

WEEK 1 LESSON GUIDE

WHAT'S
NEXT?

BIG IDEA

We can
follow Jesus.

BIBLE

Saul on the Road to Damascus:
Acts 9:1–20

ABOUT THIS WEEK

When you put a puzzle together, it's a good idea to start at the corners and slowly follow the edges as a guide. This week, we'll hear about how Saul became a follower of Jesus after his unique experience on the way to Damascus. Saul shows us that **we can follow Jesus** even when we don't see the big picture right away.

WELCOME TIME

ACTIVITY | Piece By Piece

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, cut paper into six to eight puzzle pieces or find simple puzzles [like these](#). To play, invite kids up to the front to try and put puzzles together. Have leaders help them. While putting the puzzle together, kids can try to guess what it is. Have the whole group say out loud what it is. You can also split kids up into small groups and assign each group its own leader and puzzle to solve.
- If you look at just one piece of the puzzle, it's hard to tell what the whole picture looks like. Once all the pieces are in place, we can see what the picture was all along.
- In today's Bible story, a man named Saul learns about God's plan for him ... one piece at a time!

ACTIVITY | A-maze-ing Guides

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, make a simple maze on the floor with painter's tape ahead of time that kids will be able to follow. Have everyone go through the maze in pairs. One kid will close their eyes, and one will have their eyes open. Have the kid with their eyes open lead the one with their eyes closed through the maze, holding them by the hand and walking slowly. Keep going until every pair has reached the other side of the maze. Then have the pairs switch roles and go back the way they came.
 - ✂ **TODDLER HACK:** Although toddlers couldn't manage a maze, they would enjoy an opportunity to try on sunglasses with you. Have a shatterproof mirror available for the toddler to see what they look like in sunglasses. Talk about how sunglasses make things look darker and harder to see.
- **Isn't it harder to find your way when you can't see everything?** It's a good thing you had a friend help you.
- Saul from today's Bible story gets blinded by a bright light, and he will need help from another Jesus follower to be able to see again.

STORY TIME**SCRIPTURE | Acts 9:1–20 (Saul on the Road to Damascus)**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Teach this Scripture passage by reading from a preschool-friendly Bible translation, Bible storybook, or using the talking points provided below.
- The Bible is a lot like a puzzle. Each Bible story is like a puzzle piece. The more we learn from the Bible, the more we can know about God.
- In today's Bible story puzzle piece, a man named Saul meets and follows God. Here's how it happened.
 - Jesus, God's son, had just gone up to heaven. His close friends and followers started to tell more people all about Jesus. Jesus died but came back to life. Anyone who believes in him can live forever with God. What good news!
 - **What do you do when you hear good news?**
 - Well, not everyone thought this was good news. Some people tried to stop Jesus followers. One of those people was Saul.
- One day, Saul went on a journey to capture people who were following Jesus. He did not believe their message and thought they should all go to jail and be punished.
 - While he was on the road to a place called Damascus, a bright light shone down. Saul couldn't see anything!
 - **Shield your eyes like there's a bright light shining down on you.**
- Then Saul heard a voice calling out to him. The voice asked Saul, "Why are you hurting me?"
 - Saul was confused.
 - **Everyone scratch your head and go, "Huh?"**
 - Saul asked who the voice was. The voice said, "I am Jesus, the one you are hurting." Because Saul was going after people who loved Jesus, that hurt Jesus very much.
- Jesus said that he had a plan for Saul. He would have to change his life and follow Jesus instead of chasing after people who were spreading the good news.
 - Suddenly, Saul couldn't see anymore.
 - **Cover your eyes with your hands.**
 - Saul had to go find a man named Ananias. Ananias would pray for him, and Saul would be able to see again.
- Ananias was worried. He knew that Saul used to go around hurting people who loved Jesus. What if Saul was still the same guy?
 - But Ananias trusted Jesus and obeyed. When Saul came to him, Ananias prayed for him, and he could see again.
 - Just like that, Saul became a follower of Jesus!
- What an amazing story! Now we all have one more piece of the puzzle to God's story.

BIG IDEA | We can follow Jesus.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For the Big Idea reveal each week, hide four large puzzle pieces around the room. Use pieces of [large foam play mats](#) or make your own pieces using foam boards and a craft knife. Write each word of the Big Idea on strips of painter's tape and attach these to the pieces before hiding them. You may want to have a sample to show kids what they're looking for. Once all the pieces are found, bring them together and fit them together. Then read the Big Idea aloud. Have the kids repeat after you once, then say it a few times using the motions below.
- Saul met Jesus on the road to Damascus. But that wasn't the end of the story. Next, he followed Jesus.
- Our Big Idea tells us what's next after we meet Jesus, too: **We can follow Jesus!**

- **We can** (Flex both arms.)
- **follow** (March in place.)
- **Jesus.** (Point up.)

VIDEO | *What's Next?*, Episode 1

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play this week's episode of [Cali's World](#).

ACTIVITY | Freeze In The Light

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, you will need to turn the lights on and off—the room doesn't have to get completely dark. Have kids march or gallop around the room while the lights are off. When you switch on the lights, everyone has to freeze immediately. Anyone who moves has to come to sit on the side but encourage them to play along and freeze from their seats. Keep playing until one kid remains.
- Today, we learned about a man named Saul who was on his way to capture people who loved Jesus. On the road, he saw a bright light and heard the voice of Jesus! He froze what he used to do and changed his life completely. He chose to follow Jesus.
- Jesus loves everybody. It doesn't matter where we come from or if we made a lot of mistakes. Jesus calls all of us. **We can follow Jesus!**

PRAYER

- God, thank you for loving us so much and sending your son to us. Help us follow Jesus every day. Amen.

SHARING TIME

SNACK | Open Eyes

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Prepare each kid's snack by twisting apart an Oreo so that there is an even amount of filling on each cookie (if not, twist open a new cookie). Place the open-face cookies side by side with the filling side facing up, and place black or brown M&M's in the center of each cookie. To get fancy, squeeze a little bit of [brown](#), [blue](#), or [green](#) decorating gel before you add the M&M's to give the "eyes" more color.
 - ✂ **TODDLER HACK:** Remove the M&M's as they may pose a choking hazard. Consider using chocolate frosting instead. You can also opt for a less sweet option by using Ritz crackers instead of Oreos.
- Saul wasn't able to see until Ananias prayed for him. His eyes were opened so he could see. His eyes were also opened when he found out what he was doing was wrong.
- When we learn something new or see something in a new way, we can describe it as "eye-opening."
- **What is something new you learned this week?**

ACTIVITY | Circle Time

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For Circle Time this month, create a sensory bottle or two to help kids calm down and focus on reviewing the Bible story together. You can allow kids to pass the bottle around and shake it as they answer the questions together. Check out a tutorial [like this](#) to create a wet bottle using water, oil, and [puzzle-shaped confetti](#) or a dry bottle using sand and jigsaw puzzle pieces or [plastic puzzle pieces](#).
- **What was the name of the man who was on the way to Damascus?** Saul.
- **What did Saul see on the road?** A bright light.
- **Whose voice did he hear speaking to him?** Jesus.
- **What happened afterward?** Saul couldn't see. Ananias prayed for him so he could see again. Saul decided to follow Jesus.
- **Who can follow Jesus?** We can! We can follow Jesus.

ACTIVITY | Eye See Jesus!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this craft, each kid will need two empty toilet paper rolls, stickers, and washi tape to make [binoculars](#). You can also have kids paint the cardboard tubes outside or cover them with colored paper. After kids have decorated the tubes, stick them together using glue dots, craft glue, or staples. Staple a length of [one-inch grosgrain ribbon](#) to either end to create a lanyard for kids to wear their new binoculars.
- Saul's eyes were opened when Ananias prayed for him. He was able to see that what he had been doing was not right and chose to follow Jesus. These binoculars remind us to look for ways **we can follow Jesus**, too!

MEMORY VERSE | Proverbs 16:9 (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Help kids learn this month's memory verse by setting the words and the Scripture reference to the tune of "[Brahms' Lullaby](#)." You can also have kids repeat the verse after you in small chunks, say it using silly voices, or create simple hand motions for keywords.
- **"In their hearts, humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps."**

PLAY TIME**ACTIVITY | Coloring Page**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Print and distribute [the coloring page](#) along with crayons or markers. You can review today's Bible story, Big Idea, and memory verse as the kids color.

ACTIVITY | Spotlight Shadows

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this free play activity, set up a projector screen or designate a blank wall space to cast light from a projector or a flashlight to talk about the bright light from today's Bible story. Make sure the stream of light is at the height of your kids. Have kids face away from the light toward the screen, and invite them to make shapes using their hands on the wall. You could also provide [fun cutouts](#) on popsicle sticks for kids to hold up and create their own shadow puppet show.

ACTIVITY | Sensory Box

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this free play activity, cut a hole in the top of a shoebox big enough for a kid's hand to fit inside and tape up the sides. Fill the box with dried rice or beans and bury ten to fifteen small objects inside. Everyone must feel around and guess what items are inside without looking to remember how Saul couldn't see in today's Bible story.
 - ✂ **TODDLER HACK:** Omit the rice as it may pose a hazard. Toddlers will have more fun just feeling and exploring the various textures of different fabrics or stuffed animals. Talk about how we can use our sense of feeling even when we can't see something with our eyes. Feel free to introduce different textures like this throughout your teaching, using tangibles like raw fruit and vegetables for the toddlers to explore with supervision. Offer an opportunity for them to feel soft and rough textures and talk about the differences.