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**July's B.I.G. Idea**

We believe that we can live and act with love and courage because God is always with us.

**July's Bible Verse**

*The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore. Psalm 121:8*

**July's B.I.G. Theme**

Come, Live the Adventure

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## Lesson 8 ★ Down the Wall

### Today's Bible Story

Acts 9:20-31

### Objectives

- ★ Children will connect with the biblical story of Paul's escape down the wall.
- ★ Children will recognize that sometimes when we follow Jesus, we are asked to do difficult things. But God will always be there during those times to help us.

Sometimes we find ourselves needing to get off the fence, stand up for what we believe, and take risks. Sometimes we are required to do difficult things. Such is the case with the apostle in our story today. Today's story follows the conversion of Saul, who was also known as Paul. Saul, like many new to their faith, was filled with excitement and the desire to share his faith with others. He spoke with boldness to anyone who would hear him.

However, his words were not well received by everyone. In fact, the Jewish Christians were very suspicious of his motives. After all, they said, Saul was the very one who had been persecuting them and was responsible for plots to extinguish Christianity. Why, then, would he take this radically opposing position? Could he be sincere? Saul continued to teach and preach with boldness, in spite of the suspicions and opposition that was mounting around him. When Saul became aware of plots against him, he knew that escape was the only option. His supporters lowered him out of a window in a basket, and Saul was able to escape and go on with a ministry that would become the foundation of all Christianity.

Children sometimes are afraid that what they are asked to do is too difficult. They fear ridicule and embarrassment. Help them to understand that, even in difficult times, God is nearby. God hears our quietest prayers and provides us with the courage we need in difficult times. In our story, Saul had the support of those closest to him. His escape was assisted by his friends. The support of good friends becomes important to each of us, in both good times and in bad.

As you prepare today's lesson, think about the difficult things you have faced in your life. When have you had to stand up against opposition? Have you ever felt everyone against you? This is not an easy position in which to find oneself, but this is just where our story takes us. The activities in today's lesson provide opportunities for the children to make decisions about when to stand firm and when to walk (or run) away. They will learn about courage and how to find their own courage. Introduce them to the nearness of God and the presence of the Holy Spirit each and every day.

## Invite them in . . . (15 minutes)

Hidden-Words Puzzle	✓
Saul's Strip Puzzle	✓
Bible Verse Baskets	
Can't Catch Me!	✓

## . . . Into the Bible (30 minutes)

Escape!	✓	
A Gentle Drop		
Paper Baskets		✓
Make a Friendship Web	✓	

## . . . Into Life (15 minutes)

The B.I.G. Sound	✓
Woven Bookmark	
Comfort Basket	
Closing Worship	✓



**TimeSaver**  
Activities that require little or no planning and only basic supplies.



**EcoFriendly**  
Activities that encourage responsible earth stewardship by providing options to use recycled or repurposed materials.

## DVD Summary: The Station

Everyone at *The Station* brings in items for a care basket. Then Liz comes in feeling betrayed by a friend on her soccer team. Ana recalls the Bible story of Paul, whose life was turned upside down in an instant. Suddenly, his old friends wanted to hurt him, and his new friends were helping him escape from harm by lowering him to safety in a basket. This segment will help your children realize that, when we're in trouble, it's our real friends who come to our rescue.



## The B.i.G. Idea

We believe that we can live and act with love and courage because God is always with us.

Choose one or more activities to introduce your children to the Bible story.

### Hidden-Words Puzzle



**Supplies:** Leader—page 105, pencils, crayons or colored pencils

#### Prepare

- ★ Photocopy “Hidden Words” (Leader—page 105) for each child.

**Do** ★ **Say:** Sometimes we have difficulty understanding what is happening right in front of us. This happens when we are too focused on one thing and do not notice other people’s reactions. In our story, Saul needed friends to notice that others were planning to kill him. They helped Saul escape. Let’s see how observant we are when we look at this picture.

- ★ Pass out the “Hidden Words” picture (Leader—page 105).
- ★ Have the children find the hidden words and circle them. Then have them color the remaining picture.

**Live B.i.G.** God sends friends to help us when we are in trouble.

### Saul’s Strip Puzzle



**Supplies:** Leader—page 107, crayons or colored pencils, scissors, resealable plastic bags

#### Prepare

- ★ Photocopy “Saul’s Strip Puzzle” (Leader—page 107) for each child.

**Do** ★ Give each child a copy of “Saul’s Strip Puzzle” (Leader—page 107).  
★ Have the children color the picture.  
★ Invite the children to cut the picture on the solid vertical lines.  
★ Have each child put his or her puzzle pieces in a resealable plastic bag.  
★ Take one puzzle out and divide the pieces among the children.  
★ **Say:** Each of you has one (or more) pieces to the puzzle. You all must work together to put the puzzle back together.  
★ Encourage the children to work together to put the puzzle together.  
★ **Say:** In our Bible story today, the main character relies on his friends to help him out of a tough situation. We relied on our friends to help put the puzzle back together. Take your own puzzle home and have friends and family help you put it together this week.

**Live B.i.G.** Friends are God’s gift to us.

Invite them in . . .

## Bible Verse Baskets



**Supplies:** **Leader—page 106;** scissors; five spring-loaded clothespins, two pulleys, and rope for every four children

### Prepare

- ★ Photocopy “Bible Verse Baskets” (**Leader—page 106**). Make one copy of the page for every four children.
- ★ Cut the baskets apart, keeping each group together but separate from the others.
- ★ Set up the pulley systems using the ropes and pulleys across your room. Set up one system for every four children.

- Do** ★ **Say:** When we share God’s Word with other people, we help them know that God loves them too. Let’s work on learning our Bible verse so that we can tell others about God.
- ★ Divide the children into groups of four.
  - ★ Assign each group a pulley system. Give each group five spring-loaded clothespins and a set of “Bible Verse Baskets” (**Leader—page 106**).
  - ★ Have two children stand on each end of the pulley system. One pair has the “Bible Verse Baskets,” and the other pair has the clothespins.
  - ★ **Say:** Your challenge is to use the clothespins and the pulley system to transfer the Bible verse from the pair that has it now to the other pair, and end up with the Bible verse in order on the floor by the other pair. The team who does this the fastest, wins.
  - ★ Give a signal to start and let the children work in their teams on the challenge.
  - ★ Let all teams finish the challenge before announcing the winner.

**Live B.i.G.** The Bible helps us remember that God is with us.

## Can’t Catch Me!



**Supplies:** large open area without furniture

- Do** ★ **Say:** Today we will learn a story about a daring escape. We will play a game to get us in the mood for a great escape!
- ★ Have the children form a circle, standing at an arm’s length from one another.
  - ★ Choose one child to be “Saul,” and have that child stand in the middle of the circle. The child who is Saul will try to escape the circle by running between two people in the circle. Those two people may shift together to try and prevent the escape.
  - ★ When Saul escapes, the two children whom Saul ran between must chase Saul around the circle and back to the point of escape. The last person around the circle becomes the next Saul in the middle.
  - ★ Play the game for several rounds.
  - ★ **Say:** Our escapes were fun. But Saul had to escape Damascus because the people who were after him wanted to kill him. Let’s find out more about Saul’s escape.

**Live B.i.G.** God gives us the energy we need to escape from danger.



## The B.i.G. Idea

We believe that we can live and act with love and courage because God is always with us.

Choose one or more activities to immerse your children in the Bible story.

### Escape!



**Supplies:** Leader—page 104, DVD, DVD player, television

#### Prepare

- ★ Preview The Station (DVD).
- ★ Photocopy “Escape!” (Leader—page 104) for each child.

- Do**
- ★ Give each child a copy of “Escape!” (Leader—page 104).
  - ★ Read the story, “Escape!” (Leader—page 104).
  - ★ **Say:** Saul’s friends helped keep him safe. One of the ways they helped him was by using a basket to lower him over the wall and down to safety. Let’s watch Ana and the kids at The Station as they also use a basket to help others.
  - ★ Watch The Station (DVD).

**Live B.i.G.** God helps us to help others.

### A Gentle Drop



**Supplies:** balloons, water, art supplies found in classroom, playground slide or other safe high place from where water balloons can be dropped

- Do**
- ★ **Say:** In today’s Bible story, Saul’s friends had to lower him down a wall to escape. They had to be very careful not to drop Saul and probably wanted him to be protected in case he did fall. They didn’t have a lot of time, either, because there were people around who wanted to hurt Saul. Let’s try lowering a “friend” without letting him get hurt.
  - ★ Divide the children into groups of four.
  - ★ Give each group a water balloon.
  - ★ **Say:** We are going to take our “friend” balloons to the top of the slide (or other high place) and drop them. Each group must use the supplies they can find in our classroom to provide a safe journey for their balloon friend from the top of the slide to the ground.
  - ★ Encourage the children to be creative in thinking of ways to drop the balloon and have it stay protected.
  - ★ Take the balloons to the slide or other high place, and let the children test their creations.

**Live B.i.G.** We can work together to help others.

## Paper Baskets



**Supplies:** DVD, DVD player, television, newspaper, scissors, gluesticks, tape, craft paints and brushes, smocks

### Prepare

- ★ Preview the “July 24 Demonstration” on the July Teacher Tips **(DVD)** to see how to make the basket.

- Do** ★ **Say:** People who lived in Saul’s day made baskets out of reeds that were used for many purposes in everyday life. We will make a basket out of newspaper reeds that will be similar to baskets they may have used.
- ★ Have the children use the following directions to make the newspaper reeds.
  - ★ Make a reed out of a 13½-by-22 sheet of newspaper. Starting with a long edge, tightly roll the sheet into a tube. Flatten the tube and use a gluestick to secure the open edge. Assemble seven more reeds.
  - ★ Lay four of the reeds side by side on a flat surface and weave in the remaining four. Slide the strips together to make the bottom of the basket. Fold the ends of the reeds up to form the side spokes.
  - ★ Cut newspaper sheets into four 11-by-27 rectangles. Using the same method as before, roll four more reeds. Tape the end of a reed to the base of a spoke. Weave the reed in and out of the spokes, around the basket.
  - ★ Tuck the end behind a spoke. Weave in the other reeds, one above the other. Fold the tops of the spokes into the basket and tuck them behind a reed.
  - ★ If desired, use craft paints to coat the finished basket inside and out.

**Live B.i.G.** We can work together to help others.

## Make a Friendship Web



**Supplies:** ball of yarn

- Do** ★ Have the children stand in a circle.
- ★ There should be about three feet between each child.
  - ★ **Say:** We’re going to toss this ball of yarn around our circle. When the ball comes to you, you are to say something you like about the person who threw it to you. Then, hold on to the yarn and toss the ball to someone across the circle.
  - ★ Watch the game to be sure each child receives the ball of yarn only once.
  - ★ **Ask:** What have we made? (a web) Everyone in our group is part of the web of friendship we’ve made with yarn and with our statements affirming each other. Saul’s friends had to work together to lower him safely over the wall. We worked together to create this beautiful web. Hurray for friendship!
  - ★ Challenge the class to roll the ball of yarn back up by reversing the order in which it was first thrown.

**Live B.i.G.** Children will continue to think about the nature of friendship.





## The B.i.G. Idea

We believe that we can live and act with love and courage because God is always with us.

*Choose one or more activities to connect your children's lives to the Bible story.*

### The B.i.G. Sound



**Supplies:** DVD, DVD player, television

#### Prepare

- ★ Preview The B.I.G. Sound (DVD).

**Do** ★ **Say:** Following God can sometimes lead us to new adventures. God is always with us on these adventures.

- ★ Play The B.I.G. Sound (DVD). Sing and dance along with the cast.

**Live B.i.G.** We praise God for our adventuresome lives.

### Woven Bookmark



**Supplies:** plastic canvas (plastic grid), pony beads, 2-mm ribbon, ruler, scissors

#### Prepare

- ★ Cut a piece of plastic canvas so there are ten rows and it is about eight inches long.

**Do** ★ Give each child a piece of plastic canvas.  
★ Invite the children to choose the colors of ribbon they want to use. Have them measure and cut their ribbon into five, two-foot lengths.  
★ Have them string a pony bead to the middle of one ribbon.  
★ Beginning at one end of the plastic canvas, have them weave one ribbon through the length of the canvas. Have them weave the other end of the ribbon through the next row, pulling tight so the bead fits snug against the canvas.  
★ Have the children do the same with the next two rows, but have them begin down one hole in the canvas so there is room for the bead.  
★ Continue in this manner, alternating the beginning canvas holes.  
★ Have them use a small piece of ribbon to tie all the ribbon ends together at the bottom, and trim.  
★ **Say:** Weaving is a very old skill people have used to make everyday things they need. Saul's friends used a woven basket to help him get to safety. We can put these bookmarks in our Bibles to remind us to find safety in seeking Jesus.

**Live B.i.G.** We can find Christ in the pages of Scripture.

## Comfort Basket



**Supplies:** basket or gift bag, construction paper, personal care supplies (lotion, tissues, comb, candy, tea bags, devotional book, and so forth) crayons, ribbon

### Prepare

- ★ Send home a note a week ahead of time, asking the students to each bring an item for the comfort basket. Include some suggestions based upon the basket recipient's needs.
- ★ Check with the pastor to select the name of someone who is homebound or someone who is recovering from an illness or grieving. Tell the pastor that the children will be making a comfort basket to deliver to the person.

- Do** ★ **Say:** Saul's friends used a basket to provide help for Saul when he needed it. We can also provide help for others and let them know God loves them. Today we will make a comfort basket for (*name of the basket recipient*).
- ★ Have the children place the items they have brought into the basket. It may be helpful to have a few extras on hand for visitors or for those who did not bring something.
  - ★ Invite the children to make a "thinking of you" card to include in the basket.
  - ★ Provide card-making supplies. Help them look up Scripture to include, if desired.
  - ★ Use the ribbon to tie a bow around the basket or gift-bag handles.
  - ★ Deliver the comfort basket to the recipient, and be sure to deliver any message from the recipient back to the children.

**Live B.i.G.** We are serving as God's hands when we help others.

## Closing Worship



**Supplies:** DVD, DVD player, television

### Prepare

- ★ Preview the sign language for this month's Bible verse on the July Teacher Tips (**DVD**).

- Do** ★ Review the signs for this month's Bible verse with the children (**DVD**).
- ★ **Say:** We believe what the B.I.G. Idea tells us—God is always with us. Our Bible verse says: "*The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore*" (Psalm 121:8). This means that God promises to be with us. Anytime we're in trouble, even if we're in trouble with God, God is there to help us and to be with us and comfort us. God loves each of us very much.
- ★ Lead the children in saying the Bible verse in sign language as a closing prayer.

**Live B.i.G.** No matter what, God loves us and is always there for us.



## Escape!

(Acts 9:20-31, New International Reader's Version)

At once he began to preach in the synagogues. He taught that Jesus is the Son of God. All who heard him were amazed. They asked, "Isn't he the man who caused great trouble in Jerusalem for those who worship Jesus? Hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?" But Saul grew more and more powerful. The Jews living in Damascus couldn't believe what was happening. Saul proved to them that Jesus is the Christ.

After many days, the Jews had a meeting. They planned to kill Saul. But he learned about their plan. Day and night they watched the city gates closely in order to kill him. But his followers helped him escape by night. They lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall.

When Saul came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the believers. But they were all afraid of him. They didn't believe he was really one of Jesus' followers. But Barnabas took him to the apostles. He told them about Saul's journey. He said that Saul had seen the Lord. He told

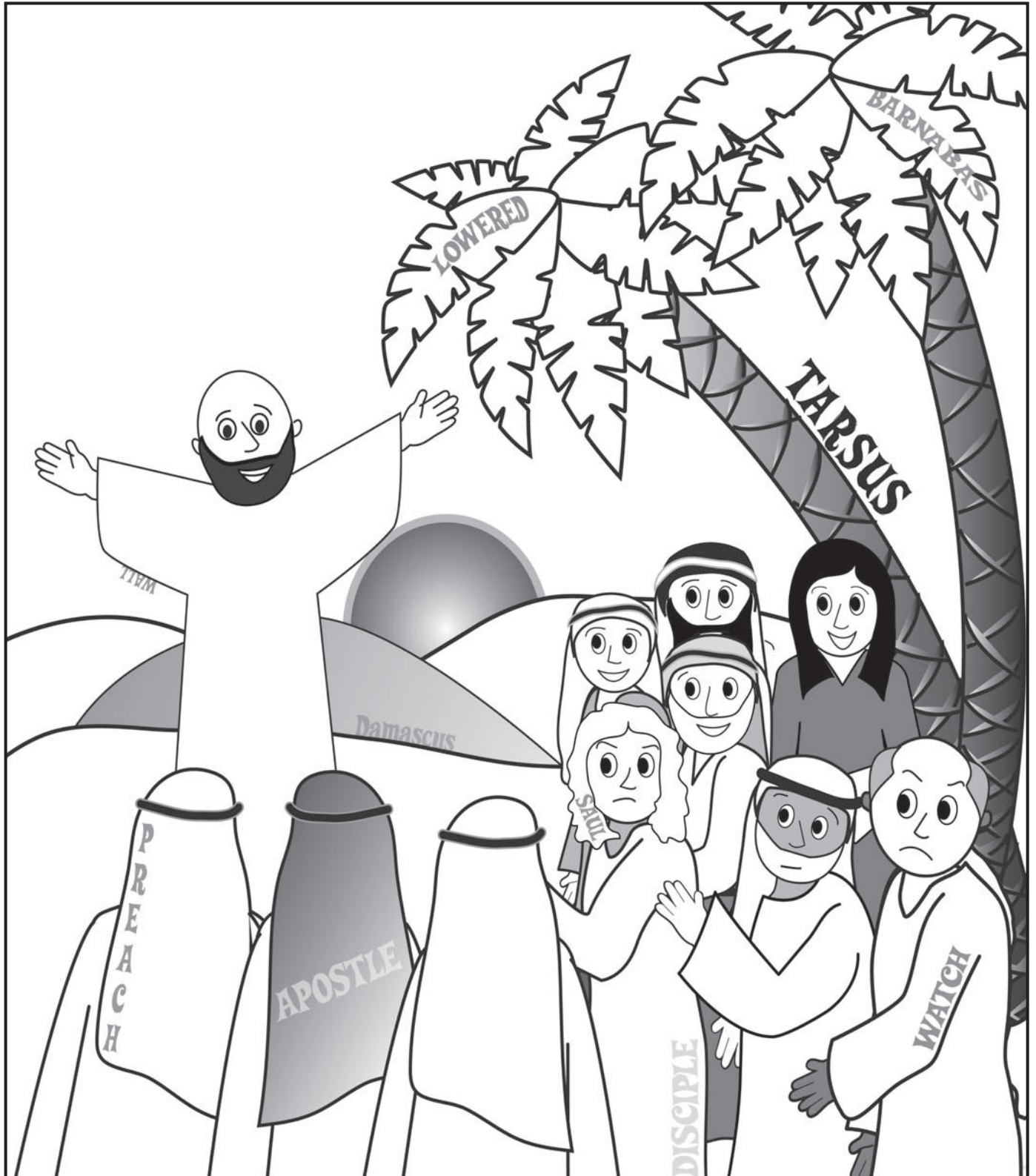
how the Lord had spoken to Saul. Barnabas also said that Saul had preached without fear in Jesus' name in Damascus.



So Saul stayed with the believers. He moved about freely in Jerusalem. He spoke boldly in the Lord's name. He talked and argued with Jews who followed Greek practices. But they tried to kill him. The other believers heard about this. They took Saul down to Caesarea. From there they sent him off to Tarsus.

Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. The Holy Spirit gave the church strength and boldness. So they grew in numbers. And they worshiped the Lord.

## Hidden Words



# Bible Verse Baskets





# Saul's Strip Puzzle

