TEACHER’S GUIDE

GRADES 3-4
YEAR 3 | SPRING

Sunday School
I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness,
but will have the light of life.

John 8:12
(NIV 1984)
Looking Back at Lesson 12

Philip and the Ethiopian Man
Acts 8:4-8,12,26-40

Aim: What gift did God give the Ethiopian man?

Truth: God gave the Ethiopian man the gift of faith in his Savior.

Application: God wants all people of the world to hear the gospel.

Response: We support missionaries who are spreading God’s Word in other countries with our encouragement, prayers, and offerings.

Lesson Summary: While Philip was preaching in Samaria, God sent him to the road going south from Jerusalem to Gaza. There Philip met a man from Ethiopia who was reading from the book of Isaiah. Philip explained God’s Word and told the man about the Savior. The Ethiopian man believed God’s Word and was baptized.

Memory Treasures: Mark 16:15; *1 Timothy 2:3,4; *The Second Petition of the Lord’s Prayer; *Hymn 573:1,4

How did Jesus turn his enemy into his helper?

Jesus called Saul to come to faith and to become his witness.

Application: Jesus has also called us to faith and to be his witnesses.

Response: We thank God for the gift of faith by witnessing for Jesus.

Lesson Summary: Saul led the persecution against believers in Jerusalem. Then he decided to go to Damascus and arrest any believers he could find there. While he was on his way, Jesus spoke to him and called him to faith. Saul, also known as Paul, then became one of Jesus’ most powerful witnesses and missionaries.

*S Matthew 28:19,20
*S 1 Timothy 2:3,4
*S *The Third Commandment (with explanation)
*S *Hymn 573:2

persecute—to make a person suffer because of what he or she believes

vision—something that is seen in a way different from normal sight


Locate Jerusalem and Damascus on a map.

Dear heavenly Father, you have chosen me to tell others about the Savior. Send me your Holy Spirit so that I may understand your Word and teach it clearly, plainly, and truthfully. Help the children believe all that your Word teaches. Then lead them to tell others. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.
Sing: Read Isaiah 42:16a. Explain that in this passage God is talking about spiritual blindness—not knowing Jesus as the Savior. God makes those who are blind in unbelief and sin able to see Jesus as their Savior. Then sing “Amazing Grace—How Sweet the Sound” (hymn 379), which reminds us that we too were blind sinners until God in his love called us to see Jesus.

Pray: We thank you, dear heavenly Father, for not leaving us in our blind unbelief but rather helping us see Jesus as our Savior. Help many people come to faith through the light of your Word. Amen.

Ask the children what Jesus commanded his disciples to do after he had risen. [Make disciples of all nations, preach his Word to all people.] Ask (or tell) some ways Jesus’ followers were persecuted for doing this. [The apostles were arrested, beaten, and told not to preach about Jesus. Stephen was stoned to death for teaching God’s Word.] Remind the children that despite this persecution, God did not allow his church to be destroyed or the preaching of his Word to stop.

Today we’ll hear more about one of Jesus’ greatest enemies—a man who led the persecution against believers. Listen for the answer to this question: How did Jesus turn his enemy into his helper?

You will need seeds and unpopped popcorn.

Show the children the seeds and unpopped popcorn as you ask:

• How will these seeds change if I plant them outside in the spring? [They’ll grow into plants.]

• How will these popcorn kernels change if I heat them? [They’ll pop into fluffy pieces of popcorn.]

In today’s lesson Jesus changes a person who was his enemy into someone very different from that. Listen carefully to learn how Jesus turned his enemy into his helper.

Note: Remember there are To Do at Home activity options in a separate file on the Teacher’s Guide CD.
Prepare two *poster board signs* as shown:

![Poster board signs](image)

At the beginning of the lesson, display the sign that shows Saul as an enemy. Display the sign that shows him as a witness when describing how Jesus called Saul to come to faith and be his witness.

Stephen was the *first person* who was *put to death* because he *believed in Jesus* as his Savior. After the death of Stephen, a man named Saul led the *persecution* against believers in Jerusalem. But he *wasn’t satisfied* to do this only there. He had heard that many *believers* were also *living in* the city of Damascus. So Saul *got permission* from the high priest to *arrest* any *believers* he found *there* and *bring* them back *to Jerusalem as prisoners*. Then he took some men and *set out for Damascus*.

But as Saul got close to Damascus, suddenly a *bright light* from heaven *flashed* around him! He *fell to the ground* and *heard* a *voice* say, “Saul, Saul, why are you *persecuting* me?”

“Lord, who are you?” Saul asked.

The voice said, “I am Jesus, the *one* you are *persecuting*. Now get up and *go into the city*. There you will be *told* what you *must do*.”

When Saul *got up* from the ground and *opened his eyes*, he *couldn’t see* a thing! So the *men* who were traveling with him *took him by the hand* and *led him to a house* in Damascus. For *three days Saul* remained *blind*. During that time he *didn’t eat* or *drink* anything.

A *believer* named Ananias *lived in Damascus*. The *Lord came* to him *in a vision* and said, “Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and *ask* for a man named Saul. He is *praying to me*. I’ve let him know that you *will come* and place your *hands on him* so that he’ll be able to *see again*."

Note: You’ll need to use the story in the adjacent column.

Before you begin, ask the children to pretend that you are looking for someone to become a great missionary for Jesus. Ask them to list characteristics that they would look for in a person to do this job, and write their ideas on the board. *Examples: Loves Jesus, eager to tell others about Jesus, brave.* After sharing the information in the first paragraph of the story, refer to the list and ask whether Saul looks like a good candidate for the missionary job. *Definitely not!* Then, just before telling the children what is stated in the last sentence of the story (that Saul became one of the Lord’s greatest missionaries), refer to the list again, and ask whether Saul now looks like a good candidate for the missionary job. *Yes!* Point out what a complete change Jesus made in Paul’s life.
“But, Lord,” Ananias objected, “I have heard about this man from many people! They told me what terrible things he did to your believers in Jerusalem. And now he has come here with the authority to arrest those who believe in you!”

But the Lord told Ananias, “Go! For I have chosen this man as my special witness. He will bring my message of salvation to the Gentiles and even to their kings, as well as to the people of Israel.”

Ananias went to the house where Saul was staying. He put his hands on Saul and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here, has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

Immediately something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes. He could see again! Saul got up and was baptized. After that he ate some food to get his strength back.

At once Saul went out into the city and began to preach that Jesus is the Son of God, the Savior. All those who heard him were surprised, and they asked one another, “Isn’t this the man who persecuted the believers in Jerusalem? And didn’t he come here to Damascus to arrest more believers?”

Saul’s preaching became more and more powerful as he used the Scriptures to show that Jesus is the promised Savior. After Saul had preached for many days, some unbelieving Jews in Damascus made a plan to kill him. They kept a close watch on the city gates, day and night, so that he could not escape. But Saul heard about their plan. So one night the believers let him down in a large basket through an opening in the city wall, and he escaped.

Saul then went back to Jerusalem and tried to join the believers there. But they were all afraid of him. They didn’t believe that he was really one of Jesus’ followers. Finally a believer named Barnabas brought Saul to the apostles. He explained how Saul had seen the Lord and how the Lord had spoken to him. He also told them that Saul had fearlessly preached about Jesus in Damascus. So Saul (also known as Paul) joined the believers in Jerusalem and boldly continued telling others about Jesus. God blessed Paul’s work, and he became one of the Lord’s greatest missionaries.
Write these two groups of scrambled letters on the board: “ifhta” and “tsewisn.” Remind the children that Jesus spoke to Saul on the road to Damascus, sent Ananias to baptize him, and sent the Holy Spirit to fill Saul’s heart. Have the children unscramble the first group of letters to complete this sentence: “By doing these things, Jesus called Saul to [faith].”

Why did Jesus bother with Saul anyway, since Saul was his enemy? [Jesus loves all people and wants everyone to believe in him as the Savior and be saved.] How has Jesus done the same thing for us as he did for Saul? [Even though we were born sinful and enemies of God, Jesus has called us to faith.]

Jesus had a job for Saul to do. Unscramble the second group of letters to finish this sentence: “Jesus also called Saul to be his [witness].”

Show Copy Master 1 and have the scissors handy as you tell the following:

- We were filled with greed, hurtfulness, hatred, and other sins, just like this piece of paper.
- But Jesus came to earth (take the upper left corner of the paper and fold it down as in figure 1) and died on the cross to pay for our sins (take point A and fold it to point B to make the shape in figure 2).
- God has now called us to faith (fold the figure 2 shape in half and cut a line down the middle as in figure 3 and throw away the smaller pieces) in Jesus as our Savior (unfold the paper and show the white side, which will have been cut into the shape of a cross as in figure 4).
- We are no longer Jesus’ enemies but are his followers—people who believe that Jesus is our Savior, who died to pay for our sins.

You will need Copy Master 1 and a pair of scissors. You will also need duplicates of Copy Master 2 for the children.

After Stephen’s death, who led the persecution against the believers? [Saul.]

What did Saul plan to do in Damascus? [Arrest believers and bring them back to Jerusalem as prisoners.]

Saul was definitely Jesus’ enemy.

Have you ever been Jesus’ enemy? [Yes. Sin made us all enemies of Jesus by nature.]

To be his witnesses.
Say On the way to Damascus, Saul saw a light from heaven, and a voice asked, “Why are you persecuting me?”

Ask How could Saul be persecuting Jesus, when Jesus wasn’t living on earth anymore? [Saul was persecuting Jesus by persecuting his followers.]

What did Jesus want Saul to realize? [Jesus really is the Savior. Saul had been sinning by persecuting those who believed in Jesus.]

Say Jesus told Saul to go into the city and wait there for instructions.

Ask What problem did Saul have when he got up? [He was blind.]

Do If you talked about spiritual blindness in the Worship section, ask the children again how we were all once blind. [We were spiritually blind—we couldn’t see Jesus as our Savior.]

Say Three days later Jesus told a believer named Ananias to go to Saul and lay his hands on Saul so that he could see again.

Ask What did Jesus say that Saul would become? [A witness for Jesus all over the world.]

Say Ananias went to Saul, saying that Jesus had sent him so that Saul could see and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Ask What does it mean that Saul would be “filled with the Holy Spirit”? [The Holy Spirit would live in Saul’s heart, making his faith strong and giving him the ability to serve Jesus.]

Say Saul was baptized, and the Holy Spirit did come into his heart.

Ask How, then, did Jesus show his love for Saul? [Jesus called Saul to come to faith.]

Do Draw a chart on the board, contrasting what Saul was like before Jesus called him to faith and what he was like afterward, and have the children help you fill it in. Then make a similar chart contrasting what we were like before and after being called to faith. Possible ideas for charts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Saul Before</th>
<th>Saul After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jesus’ enemy</td>
<td>Jesus’ follower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persecuted Christians</td>
<td>Witnessed for Jesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unbeliever</td>
<td>Believer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. When playing with neighborhood friends
2. When visiting a sick friend in the hospital
3. When doing chores around the house

[Possible responses include the following:

1. Wear a T-shirt or jewelry that shows your faith; refuse to join in sinful activities; invite friends to church or Sunday school; tell friends about Jesus.
2. Tell your friend that Jesus loves him and will be with him or her; make a card or picture that tells of Jesus’ love; share a devotion or prayer book; show God’s love by being friendly to other patients or medical staff you might meet in the hospital.
3. Do chores cheerfully out of love for God; sing songs about Jesus while you work.]

Say If we are always looking for ways to witness about Jesus, we will find ways every day through which we can show our faith to others.

Ask Why do we want to witness for Jesus? [Possible answers: To thank Jesus for calling us to faith, so that all people may be saved, because Jesus has commanded us to, to show our love for Jesus.]
Say  God has given us the ability to change some things.

Ask  How could we change un popped popcorn kernels into popcorn we could eat? [By heating the kernels.] How could we change water into ice? [By putting it into a freezer.]

Say  But we can’t change people from unbelievers into believers. Only God can do that.

Ask  How did Jesus turn his enemy Saul into his helper? [Jesus called Saul to come to faith and to become his witness.] How has Jesus also turned us into his helpers? [Jesus has also called us to faith and to be his witnesses.]

Say  Let’s thank God for the gift of faith by witnessing for Jesus.

Do  Close by singing the hymn 573:2 memory treasure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Us Before</th>
<th>Us After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jesus’ enemies</td>
<td>Jesus’ followers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unbelievers</td>
<td>Believers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to hell</td>
<td>Going to heaven</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Say  Saul had been persecuting those who believed in Jesus. Now he began preaching that Jesus is the Savior.

Ask  Why did some Jews now want to kill Saul? [Just as Saul had not believed in Jesus at first, these Jews didn’t believe that Jesus was the Savior. They thought Saul was doing something terribly wrong by witnessing about Jesus.]

Say  The believers helped Saul escape, and Saul went to Jerusalem.

Ask  What did Saul continue to do in Jerusalem? [Preach boldly that Jesus is the Savior.]

Why did he do this? [Jesus had called Saul to be his witness.]

Say  God wants us also to witness for Jesus to all people.

Do  Tell the children that they can use sign language to share God’s Word with those who are unable to hear. Help them use Copy Master 2 to learn the signs for a message they could share with the hearing impaired.

**CLOSE**

Ask  Who was Jesus’ enemy at the beginning of today’s lesson? [Saul.]

What did Saul become by the end of the lesson? [A missionary for Jesus.]

How did Jesus turn his enemy into his helper? [Jesus called Saul to faith and to become his witness.]

How has Jesus also turned us into his helpers? [Jesus has also called us to faith and to be his witnesses.]

Say  Let’s thank God for the gift of faith by witnessing for Jesus.

Do  Pray:

Dear Jesus, as we walk along And see so many without faith, Help us tell them of your love; Lord, call them from their unbelief. Oh, help us tell all, far and wide, Of Jesus, Savior crucified. Amen.
• Begin by singing “By All Your Saints Still Striving” (hymn 552:1,6,3). Stanza 6 tells of Paul’s conversion.

• Use Activity 1 under Lesson Activities to review the story.

• Use Activity 2 (“You Can Witness” or “VBS Promotion”) to practice witnessing to others.

• Close by giving the children the opportunity to pray silently for specific people they know who need to hear about Jesus.

**Matthew 28:19,20**

**The Third Commandment**
Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

What does this mean?
We should fear and love God that we do not despise preaching and his Word, but regard it as holy and gladly hear and learn it.

The Third Commandment reminds us to gladly hear and learn God’s saving Word, which has brought us to faith in Jesus.

**Hymn 573:2**

If you cannot speak like angels,
If you cannot preach like Paul,
You can tell the love of Jesus;
You can say he died for all.
If you cannot rouse the wicked
With the Judgment’s dread alarms,
You can lead the little children
To the Savior’s waiting arms.

**1 Timothy 2:3,4**

* The Third Commandment
Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

What does this mean?
We should fear and love God that we do not despise preaching and his Word, but regard it as holy and gladly hear and learn it.

The Third Commandment reminds us to gladly hear and learn God’s saving Word, which has brought us to faith in Jesus.

* Hymn 573:2

If you cannot speak like angels,
If you cannot preach like Paul,
You can tell the love of Jesus;
You can say he died for all.
If you cannot rouse the wicked
With the Judgment’s dread alarms,
You can lead the little children
To the Savior’s waiting arms.

**The Third Commandment**
Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

What does this mean?
We should fear and love God that we do not despise preaching and his Word, but regard it as holy and gladly hear and learn it.

The Third Commandment reminds us to gladly hear and learn God’s saving Word, which has brought us to faith in Jesus.

* Hymn 573:2

If you cannot speak like angels,
If you cannot preach like Paul,
You can tell the love of Jesus;
You can say he died for all.
If you cannot rouse the wicked
With the Judgment’s dread alarms,
You can lead the little children
To the Savior’s waiting arms.
Lesson Activities

1. Review

“Fast Facts” Game

*Purpose:* To review the lesson in a fun game show format.

*Procedure:* Using two 6-inch lengths of book tape or masking tape, make an X on a desktop or small table. This will be the “buzzer.” Divide the class into three teams. Have the children line up single file on three sides of the desk or table. The first child in each line should hold both hands behind his or her back. Begin asking questions about the lesson. After you ask a question, the first player to get a hand on the X must give the answer. If the child is incorrect, one of the other two players may answer. The child who responded correctly remains in position, while the other two players move to the end of the line for their team. (If the same player continually answers correctly, have her or him move to the end of the line after a few turns.) Two new players step forward to challenge the winner. *(Optional: Keep track of each team’s points, and have a prize for the winning team.)*

2. Application

You Can Witness

*Purpose:* To practice witnessing to someone who does not know Jesus as the Savior.

*Procedure:* Have the children role-play witnessing in pairs. They could use duplicates of Copy Master 1 and follow the directions given in the Discuss section, or use the following format:

- Have the believing child ask, “Do you think you’ll go to heaven someday?”
- The unbelieving child should say, “I don’t know,” or a similar answer.
- The believing child should then make the following points:
  1. We are all sinful and deserve to go to hell.
  2. We can’t pay for our sins or make up for them in any way.
  3. But God loves us and sent Jesus to be our Savior.
  4. Jesus forgives all our sins and assures us that he will take us to heaven.

*(Note: You may want to write the following key words on the board to help the children remember the points: 1. sinful; 2. can’t pay; 3. Jesus = Savior; 4. forgives, heaven.)*

- The unbeliever should then say, “That sounds interesting”; “I never heard that before”; or a similar comment.
- The believer can then invite the unbeliever to church or Sunday school.

Then have the children switch roles and repeat the activity. Encourage the children to do this activity at home with a parent acting as the unbeliever. Also encourage them to really witness in this way when they meet others who don’t know Jesus as their Savior.

VBS Promotion

*Purpose:* To assist in witnessing in a practical way.

*Procedure:* If your church holds vacation Bible school (VBS), find out if your class can help with its promotion. Use one (or more) of the following methods:

- Have each child write an invitation on a postcard to a friend or neighbor. The children should include the date, time, and location of the VBS. Help them address and mail their invitations.
- Have the children make posters containing the date, time, and location of the VBS. Get permission from neighborhood banks, stores, and businesses to display the posters in their windows.
- Have the children make door hangers containing the date, time, and location of the VBS. Then lead them around the church neighborhood to hang the material on neighborhood doors.
3. Music

“The Great Commission”

*Purpose:* To remind the children that Jesus has called them to be his witnesses.

*Procedure:* Teach the children to sing “The Great Commission” (*Copy Master 3*), which is based on the Matthew 28:19,20 memory treasure.

4. Art

**Jesus Pennants**

*Purpose:* To have the children make pennants that they can use to witness about their faith in Jesus.

*Procedure:* Point out that people sometimes display pennants to show their support for a sports team. Tell the children that they can make pennants to show that they follow Jesus. Have them cut pennant-shaped triangles from felt or pellon interfacing. They can use permanent markers or fabric paints to write messages on the pennants, such as “I Follow Jesus” or “Jesus Is My Savior.” Then let them use craft glue to glue rickrack or decorative braid around the edges of their pennants. Encourage the children to display their pennants in a prominent place to show their faith in Jesus.

5. Review and Apply

**A Persecutor Becomes a Preacher**

*Purpose:* To complete a crossword puzzle about the lesson events and to demonstrate understanding of the lesson application through drawing.

*Procedure:* Have each child complete *Copy Master 4*. The answers are as follows:

**Part One:**
1. PERSECUTION
2. PRISONERS
3. DAMASCUS
4. LORD
5. JESUS
6. ANANIAS
7. BAPTIZED
8. KILL
9. BASKET
10. JERUSALEM
11. BARNABAS

**Part Two:** The picture on the left side should depict the child being baptized or hearing/reading God’s Word. The picture on the right side should depict the child witnessing for Jesus.

6. Other Ideas

**Cut and Complete**

*Purpose:* To reinforce learning the memory treasure hymn.

*Procedure:* Have each child complete *Copy Master 6*. The answers are as follows:

1. Picture of angels
2. Picture of Paul preaching
3. Picture of Jesus’ face
4. Picture of people of various ages
5. The word *wicked*
6. The word *alarms*
7. Picture of little children
8. Picture of outstretched arms

**Bible Study**

*Copy Masters 7.1–7.4* contain an age-appropriate, theme-related Bible study. The Bible studies are from the original Christ-Light (© 1998) and use the 1984 edition of the New International Version Bible translation.