



Paul's Conversion: Acts 9:1-19 Lesson Plans

WRM Season 2 Session 10: Movement & Games, Storytelling, Arts & Crafts

OVERVIEW SECTION

How to Read This Lesson Plan

The **Overview Section** is the foundation of this lesson plan. The questions and activities for the class that you will be teaching on Sunday morning have been based (sometimes loosely) upon what you read in this section. The **Overview Section** is composed of five components (each component is underlined in the lesson plan):

How to Read This Lesson Plan (defines all components of the lesson plan)

Purpose of Sunday Morning Spiritual Formation (a reminder of why we do this)

Scripture(s) for the Session (a reminder that the scripture is to be read in every class)

Key Verses & Theology (background for teachers to ponder)

Themes to Focus on from the Scripture (the ideas that the session's lessons are based on)

The actual lesson is found in the second section, **The Sunday Morning Experience Section**. Think of this section as the step-by-step instruction guide to your Sunday morning teaching experience. There are four components to this section (again, each component is underlined in the actual lesson plan):

Preparation (including supplies needed)

Classroom Statement (a brief explanation of what will be taught/happening in the classroom)

Step-by-step process of the lesson (including the scripture to be read)

Suggested variations for age groups (Self-explanatory but not always applicable)

We encourage you to read the rest of this **Overview Section** before reading the **Sunday Morning Experience Section**.

Purpose of Sunday Morning Spiritual Formation

The purpose of Sunday Morning Spiritual Formation is, with God's help and in community, to hear and interact with the stories of our faith tradition, to pray, worship and play together, and to equip and support the building of relationships with God and with each other.

Scripture(s) for the Session: Acts 9:1-19

Please READ this aloud in every class you teach. The actual words to the scripture can be found in **The Sunday Morning Experience Section: Step-by-Step process of the lesson**. When

reading to the class, please read it from the lesson plan (not an actual Bible) as the wording of the scripture has been modified to help clarify some language issues.

Key Verses & Theology: These are provided to help the teachers think about and build a framework for understanding the story to help in answering some of the questions that the students might raise in class.

1 Meanwhile Paul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Jesus and his disciples were Jewish. After Jesus' resurrection and ascension, Pentecost came, and the Body of Christ/the Church was formed. The Church was formed within the Jewish community. This community was seen by the Pharisees as a threat. Paul was a Pharisee. And it was his job to pursue and prosecute Israelites that were participating in "The Way." Prosecution usually involved capital punishment. The phrase "breathing threats and murder" is a play on words to show that Paul was not breathing the Holy spirit (*ruach*), but an abomination. Paul was breathing the wrong air. Not the air of love, but the air of hatred. And it showed. The man was a beast. A force that, if left unchecked, would've seriously hampered, even destroyed, the newly-born Church.

8 Paul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. This is a hitting-bottom moment for Paul. This powerful righteous man has been doing things that were eating at his heart. Paul wanted to do the right thing. And he saw the church, this uprising among his people as a threat. He was doing everything possible to stop it. But what he was doing in order to stop the Church went against the essence of who he was. And those actions eventually caught up to him, and in a rather dramatic way (as hitting bottom often is). Everything that Paul thought he knew was suddenly in question. His entire world had been turned upside down. And it left him unable to trust what he'd always known to be true. And thus, he must be led by the hand to finish his journey, unsure and unseeing.

[Ananias] laid his hands on Saul and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18 And immediately something like scales fell from Paul's eyes, and his sight was restored. We are not made to be alone. We are not made to function as an island of self-containment. Paul is a brilliant and driven man. But he cannot get straightened out on his own. He hit bottom on his own. His own decisions got him there just fine. But he is not able to get off the bottom without the help of others. Ananias reaches out to help Paul, even though he doesn't want to help Paul. But because he does, then Paul is able to see again.

Themes to Focus on from the Scripture: Themes are provided to help teachers understand the teaching of the *session* (not necessarily the class). Sometimes an activity in one class may not match up with any of the themes.

Persecution – when we feel challenged, when our way of life is threatened by another way of life, and we choose to fight instead of flee, then we end up persecuting those who we feel threatened by. Paul was an upstanding citizen. But because his way was being threatened, he threatened back. Whenever we choose to hold our ground without inviting God into our planning, then we invariably arrive at a place of persecuting those whom we fear.

Insight – On our own, we can only see and understand so much. This is what happened for Paul. He was sure he was right. Until God showed him otherwise. If we're seeking God, and asking God to help us to understand what's going on for ourselves and for those around us, then, like Paul, we start to see and understand things we never saw/understood before. When we see things for the first time, it can be unsettling and can take us some time to get used to such a perspective (like Paul getting knocked off his horse). But we will adjust, just like we do when we get a new prescription for contacts or glasses. And once we do, then we can see and act more confidently.

Conversion – When we are threatened, but we invite God into our threatened feeling, then we will eventually experience a conversion. We will experience a breakthrough. It might be a minor breakthrough with our worldview shifting only slightly. But like in the case of Paul, our entire worldview might be turned upside down. And that takes some readjustment time. But once we're readjusted to our new understanding, then we can move with confidence in the right direction.



THE SUNDAY MORNING EXPERIENCE SECTION

Preparation

- Print out this lesson plan and bring it with you on the Sunday Mornings you are teaching
- Arrive at pre-arranged time to join other teachers, shepherds and staff for an opening prayer.
- Supplies Needed: Stencils (I used 1 inch letters found in the scrapbook aisle at Target – bought 4 or 5 bags), pencils, construction paper, scissors, sun print paper (this is not necessarily easy to find – check with your local arts store a number of weeks ahead of time for availability), cardboard (get some cardboard boxes from a local cardboard recycling dumpster and then cut them up), pushpins and pictures of some street signs, overhead/spotlight lamp with 100 watt bulb, aluminum cooking pan (filled half-way with water). Markers or Crayons.

Classroom Statement

This Arts & Crafts class consists of the telling of the Paul Conversion story (in Acts 9) and then an art project that uses sun print paper to show how God's light can transform/convert us.

Step-by-Step Process of Lesson

Shepherd comes in with students

SHEPHERD ASKS "Question of the Day."

INTRODUCE yourself

Hi, my name is ____ and I want you call me (tell the students how they may address you).

PRAY (Short and simple is perfect)

God, thank you for this day and for each other. We need your help. Help us to learn about you this day. Amen.

TELL

- We're going to hear a story today about a man named Paul. Sometimes, he's also called Saul. Saul is how you say his name in Hebrew, Paul is how you say his name in Greek. In this story, we're just going to call him Paul to avoid any confusion.
- In the story we're going to hear, Paul experiences a conversion.
- A good way to think about conversion is to first picture someone riding their bike or driving their car in a certain direction.

- Once you have that picture in your mind, then think about that person realizing that they are going in the wrong direction.
- Then what do they do?
 - Maybe they stop and look confused.
 - Maybe they stop and ask for instructions.
 - Maybe they stop and check a map.
- And then, once they figure out what's happened, they turn around and go in a different direction than they were going. Maybe even in the exact opposite direction!
- Another word that has a similar meaning to "conversion" is the word, "repent."
- And the word repent means very simply to "turn around."
- Listen for the turning around that Paul does in this story.

READ Acts 9:1-19

1 Meanwhile Paul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest in Jerusalem 2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way of Jesus, men or women, he could arrest them and send them to Jerusalem to be put in jail.

3 Now as Paul was riding along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. 4 He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Paul, Paul, why do you persecute me?" 5 He asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 6 Get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." 7 The men who were traveling with Paul stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. 8 Paul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. 9 For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

10 Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." He answered, "Here I am, Lord." 11 The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Paul. At this moment he is praying, 12 and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." 13 But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your followers in Jerusalem; 14 and here he has authority from the chief priests to arrest all who invoke your name." 15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel."

17 So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Paul and said, "Brother Paul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18 And immediately something like scales fell from Paul's eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, 19 and after taking some food, he regained his strength. For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, and then headed back to Jerusalem.

ASK

- At the beginning of the story, where was Paul headed? (Damascus)
- At the end of the story, where was Paul headed? (Jerusalem)
- Did he do what he wanted to do in Damascus? (No)
- What did he want to do in Damascus? (arrest followers of the Way)
- What stopped him? (God interrupted him/blinded him)

TELL

- Remember what I told you before I read you the story? I told you a way to think about conversion.
- In the story we just read, Paul's starts out going one way.
- Then, in the story when Paul is blinded, that's the part where Paul is realizing that he's lost or at least not headed in the right direction.
- So Paul stops.
- Then when Annanias comes, think of that as Paul receiving direction.
- Then Paul turns around and heads back to Jerusalem.

ASK

- The part in the story where Paul is blinded, what causes him to fall down? (bright light)
- What does light usually help us to do? (to see)
- So even though Paul was blinded, he was able to see that he was going in the wrong direction, right? (right)

TELL

- Today, we're going to make traffic signs.
- And we're going to make them using paper and light.
- Because in the story, God points Paul in the correct direction using light to get his attention.
- So we're going to make traffic signs with the help of light that will serve as reminders to pay attention to God.

EXPLAIN

- First, we have to decide what type of traffic signs we want to make.
 - So maybe we'll want to make a stop sign and then underneath say, "And Pray"
 - Or maybe a "Yield" sign and then under it say "To Jesus"
 - Or maybe a "U-Turn" symbol and under it say "For God"
- The way we'll make these signs is by using stencils to spell out the words on the sun print paper, also known as solar graphic paper.
- So take a piece of cardboard and put a piece of sun print paper on top of it.
- Then, arrange the stencils to spell out "Stop and Pray" or "Yield to Jesus" or "U-Turn for God"
- Once you have your stencils arranged on your sun print paper, use the cardboard like a plate and bring it over to the lamp over here.
- Place the paper under the lamp for 2 minutes (we'll set a timer)

- Then remove the stencils from your paper and put the paper in the water tray (this aluminum thing in the sink) for 1 minute so that the color will set.
- Then, while that dries, go back to your seat and pick a sheet of construction paper draw the shape of the sign that your words fit with. So if you did Stop and Pray, you'll want to draw a large octagon on your construction paper.
- Then, you can color it and cut it out.
- By this time, your sun print paper will be dry enough to cut out the words.
- Then, arrange each word how you want it to look and then glue it (with Elmer's) on your sign that you've prepared.
- When you're done and finished, you'll have a sign that we're all able to see with the help of the light!
- If you did a good job and get done early, then you can make a second sign.

DO Street Sign craft with Sun Print paper

NOTE:

For the most part, you'll only be able to get 3 signs under the lamp at a time. So if you have a big class, there could be a lot of waiting involved, which will cause restlessness. There are two things you can do to help relieve this waiting

1. While they wait for "lamp time," have them start preparing their construction paper part of the sign
2. Put them into teams of 2, with the understanding that they'll be working on one sign at a time. This means two of them will bring only one sun print paper to the lamp at one time.

Neither option is perfect, but should be sufficient.

CLEAN UP

DISMISS FOR SINGING

Suggested Variations for age groups

For the K-1, you might want to have a stencil of the street signs for them to trace.