



Date: _____

Series: God's Power (Summer)
Year 4, Lesson 9

See God's Power... Even in Times of Trouble

Primary Scripture: Acts 7:54-60; Acts 9:1-31

Key Verses: Acts 7:55, "But Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit. He looked into heaven, saw God's glory, and Jesus in the position of authority that God gives."

Acts 9:18, "Immediately, something like fish scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. Then Saul stood up and was baptized."

How does this address a need in our kids' lives?

Kids need faith, especially in times of trouble. They need faith to see God at work in the invisible. Kids often have open hearts and are quick to trust in the reality of God and his power. However, when faced with troubling circumstances, they might interpret this as evidence that God is not in control or involved in their lives. Their faith can turn to doubt. Kids need to see beyond troubling circumstances so they can see the power and love of God given to us through Christ. This is seen through the eyes of faith.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: Jesus endured troubling times, even suffering on the cross, to remedy our condition of sin.

Jesus in us: Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus dwells in us so that we will trust God, even in times of trouble or suffering.

Jesus through us: When we pray for God's power, even in the midst of troubling times, we see how God can prepare and use us for his greater purpose.

Lesson 9 - 1

Stamp of Excellence:

Remind the kids what excellent worship looks like. We are in God's presence to honor him. Put on your best manners. This might include wearing your name tag, participating eagerly at all times, listening when the leader is talking, raising your hand to speak, not distracting others, playing the learning game with cooperation, singing enthusiastically, and praying reverently. Offer rewards or positive reinforcement to those who worship with excellence.



Worship

Invocation:

Let kids bring forward the worship symbols, such as the cross, candles, Bible, and offering plate. Invite God's presence and call by name Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Attention Grabber:

Capture the children's attention and help them focus on the worship theme for the day.

Supplies needed: a pair of glasses with spring-loaded bulging eyes (quite comical) or half-rimmed bifocal glasses that focus downward

Put on the glasses and say to kids:

How do you like my glasses? I'm going to call these my special downward-looking glasses. Sometimes this is what we do when we are faced with times of trouble. We just look down at the trouble. The more we think about it, the worse it becomes.

Have you ever gone through times of trouble? For example, maybe someone said something very bad or mean about you and it really bothered you. Maybe someone you love got sick or even died, and it made you look and feel down. Maybe you were not doing well in school and you worried about your grades or what other people would think about you. Or maybe there were problems in your family. Those can really feel like times of trouble.

When you go through times of trouble, it is easy to focus on the downside too much—looking down and only seeing your troubles. You might feel very spiritually sad inside or even wonder “Where is God when I need him? I don't feel him now.”

Today we will learn that we can take off these glasses that look down.

Take off the glasses.

Instead, we can look up and see God's power, especially when we go through times of trouble. Let's look up to God now when we give him our songs of worship and praise. You might even notice that when you think about him and tell him that you love him, you are reminded of his love for you. This lifts your heart, as well.

Songs of Worship:

Choose two or three songs. Briefly introduce songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God!

The Power of the Cross:

Jesus has given his life for us that we might have forgiveness and power to live for him.

Supplies needed: binoculars, a 12" extension from a wire hanger or pipe cleaner that will quickly attach to a pair of binoculars or fit on the hand next to the binoculars. Attach a cross to the end that is farthest from the binoculars. Place a small heart over the top of the cross.

Again put on the downward-looking glasses. Say:

Sometimes when we go through times of trouble, it is easy to look down at our problems and doubt that God loves us. Sometimes we don't think about him at all and we try to solve our problems all by ourselves.

Take off the glasses. Pull out the binoculars.

If you look through binoculars like these, you will see that things far away seem much closer. That is what faith does. Faith looks up to God. When we look to him, he not only SEEMS closer, he IS much closer.

Attach a 12" extension with a cross to the binoculars or hold it next to the binoculars so you see it when you look through them.

Now when I look through the binoculars, no matter what I look at, I see the cross. Jesus' cross is the proof that no matter what, God loves me. He loves me so much that he gave me his Son, Jesus. Even if the worst thing ever happened to me—even if I died, I would still be a winner because



Jesus defeated death when he gave his life for me. When I trust Jesus, I know that no matter what, he is with me. Let's pray.

Dear God, sometimes when we go through times of trouble, we know that we can forget about you or think that you don't care. Sometimes we doubt your promise, but we don't want to do that. We are sorry for the times when we do not look to you or ask for your help. For Jesus' sake, please forgive us and help us to see that no matter what, you are powerful enough to help us. You do so through Jesus. In his name, we pray. Amen.

Song of Response:

Choose a song to help the children turn to Jesus. Or, you may want to help them celebrate what God has done by singing a song of praise.

Offering:

Teach the importance of giving and talk about the mission activities they are supporting.

Lay the downward-looking glasses in the offering plate. Say:

Did you know that many times people have lots of problems because of money? This is because they worry about it. They often think that if they just had enough money, it would solve all their worries. But that is not true. Instead, God says something entirely different. Let's look at our money and see if we can find a clue about what God says.

Using the binoculars, look for the motto "In God we trust" on a coin or dollar bill. Say:

Here it is. It says, "In God we trust." Let's never look at money as a way to solve our problems. Instead, let's look at God. Giving our offerings is one way in which we show that we trust in him.



The Word

Learning Game:

Some churches dismiss children from the adult service at this time to join Kids Church. The learning game provides a fun kinesthetic activity to help kids connect with each other. The learning point will help reinforce the theme of the day.

“Blind Man Faith Walk”

Supplies needed: a blindfold for each pair of children (optional), masking tape, plastic buckets, chairs, tables, or any other obstacles for a maze

Option 1:

In advance, make a beginning line across the floor with masking tape on one side of the room. Make a maze for kids to walk through to get to the other side of the room constructed with plastic buckets, chairs, and tables. The obstacles can be given hazardous names such as the bottomless pit, booby trap buckets, electric chairs, etc.

To play, divide the children into pairs. Pass out one blindfold per pair or make a contract that they will keep their eyes closed without peeking.

Have kids take turns wearing the blindfold and directing their partners through an artificial maze. Instruct the children to move from one side of the room to the other without hitting any of the obstacles. His partner will guide him with verbal instructions only. No touching is allowed. If he hits one of the hazardous objects, he is in great peril. He returns to the beginning line and his partner has a turn.

Learning Point:

We were just playing a game, but if it had been really dangerous, would it have made you listen more or less to the person giving directions? Yes. It would be even more important to listen.

We sometimes can't see where we are going, so we need to trust the one who guides us. God can see our path clearly. So we have faith and trust him to lead us in the right direction, even if we cannot see where he is leading us.

Option 2:

Rather than partnering up, divide the group into two large groups. Divide the room with two lines, a starting line and a finishing line. Both groups will stand behind the starting line. The first person from each team will enter the obstacle course while blindfolded. They will attempt to cross the room to the finish line. When they get half way across, a second person from each team may begin. Therefore, several contestants can move through the obstacle course at the same time. Each team will shout directions to their players to help them avoid the obstacles. You may even permit the teams to shout false directions to the other team's contestants as long as you tie that into the teaching point at the end of the game. Whenever a person hits an obstacle, he or she will return to the starting line, and another contestant will immediately enter.

Another option: For added interest, have the blindfolded contestants walk backwards. That way they cannot gain an advantage by peeking beneath their blindfolds.

Learning Point:

The learning point is the same as Option 1, but there is an additional point. Many times, there are competing voices fighting for our attention. Rather than being led astray, we must listen to the voice that will lead us down the right path – God's voice.

Bible Reading:

Help children pay attention by giving them a word or concept to listen for as you read. Consider letting a child read who could do so with excellence.

Supplies needed: video—Saul of Tarsus, produced by Nest Family Entertainment, 1990, ISBN 1-56489-005-8 (order from http://www.nestfamily.com/store/product_detail.asp?productID=STD), two candy bars or some other treat

Introduce the video.

When you watch the movie, pay close attention. I have a special treat for the person who can tell me what someone in the movie sees that no one else can see.

Show the video clip. Begin during the opening credits, and end it after the Christians hug Paul and he says, "God is merciful." This will take 18 minutes.

Review questions:

What were things that Saul saw that no one else could see?

How did something that seemed scary end up being used by God and very helpful to that person?



Witness and Tell:

Give children opportunities to share how God is working in their lives. It is best to use a microphone to ask children interview questions around the theme for the day.

Tell about a time when you went through a time of trouble and you saw God's power help you. For example, one time in my life...

Share a personal story.

Prayer:

Let the kids pray out loud. If you are using a microphone, invite children to form a prayer line and speak their thanksgivings or requests. If you have portable microphones, you can roam the audience. Kids can also go to prayer stations set up for specific types of prayer.

Options: (select one from the options below)

_____ **Prayer Line Option:** Kids line up and take turns stepping in front of the microphone to speak their prayers briefly.

_____ **Prayer Chair:** Adults or children with special prayer needs are invited to sit in the chairs. Kids gather around them, lay hands on their shoulders or knees and take turns praying.

_____ **Popcorn Prayer:** The leader moves through the crowd with a microphone and turns it toward kids who are raising their hands to pray. The kids speak their prayers into the microphone.

Lord's Prayer: Lead the children through the Lord's Prayer, phrase by phrase, or let them pray the entire prayer along with you.

Blessing:

Speak a blessing prayer over the children. Personalize this to your setting. Use a special scripture verse or blessing around the theme of the day.

Song of Sending:

Choose one song. Briefly introduce song so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God.

Supplies:

Attention Grabber:

- spring-loaded, bulging eyes, available in novelty stores or half-rimmed bifocal glasses

Power of the Cross:

- binoculars
- make a 12" extension from a metal hanger that will quickly attach to a pair of binoculars or fit on the hand next to the binoculars. Attach a cross to the end that is farthest from the binoculars. Place a small heart over the top of the cross.

Learning Game:

- a blindfold for each pair of children (optional)
- masking tape
- plastic buckets, chairs, tables, or any other obstacles for a maze

Bible Reading:

- video Animated Stories of the New Testament: *Saul of Tarsus*, produced by Nest Family Entertainment, 1990, ISBN 1-56489-005-8 (order from: http://www.nestfamily.com/store/product_detail.asp?productID=STD)
- two candy bars or some other treat