and their families, meeting their needs, and teaching them about Jesus. As a result, some prisoners have changed from criminals into mature followers of Christ. What would happen inside these jails if there were no Christian volunteers and workers?”* Let students predict what they think could happen.
8. Help students realize that Christians who love and follow Jesus do much good in communities around the world. They influence not only individual people, but also the entire way of life in cities and villages.
9. Now have students apply what they have learned to their own situation. Ask, *“What would happen in our community if we took out all the Christians and their influence?”* Discuss the effects with your students.
10. Spend a few minutes praying for Christians in schools, hospitals, businesses, and jails in your area. Also pray for local leaders such as mayors



PREPARATION: 10 min.

TEACHING: 15 min.

Materials

- large set of Legos® or other creative building blocks
- table with large surface area or large floor area

and judges. Encourage students to personalize their prayers by using the names of people they know in these roles.