

River Community Church Rotation Model Lesson Plan, "Saul on the Road to Damascus"
 This lesson was written by Jamie Senyard for River Community Church in Prairieville, Louisiana.
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The Conversion of Saul

GAMES WORKSHOP

Scripture: Acts 9: 1-19

Memory Verse: Psalm 25:4 (NIV)

"Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me Your path guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior."

WORKSHOP SUMMARY: The children will review the details of Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus by playing a giant board game. They will also reflect on how the church teaches them to be disciples of Jesus Christ and how they can help others become disciples.

Objectives for the rotation

At the end of the rotation, the students will:

- be able to find Acts and know it is a history of the early Christian church.
- understand that anyone can be called to do God's work.
- Know the story of Saul's persecution of Christians and his conversion on the Road to Damascus.
- be able to contrast Saul before and after his experience on the road.
- be able to repeat the memory verse.

Additional objectives for the games workshop

At the end of the session, the students will

- know some ways the church teaches them to be followers of Jesus Christ
- know some ways they can help others become followers of Jesus Christ.

Teacher preparation in advance:

- Read the scripture passages and lesson plan and view the online Bible Study at www.GloriaDeiKids.org
- Prepare a closing prayer.
- Learn the memory verse.
- Consider the age level adjustments needed each week (those included in the lesson plan and your own). Confer with the Shepherd on "Stretchers" to use, especially with the youngest children.

- The design of this workshop is very intentional. The activities and discussion questions for this workshop were designed to meet the goals of the entire rotation and the educational objectives of the Rotation Model (tm). While we feel it is important to follow the serendipitous leading of the Holy Spirit, please do not change the lesson plan without consulting a Design Team member.
- Check out the room before your first Sunday workshop so that you know where everything is located.
- Prepare the cards for the game.
- If you don't have a life-sized game board, you can create one on canvas painter's tarps using the instructions from Jaymie Derden (State St. UMC) at the rotation.org website: <http://www.rotation.org/images/games-state.htm>. (Or you can create tabletop sized game boards on posterboard using the same game path format.)
- Write memory verse on cards as indicated in memory verse activity.

Room set-up:

Spread the life-sized game board out on the floor.

Supply List

- Game Board (see advance preparation) - We will use construction paper or foam board squares to make the game board.
- Oversized Die (you can buy oversized dice at various "game" websites including <http://www.trainerswarehouse.com/> , make one out of a cube shaped box, or use a regular sized game die, available at most discount stores)
- Game cards printed on three different colors of card stock (text at end of the lesson; feel free to add more questions)
- Bibles
- Memory verse cards
- Paper squares or rugs for memory verse activity
- Tape or CD and tape/CD player
- Timer
- Bowl of water
- Crackers - be aware of food allergies
- Bible times map
- Flip chart
- Markers
- Memento: heart stickers
- Faith Journal Sheet: A copy of the appropriate age-level journal page for each child (samples attached)

PRESENTATION:**OPEN:****Welcome and Introductions:**

Greet the children and introduce yourself. Wear your name-tag. (Remember, you are interacting with a different group of students each week who may not know you.) Make sure the children are wearing name-tags.

Please open with prayer and begin the lesson at 10:05. This will help the students transition into their time of learning. Students will be arriving and interacting with their shepherd(s) between 10:00 and 10:05.

Tell the children that they will be playing a game on a life-sized game board today that will help them remember the story of Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus.

Scripture/Bible Story:

Read Acts 9:1-9. Have the children locate the story passage in their Bibles.

Review the organization of the Bible:

The Bible is divided into two big parts, the Old and New Testaments.

Each part is a collection of books.

Each book is divided into chapters and verses.

Show them that if they open their Bible in the middle, they will usually land in the book of Psalms in the OT.

The book name is at the top of each page.

Acts is the fifth book of the New Testament and it comes after John.

Remind them that the order of the first five books of the New Testament is Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts.

Explain to the children that Acts is short for Acts of the Apostles and the stories here tell about what happened to Jesus' followers after his death and resurrection. It tells the story of the early church. Acts is a book of history---the only history book in the New Testament.

After they have found Acts tell them to find Acts 9:1-19. Some of the children may confuse chapters and verses. Show them that chapter numbers are the big ones, and also are at the top of every page (in most editions).

For classes composed primarily of pre-readers, show the children how to find the passage in the Bible and then have them do it. After everyone has found the passage, have them listen while you read.

DIG:**Application:**

Now we are going to play the game “Road to Damascus” to help us remember the life-changing experience Saul had on the Road to Damascus.

Play the game. Divide the class into groups of 3-4 players each. All answers given/performed should be agreed upon by the entire group. Do not allow one person to shout out an answer. Bibles are an important tool in this game. Encourage the students to use them. If a group cannot come up with an answer, others may make suggestions, but the group still has to agree on their final answer.

Have the group with the youngest or shortest player go first. (Remind the children that the meek — those who are not judged by the world's standards to be strong and powerful — will inherit the earth. Matthew 5:5.)

If you are playing with a life-sized game board, all of the students in a group should move together and try to squeeze onto a space together. If another group lands on the same spot, have them squeeze on as best they can.

If a roll of the die puts a group on a plain space, their turn is over and they wait there until their next turn. If they land on a space with a cross (Scripture card), star (surprise card), or question mark (question card), they follow the directions on the card that corresponds to that space. They should work as a group to decide on an answer, and they may use their Bibles. Answers should be shared so all of the groups can hear. (Some of the questions may be repeated, as the cards are placed at the bottom of the deck after being used.) During the early weeks of the rotation, put the scripture and question cards in chronological order to help connect story details with the sequence of events. This also allows you to skip some cards if you're getting bogged down in the early events. In later weeks, if the kids seem familiar with the sequence and most of the details of each event, you can mix the cards up.

Scripture cards (cross space):

Grades 2-5: When a group lands on a “scripture” space, give everyone in the group a Bible. Then have one member draw a scripture card. Using the timer, give the group one minute to find the passage in the Bibles they're holding. The first to find it reads it out loud. If somebody finds it before time runs out, the team moves ahead one space; if not, back one space. (If one minute seems too short for the class's general ability, make it longer.)

Grades 1: Have the Shepherd hold a Bible open to Acts 9. Let one member draw a scripture card and hand it to you. Have the Shepherd read the verse out loud,

then ask the group the question on the card. Correct answer, move forward one space. Incorrect, back one space.

Question cards (question mark space):

When a group lands on a “question” space, one member picks a question card and hands it to you without reading it. (the answers are on the card). Ask the question, and offer the multiple choices only if the group is stumped. Correct answer: forward one space. Incorrect: back one space.

Surprise cards (star space): The group draws a card, does what it says, then moves forward one space.

The object of the game is not to be the first group to reach the end, but for all the groups to reach the end (or get as far as time permits) and to have fun doing it. If a group gets to the end of the path before the end of class time, they can begin again at the first square or they can sit to watch the others finish.

Remind the groups that this is not a time to visit with friends and that they should pay attention to the other teams in case they get the same questions.

Stop the game by 10:30.

REFLECT:

Pulling it all together (closing discussion):

(From Kirk of Kildaire Presbyterian Church, Antioch Arcade lesson plans for Saul on the Road to Damascus Lesson Plan.)

Discuss:

Who was the person “made new” in this story? (Saul.)

What made him a new person? (Jesus changed him.)

I wonder what was so special about Saul that Jesus chose him? (Saul wasn’t so different – Most people don’t have such dramatic experiences as Saul, but Jesus changes anyone who accepts him Remember – “anyone who belongs to Christ is a new person.”)

When Jesus made Saul a new person, did that mean Saul always did the right thing from then on, or never had any more problems? (No – he just faced his problems knowing that Jesus was with him, and he tried to do the right things but knew Jesus loved him even when he did the wrong thing.)

What did Jesus choose Saul to do? (To tell a lot of people -- foreigners, kings and Jews -- about Jesus. When Jesus changed Saul, he called him to do God's work. And when Jesus changes US, he calls US to do God's work.)

I wonder how Saul knew what to do? Who did Jesus use to help Saul change? (Ananias, other Christians in the church.)

Who do you think Jesus uses to teach us? (The church teaches us how to be disciples, just like the church helped Saul learn how to be a disciple. Other Christians help us, like our parents and friends.)

Let's think of some ways the church teaches us to be disciples: (through baptism and becoming part of God's family, through the things we learn in Sunday school, through worship, through choir, VBS, through the opportunities the church gives us for service to the church and for helping other people outside the church, etc.)

Review the memory verse.

Play a version of musical chairs to learn or review the Bible verse. Write the verse on index cards with two or three words on each card. Put the cards in the correct order on the floor in the middle of the circle with the words facing up or hang them up on the wall where everyone can see them. Place pieces of construction paper, newspaper, or rugs in a circle on the floor, with one less piece of paper than there are children. Start the music and have the children walk around on the circle. Stop the music. When the music stops, each child should try to stand on a construction paper square. Have the child who did not get a spot when the music stops read the words of the memory verse. Turn over the first card of the verse so the words are not visible. Don't take any papers out of the circle. Continue to allow everyone to participate. Each time the music stops, have the child without a spot say the memory verse and then turn over another word card. Allow the group to help the child remember the words to the verse that are hidden. By the end of the game all the cards should be turned over and the children should be able to recite the verse from memory.

For the younger non-readers go over the verse before beginning the game, pointing to each word as you say it. When a non-reader is it, have the group say the verse with them or say the words and have them repeat them back to you.

The following activity should take place if you have time. If you do not have time, sent the journal pages home with the students.

Pass out the journal pages and pencils/markers. Suggestion: You may wish to give the children a sticker or some memento to paste in their journal as a reminder of the story or activity.

Journal Time:

(Journal questions from Paul on the Road to Damascus, Kirk of Kildaire Presbyterian Church, Antioch Arcade lesson plan)

Younger Children: Ananias was afraid of Saul at first, but he and other people in the early church helped Saul to change. They taught him how to follow Jesus. The church teaches us how to be disciples, too. Draw a path of several stepping stones like in our game today. On each stone, write or draw a picture of something we do at church that helps us become disciples.

Older Children: Ananias was afraid of Saul at first, but God used Ananias and other people in the early church to help Saul change. They taught him how to follow Jesus. The church teaches us how to be disciples, too. Suppose a mean kid you know from school shows up at Gloria Dei one Sunday morning. What are some things God might want you and the rest of the class to do to help this person follow Jesus?

This is meant to be a time of reflection and introspection. Writing about faith helps clarify lessons. In addition to the suggested activity, children may draw pictures relating to today's scripture or memory verse, list highlights of the day's activities, or rephrase the memory verse. The journal pages go home each week and are to be added to the student's Faith Journal which is kept at home.

You may want to provide an extra activity or worksheet for children who finish their journals quickly, such as coloring sheets, crossword puzzles, word searches, games. See the Workshop Leader's Background Notes, and rotation.org for ideas.

Closing prayer:

Pray for the children grow as followers of Jesus and be willing to be used by God to help others become followers of Jesus, too.

Tidy and Dismissal:

Ask children to help tidy the room. Give any specific instructions for clearing the workshop room.

Make sure their names and the date are on the journal pages. Closing begins at 10:45 in the choir room upstairs.

Resources

Kirk of Kildaire Presbyterian Church, Antioch Arcade lesson plans for Saul on the Road to Damascus Lesson Plan. <http://www.kirkofkildaire.org/quest/FQlessons/PaulOnRoadToDamascusAntiochArcade.html>

River Community Church, Fruit of the Spirit Games lesson plan. <http://rotation.in-fopop.cc/eve/forums?a=tpc&s=1206067121&f=859601925&m=600105712>

Game board idea inspired by Jaymie Derden, State St. UMC: <http://www.rotation.org/images/games-state.htm>

Another game board idea by Jean Carey, Christ Community Church Palos Heights, Illinois <http://rotation.org/images/games.htm>

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