

Instructed to Change His Life (Saul of Tarsus)

Acts 9



New Testament 7
Part 2: ABCs of Acts 7-12

SUNDAY MORNING

New Testament 7 [Class Attendance Sheet](#) provided in activity sheets (NOTE: The document is interactive, allowing the teacher to type in the Class, Teacher, and the children's names.)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Acts 9:1-31; 22:1-21; 26:9-18

MEMORY WORK:

YOUNGER CHILDREN: "So he, trembling and astonished, said, 'Lord, what do You want me to do?'" (Acts 9:6a).

OLDER CHILDREN: "So he, trembling and astonished, said, 'Lord, what do You want me to do?' Then the Lord said to him, 'Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do'" (Acts 9:6).

Also help the children memorize the ABCs of Acts.

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF LESSON FOR WORDS):

A [song book](#) and [audio recordings](#) of many of the curriculum songs are available on the curriculum Web site.

- ["How Long Was Saul Blind?"](#)
- ["Saul, Who Was Called Paul"](#)
- ["I Will Obey God"](#)
- ["Acts 22:16"](#)

LESSON VISUALS AND TEACHING AIDS (NOTE ANY DISCLAIMERS):

- See [AP's Pinterest page](#) for ideas on bulletin boards, visuals, crafts, etc. [DISCLAIMER: Pins may sometimes need to be adjusted to be Scriptural.]
- [ABCs of Acts 1-12](#) Bible fact cards (provided under "N.T. 7 Bible Facts")
- "Acts Chapter Summary" from "[Kids Prep 2](#)" CD by Jeff Miller
- "Summary of the Bible" from "[Kids Prep](#)" CD by Jeff Miller
- Pictures/drawings from any books listed under 3rd-4th Grader Pre-Class Activities/ Learning Centers
- Betty Lukens' felt pieces
- Life of Paul (Series 1) A Beka picture set (DISCLAIMER: use the cards, *not the*



lesson book; note that only the apostles received the Holy Spirit baptism in Acts 2—skip card 1.2 or remove girl)

- [Map of New Testament Palestine](#) (provided in activity sheets)
- Invite a man to come to class dressed in a Bible times costume as Saul to tell “his” story.
- Saul’s Conversion Blacklight Kit (<http://store.bibleclassworkshop.com/shopexd.asp?id=553>)

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

God loves me and wants me to do what is right. He will forgive me when I do wrong and want to change (do better).

LESSON STARTS HERE

INTRODUCTION: (YOUNGER CHILDREN)

Last week we talked about Happy New Christians. Can you tell me the names of the new Christians we talked about? Who taught them about Jesus?

Have you ever known someone who did very bad things? Do you think God can forgive someone who does really bad things? The book of Acts tells us about a man who looked for Christians so he could put them in jail. Let’s find out more about this man.

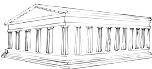
INTRODUCTION: (OLDER CHILDREN)

Review last week’s lesson.

Have you ever known someone who chose to do bad things—and even laughed about it? It’s hard to be nice to someone who lies, hurts others, uses bad language, etc., isn’t it? Do you think God loves someone who acts that way? Today we are going to talk about a man who did horrible things, but we’re also going to learn how his whole life changed. Let’s see what happens!

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Review ABCs of Acts covered thus far.
2. “I” is for Instructed to Change His Life. At the end of Acts seven we read about a man named Saul from the city of Tarsus; Saul was holding the coats of the men who were stoning Stephen to death. In chapter 8:1-3, we are told that Saul was doing everything he could to get rid of the followers of Jesus: even going house to house, arresting them, and putting them in prison. Chapter nine tells us more about what he did, describing him as a very dangerous and powerful enemy of the Church. He went to the high priest in Jerusalem and asked for letters to carry with him to the Jewish leaders in Damascus, Syria. He wanted the Jews in another country to help him hunt down Christians; he was not content to persecute Christians only in Palestine! He wanted to take **disciples** (followers of Christ) in Damascus back to Jerusalem for trial and imprisonment!



HISTORICAL NOTE: Tarsus was about 300 miles north of Jerusalem, only 10 miles from the Mediterranean coast. Along with Athens and Alexandria, Tarsus was considered one of the leading centers of education in New Testament times.



NOTE: At this time in the early history of the Church, the Roman government considered the Church a sect or branch of Judaism, since Jesus was a Jew. The Romans allowed the Jewish court, the Sanhedrin, considerable leeway to oversee Jewish affairs. The Sanhedrin could not, however, sentence someone to death; that was why it was so important for the Romans to kill Jesus, within their legal system. The execution of Stephen was something the Romans ignored or did not know about. **Also note** that Jesus’ followers were called “disciples” and “belonging to the Way.” **“Disciples”** were followers who wanted to learn from and imitate their Master. “The Way” refers to Jesus’ statement in John 14:6.

- The journey from Jerusalem to Damascus, Syria is about 140 miles. Saul was traveling with a group of men who apparently were eager to help him in his persecution of “dangerous” followers of Jesus. About noon on the last day of their journey, as they drew closer to Damascus, an extremely bright light shined from heaven. The light was so bright that Saul and the men with him fell to the ground. He heard a voice speak to him. Saul was very frightened. Saul asked who was speaking to him, and Jesus said it was He—the One Whom Saul was persecuting. Saul asked, “What do you want me to do?” Jesus told him to go into Damascus and wait for further instructions.



RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the articles [“What Did Saul’s Companions See and Hear on the Road to Damascus?”](#) and [“One Question, Three Different Answers”](#) by Eric Lyons on the Apologetics Press Web site for a discussion about some of the details in this narrative.

- Because of the great light, Saul was suddenly blind. His men led him into the city; the men had seen the bright light and heard a loud noise, but did not understand it to be Jesus’ voice. Saul stayed with a man named Judas on Straight Street for three days. He prayed and prayed, refusing to eat or drink anything, waiting to be told what he should do, and remembering all the terrible things he had done to Jesus’ followers. Even though Saul obviously had a repentant heart and prayed fervently, he was still not saved.
- While Saul prayed, God chose a man named Ananias to go to him and tell him what to do to be saved. Jesus, Himself, could have told Saul what to do on the road into the city, or He could have spoken to Saul at Judas’ house. Instead, He used one of the Christians to convey His message. With Ananias being a witness to Saul’s **conversion**, other Christians surely be more willing to accept Saul. Like Ananias, many were understandably afraid of Saul because of the terrible things he had done.



Conversion: a complete change in one’s beliefs and lifestyle. The New Testament calls it the new birth and regeneration, because being baptized into Christ (being converted) is starting to live a completely new life.

- At first Ananias was afraid to go to Saul, but God insisted that Saul would become a powerful preacher to the Gentiles (non-Jews). What did Ananias tell Saul of Tarsus? “God sent me to tell you that you are to change your life completely. You are to be devoted to Jesus and His Church. You are to be a special preacher, a messenger to the Gentiles in all the world. Get up and be baptized and wash away your sins!” (Paraphrased from Acts 22:14-16)
- Ananias had been given the ability to perform miracles, so when he put his hands on Saul’s face, he could immediately see again. In just a few days’ time, Saul experienced some wonderful, scary, life-

changing things. Jesus talked to him, he was completely healed of blindness, and he became a completely new person, a Christian!

8. Saul’s conversion was talked about among all the Christians, and some were very suspicious—even afraid—of him. Most gradually accepted him, however, and he began preaching immediately, trying to bring other people to Jesus. Saul stayed in Damascus for a time with the disciples there.
9. The Jews in Jerusalem and Damascus were very angry (and puzzled) that Saul of Tarsus would no longer help them get rid of Jesus’ disciples, and Saul became their enemy instead of their hero. They plotted and planned to kill Saul while he was still in Damascus. The Jews made an agreement that when Saul came out of the city gates they would kill him. Fortunately, some of the Christians found out about their plans and helped Saul escape the city by letting him down over the city walls in a huge basket.
10. None of us lived 2,000 years ago and stood in the crowd demanding Jesus’ death. None of us stood beneath the cross, made fun of Him, or gambled for His clothing as He was dying. None of us have helped put Christians in prison. But when we make bad choices, we hurt God just as much as if we did those horrible things to Jesus and His followers. The only way to “make it right” with God is to repent and to try to do better every day. Saul of Tarsus was probably from a wealthy family. He was well educated and popular—but he was not doing what was right in God’s sight. He thought he was doing right, but he was blinded by his pride and zeal. Thankfully, even someone like Saul of Tarsus can change. Just as surely as God had the power and the willingness to help Saul become a completely different person, He has the power and willingness to help us be more like Jesus, too, if we are willing to obey.



RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the article “[The Testimony of the Man from Tarsus](#)” by Kyle Butt on the Apologetics Press Web site for a discussion about the power of Saul’s testimony in arriving at the truth about Jesus.

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—BEFORE CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

- Click here for complete [Activity Book](#).

Ages 2-5:

- “[Saul to Paul Coloring Sheet](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- Continue working on ABCs of Acts booklet. (“[ABCs of Acts Booklet](#)” page 9 provided in activity sheets)
- Fun with Foam: Give each child some shaving cream (in a Styrofoam meat tray, aluminum pan, or directly on the table). Ask them to spell out the names of different characters from Acts that you have studied thus far as you pronounce the names (or have them write only the beginning letter of the names).
- When telling the story, have a pair of kids’ sunglasses for each child. (Can be purchased at a party supply store, a dollar store, or from Oriental Trading Company. Use black tempera paint to paint the back of the lenses.) When you get to the part of the story about Saul being

blinded on the road to Damascus, give each child a pair of the glasses. When the children put on their glasses, they won't be able to see much and will be "blind" like Saul. They can take their glasses home and tell their families about Saul of Tarsus.

- Role Play: Help the children act out the story. Use a bright flashlight to shine on "Saul."
- Review game: Color and cut out a Bible character that can be Saul and then laminate it. Make a road out of construction paper. Make this on poster board and have a picture colored, cutout, and laminated of a Bible city that can be Damascus. Give each child a turn to hold "Saul" as the teacher asks a question from the story. If they answer correctly, they move Saul closer to Damascus. When everyone has had a turn, see if Saul made it to Damascus!

1st-2nd Graders:

- Continue working on ABCs of Acts booklet. (["ABCs of Acts Booklet"](#) page 9 provided in activity sheets)
- Fun with Foam: Give each child some shaving cream (in a Styrofoam meat tray, aluminum pan, or directly on the table). Ask them to spell out the names of different characters from Acts that you have studied thus far as you pronounce the names. **Or** ask them review questions about this and previous lessons for which the answers are names of people and places. Ask the children to draw the first letter of the word which answers the question.
- The importance of light: Talk about (and show pictures of) animals, such as bats, that live in darkness most of the time. They need special help (sonar, radar capabilities) to get around in the dark and can't function well in bright light. Saul had been living "in the dark" for a long time because he was sure Jesus was **not** the Son of God. He chose to do terrible things to Christians because he believed he was doing right.
- "Who Am I?" review game: Write clues about main characters studied so far in this unit. Divide the class into teams. Read one clue at a time, taking turns between teams. The team that can correctly name the person on the first clue earns four points. If it takes two clues, give that team three points, and so on. **Or** write clues and names on separate index cards. Put mixed up cards face down on the floor or board, and let students take turns choosing two cards at a time until they find a matching pair.
- "How to Become a Christian" matching game: On wide craft sticks, write the scriptures related to each "step" of salvation [HEAR = Romans 10:17; BELIEVE = John 8:24, Hebrews 11:6; REPENT = Luke 13:3, Acts 2:38; CONFESS = Romans 10:9-10; BE BAPTIZED = Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, 1 Peter 3:21; BE FAITHFUL = Revelation 2:10]. Write the "steps" on library pockets, mounted on file folder or cardboard. Ask the children to look up the verses and match them to the correct action. It would be a good idea to make enough sets for the children to be able to work in pairs.
- "A Special Time for Saul" game: Print out or draw clocks and cut them out. Cut the clocks in half. On one half write questions about the lesson. On the other half, write the answers. Put pieces of magnetic tape on the backs of both halves, and use on a magnetic board. **Or** glue the question halves onto a file folder or project board. Put magnetic tape above the question halves, and another piece on the answer halves. Kids can work alone or in pairs to match the questions and answers.
- What Happened First?: Write events from today's lesson (begin with the stoning of Stephen) on strips of paper. Have the children put them in chronological order. (Make several sets and let the children work in pairs or small groups to complete the activity.) (["Saul to Paul Sequencing Game"](#) provided in activity sheets)

3rd-4th Graders:

- Continue working on ABCs of Acts booklet. (["ABCs of Acts Booklet"](#) page 9 provided in activity

sheets)

- The importance of light: Talk about (and show pictures of) animals, such as bats, that live in darkness most of the time. They need special help (sonar, radar capabilities) to get around in the dark and can't function well in bright light. Saul had been living "in the dark" for a long time because he was sure Jesus was **not** the Son of God. He chose to do terrible things to Christians because he believed he was doing right.
- "Who Am I?" review game: Write clues about main characters studied so far in this unit. Divide the class into teams. Read one clue at a time, taking turns between teams. The team that can correctly name the person on the first clue earns four points. If it takes two clues, give that team three points, and so on. **Or** write clues and names on separate index cards. Put mixed up cards face down on the floor or board, and let students take turns choosing two cards at a time until they find a matching pair.
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- What Happened First?: Write events from today's lesson (begin with the stoning of Stephen) on strips of paper. Have the children put them in chronological order. (Make several sets and let the children work in pairs or small groups to complete the activity.) ("[Saul to Paul Sequencing Game](#)" provided in activity sheets)
- Have the children read the following:
 - Acts 9 and 22 (if they did not do so in NT6)
 - *Discovery* magazine articles: "Saul the Enemy of Christ" and "Paul The Friend of Jesus," [May, 2007](#); "The Conversion of Saul," [December, 2008](#)
 - *Paul's Great Basket Caper*, by Larry Burgdorf, Arch books
 - *Paul at Damascus*, by Penny Frank, Lion Publishing

FINGERPLAYS:

"HOW LONG WAS SAUL BLIND?"

One day, two days, three days went by; (hold up fingers as you count)
Saul was blind as could be! (cover eyes)
Then Ananias came, (walk in place)
With a message from God, (point upward)
And Saul could see again! (cover, then quickly uncover eyes)

SONGS:

“SAUL, WHO WAS CALLED PAUL” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Lora Laycook
(Tune: “O Why Not Tonight”)

VERSE 1:

There was a man whose name was Saul.
He was born in Tarsus, as you know.
He hated all who followed Christ.
He was their foe.

CHORUS:

O why did he hate? O why did he hate?
The one who died for you and me,
He hated so!

VERSE 2:

One day a light shone very bright,
And Saul saw Jesus up above;
He said, “What will you have me do?”
Hate turned to love.

2nd CHORUS:

O how he did love! O how he did love!
The one who died for you and me,
He loved Him so!

Ananias baptized him into Christ,
And Paul preached Jesus far and near.
He worked for God both night and day,
He had no fear.

(2nd CHORUS)

“I WILL GOD OBEY” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Lora Laycook (Revisions by Jeff Miller)
(Tune: Chorus of “Sunlight, Sunlight”)

I will, I will, I will God obey!
I will, I will, obey Him ev’ry day.
Every day, every way, I will God obey!
If I will obey Him, He’ll be pleased always.

“ACTS 22:16” ([Click to Hear](#))

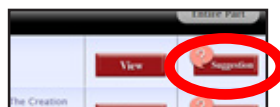
Author: Lora Laycook

(Tune: “Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus”)

“Arise, arise, be baptized,
And wash away your sins,
Calling upon the Lord’s name,”
A new life then begins;

For God is ever waiting.
His Son is waiting, too.
“Arise, arise, be baptized,”
Begin your life anew.

***** IF YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS PERTAINING TO THIS LESSON, PLEASE CLICK THE “SUGGESTION” BUTTON BESIDE THE BUTTON FOR THIS LESSON ON THE CURRICULUM WEB SITE.**



Important Woman Raised from the Dead

Acts 9



New Testament 7
Part 2: ABCs of Acts 7-12

WEDNESDAY EVENING

New Testament 7 [Class Attendance Sheet](#) provided in activity sheets (NOTE: The document is interactive, allowing the teacher to type in the Class, Teacher, and the children's names.)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Acts 9:36-43

MEMORY WORK:

YOUNGER CHILDREN: "So he, trembling and astonished, said, 'Lord, what do You want me to do?'" (Acts 9:6a).

OLDER CHILDREN: "So he, trembling and astonished, said, 'Lord, what do You want me to do?' Then the Lord said to him, 'Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do'" (Acts 9:6).

Also help the children memorize the ABCs of Acts.

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF SUNDAY'S LESSON FOR WORDS):

A [song book](#) and [audio recordings](#) of many of the curriculum songs are available on the curriculum Web site.

- ["Dorcas and Peter Action Rhyme"](#)
- ["Dorcas was Raised"](#)

LESSON VISUALS AND TEACHING AIDS (NOTE ANY DISCLAIMERS):

- See [AP's Pinterest page](#) for ideas on bulletin boards, visuals, crafts, etc. [DISCLAIMER: Pins may sometimes need to be adjusted to be Scriptural.]
- [ABCs of Acts 1-12](#) Bible fact cards (provided under "N.T. 7 Bible Facts")
- "Acts Chapter Summary" from "[Kids Prep 2](#)" CD by Jeff Miller
- "Summary of the Bible" from "[Kids Prep](#)" CD by Jeff Miller
- Pictures/drawings from any books listed under 3rd-4th Grader Pre-Class Activities/ Learning Centers
- Betty Lukens' felt pieces
- [Map of Palestine](#) (provided in activity sheets)



- **John the Baptist/Peter A Beka Flash-A-Card Series (DISCLAIMER: use the cards, not the lesson book)**
- **Dorcas (<http://store.bibleclassworkshop.com/shopexd.asp?id=314>)**

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

God has given each of us different talents and abilities. He wants us to use them to help others and to do good.

INTRODUCTION:

Review [N.T. 7 Bible Fact Flash Cards](#) (provided under “N.T. 7 Bible Facts” on curriculum Web site)

Discuss with children things they are good at. Help them see how they can use those talents to work for God.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Briefly review Sunday’s lesson (See [N.T. 7 Review Questions](#) for example questions), as well as other ABCs covered to this point.
2. In Acts nine we learn that “I” is for “Instructed to Change His Life,” referring to Saul. “I” is also for “Important Woman Raised from the Dead.” Peter was traveling throughout the country at this time preaching and teaching. He went to the city of Lydda and spent some time with the Christians there. He healed a crippled man named Aeneas, and many people believed in Jesus because of that miracle.
3. Not too far away, in the city of Joppa, a very special woman named Dorcas (or Tabitha) died, and all the Christians were very sad. She was a generous and kind woman who made clothing for the poor and the widows. When her friends heard about the crippled man being healed in nearby Lydda, they sent for Peter and asked for him to come. They were hoping for a miracle. With God’s help, Peter brought the dead woman back to life! Because of this miracle, many more believed in Jesus and became Christians. [Remind the children about the purpose of miracles throughout the Bible: to prove that the message of the apostles and others sent by God was the Truth—to confirm the Word (Mark 16:20).]
4. Each of us is just as important to God as Dorcas was. God gave her special talents, and she used her talents every day. God also gives you and me talents that we should use to do good and to help others, just as Dorcas did.
5. [See New Testament 4, Lesson 8 for more information.]

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—**BEFORE** CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

- See Sunday morning’s lesson.
- **YOUNGER CHILDREN:** Make sewing cards out of cardboard or cardstock in the shape of a coat/robe out of cardstock or poster board. Punch holes around the outside. Have a length of yarn cut for each child; the yarn needs to be long enough to “sew” around the card. Let the children decorate and then “sew” their cards.
- Cut out several “robes” from cardstock, at least the size of half a sheet. (The size of a whole

sheet of cardstock would be better!) On each “robe,” write one or two words from one or more verses of the story (especially Acts 9:40-42), making sure that all of the words from each memory verse are split up on robes. Mix up the “robes”/words, and put the pieces in a plastic bag. Then let the children put the pieces in order. As soon as a child finishes one verse, ask him/her to put the pieces back in the bag and hand it to another child who has finished his verse.

- Have the children read *Dorcas Sews for Others*, by Alberta Poth Miller, One in Christ Bible Story Book, Concordia Publishing House (DISCLAIMER: Some believe we should only pray to the Father, not Jesus. “Jesus” can be changed to “God” on pp. 22,27.)

FINGERPLAYS:

“DORCAS AND PETER ACTION RHYME”

A lady called Dorcas helped many people. (stretch out hands)
She loved the Lord so much! (cross arms over chest like a hug)
So, when she fell ill and suddenly died, (very sad face)
People cried, for they missed her kind touch. (pretend to cry)
The apostle Peter was asked to come to Joppa. (walk in place)
Many there had heard about Peter’s work for the Lord. (finger to ear, then upward toward heaven)
Peter went to the room where Dorcas was. (march as if climbing stairs)
He asked all the people to leave. (“shoo” motion with hands)
“Get up,” he told Dorcas, and she opened her eyes. (crouch, then get up)

SONGS:

“DORCAS WAS RAISED” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Lora Laycook
(Tune: “Trust and Obey”)

In the Bible we find, Dorcas was very kind,
She was full of good works for the poor.
She was sick and then died, and the widows all cried
Until Peter kneeled down on the floor.

CHORUS:

“Tabitha, arise!” Simon Peter then cried.
They were happy, so happy, for she opened her eyes.

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“SUGGESTION” BUTTON BESIDE THE BUTTON FOR THIS LESSON ON THE
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