









# Paul As An Eyewitness

ACTIVITY	MINUTES	GRADE LEVEL	FOCUS	PITstops	*OTHER SUPPLIES
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OPENING ACTIVITY The Blind Leading The Blind	5	1-6	 		blindfolds
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LESSON Paul As An Eyewitness	10	1-6			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MEMORY VERSE	5	1-6			
REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITY (Choose One Option)					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OPTION 1 Eyewitness News	5	1-6	  A		
<input type="checkbox"/> OPTION 2 Tag, Jesus Died For You	10	1-6			
<input type="checkbox"/> WORSHIP PROGRAM Bad To Good	5	1-6			
<input type="checkbox"/> LET'S DO IT! (LDI)					
Persecuted Christians	5	1-2			
Where To?	5	3-4			
Persecuted	5	5-6			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DIALOGUE FOLDER					
iSPEAK	5	1-2			
iSPEAK	5	3-4			
iSPEAK	5	5-6			

## INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOME

This lesson will help junior soldiers understand the story of Stephen's death through the eyes of Saul before his conversion. They'll learn how the events of Stephen's death led to the growth of the Church, and to the conversion of Saul (who later was called Paul).

## YOU ARE HERE!



Place the timeline marker on **32 A.D.** on the **New Testament** timeline.

\*In addition to materials listed in this chart, you need Basic Classroom Supplies.

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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE LEADER

### BIBLE REFERENCES:

This lesson is based on the following Bible references:

Acts 7:54-9:31

### UNIT AIM:

This unit will help junior soldiers understand that the trial and death of Jesus was a part of God's plan. The events that followed the resurrection of Jesus, and the events that transpired before and after Stephen's trial created the climate necessary for the spread of Christianity throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria.

**DEALING WITH CHANGE** isn't easy. Most people deal with change in one of two ways: either realize that change is inevitable, and happily accept it, or resist change.

Perhaps resisting change was Saul's motivation prior to his conversion. Saul, whom we later come to love and respect as Paul, was present when Stephen was stoned. He looked on with approval, guarding the cloaks of those who were the witnesses of the stoning (Acts 7:58 NIV). Saul, an influential man even though he was young, wasn't ignorant of the events that had taken place all over Palestine in the preceding three years. There's no evidence that Saul met Jesus, but he could hardly have been ignorant of His teaching or of the excitement that surrounded His life, death, and resurrection. Most likely Saul heard all or part of Stephen's sermon before the Sanhedrin.

Saul felt the death of Stephen was justified. During the time of Stephen's death, Saul was in agreement with the Sanhedrin that Stephen was a blasphemer just as Jesus had been. Stephen preached that Jesus was alive, that He rose from the grave. If his preaching was true, and Jesus was alive, that would prove the Sanhedrin was wrong for sentencing Jesus to death. The Sanhedrin couldn't allow the idea to spread that they were wrong to kill Jesus. Saul didn't believe it either. He heard the truth, but wasn't changed by it. In fact, at this point Saul was so enraged by the Gospel of Jesus Christ that he began to plot the destruction of Christianity.

The death of Stephen was the trigger for a great persecution of Christians by the unbelieving Jews. Saul was perhaps the chief instrument of this persecution. "Godly Jews buried Stephen. They sobbed and sobbed over him. But Saul began to destroy the church. He went from house to house. He dragged men and women away and put them in prison" (Acts 8:2-3 NIV).

What was the outcome of this great persecution? Some Christians suffered and died for their faith. But, many more were scattered throughout Israel and even to Samaria. As they went, they preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Some of these Christians left Jerusalem in fear for their lives while others went in obedience to the Lord's command.

Jesus told His disciples, "When people attack you in one place, escape to another. What I'm about to tell you is true. You will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes" (Matthew 10:23 NIV). Jesus also commanded His followers to, "...go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey



everything I have commanded you. And you can be sure that I am always with you, to the very end" (Matthew 28:19-20 NIV).

Though Saul's goal was to destroy Christianity, his actions caused the teachings of Christ to spread throughout the region. The apostles remained in Jerusalem to shepherd the infant Church, but most of the other believers scattered. As they moved, they preached and spread the teaching of Christ everywhere they went.

God can use even the worst trial or persecution to do something wonderful in the lives of His children. God had a wonderful plan for Saul. Saul was confronted by Jesus, he was converted, his name was changed to Paul, and he became a witness for Jesus, the very One he had persecuted.

### OPENING ACTIVITY

## The Blind Leading The Blind



Before class, remove tables, chairs, and other obstacles from one area of the room. Ask junior soldiers to find a partner. Give each junior soldier a blindfold. Line up the pairs and instruct them to walk around the room together. Next, ask one junior soldier in each pairing to put on their blindfold. Instruct the pairs to walk around the room by having the unblindfolded junior soldier lead their partner.

Ask the blindfolded junior soldiers:

**How confident did you feel that your partner would guide you safely?**

*(Allow response.)*

Ask the unblindfolded junior soldiers:

**How did it feel being in charge of someone else's safety?** *(Allow response.)*

**How do you think you'd feel if you were responsible for leading a large group of blindfolded people?** *(Allow response.)*

Ask for two pairs to help you with this next activity. Blindfold both members of each pair. Assign one junior soldier in each pair to be the leader, and instruct the other junior soldier in each pair to be the follower.

Ask the followers:

**How confident did you feel that your partner would guide you safely?**

*(Allow response.)*



#### MATERIALS NEEDED:

- blindfolds



Ask the leaders: **How confident did you feel that you could keep both you and your partner safe?** *(Allow response.)*

Ask all junior soldiers: **Is it easy to lead someone when you can't see where you're going?** *(Allow response.)*

**We've been studying the trials of Jesus and Stephen. The Sanhedrin tried to lead the nation of Israel in a certain way. Jesus once said that the leaders of the Sanhedrin were like blind men trying to lead other blind men. What do you think He meant?** *(Allow response.)*



#### TEACHER TIPS:

Be alert during this activity so junior soldiers don't get hurt. You may want to recruit corps cadets or adult volunteers to help during this activity.

#### BE AWARE!

Children with physical limitations may be unable to participate in this activity. Allow them to be observers.



#### MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Bibles

#### LESSON

## Paul As An Eyewitness

Say: **During our last lesson we learned about a man named Stephen. Stephen was chosen by the people to serve as a deacon in the early Church. The apostles were busy praying and teaching and didn't have time to distribute food to the people. The people chose seven men to be in charge of distributing the food, and Stephen was one of them. The Bible says that Stephen was a man full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom.**

**Stephen began teaching about Jesus, and this upset the Jewish leaders. The leaders arrested Stephen. They brought him before the Sanhedrin and had people lie and say that Stephen spoke against God and the Temple. Stephen preached to the people present at his trial. He gave them examples of how their fathers persecuted every prophet they knew, and that the leaders of the Sanhedrin wrongfully accused and killed Jesus, the Son of God. The leaders didn't like what Stephen had to say. They dragged him out of the city and stoned him to death.**

Ask a junior soldier to read Acts 7:57-8:3 aloud to the other junior soldiers.



Say: **Why did the Sanhedrin want to kill Stephen?** *(Allow response.)* **The Sanhedrin wanted to kill Stephen because they were afraid that they would lose their power if the people of Israel believed what Stephen was saying.**

**How did Saul show his approval of Stephen's death?** *(Allow response.)* **Saul didn't stop the men who were stoning Stephen. In fact, Saul stood by and held the coats of the men who were stoning Stephen.**

**What happened to the Christians after Stephen was killed?** *(Allow response.)* **After Stephen was killed, the Christians were persecuted. They were put in prison or killed because they believed that Jesus died on the cross, and then rose from the dead. Saul was the leader of the persecution. He went from house to house arresting people for being Christians.**

Ask a junior soldier to read Acts 8:1-4.

Say: **What do you think the Christians in Jerusalem did when Saul began persecuting them?** *(Allow response.)* **The apostles stayed in Jerusalem while the other Christians scattered to Samaria and Judea.**

Ask a junior soldier to read Matthew 10:23.

Say: **What did Jesus tell the disciples they should do if they were persecuted in one town?** *(Allow response.)* **Jesus told the disciples that if they were persecuted in one city, to go to another city.**

Ask a junior soldier to read Matthew 28:19-20.

Say: **What did Jesus tell His followers to do?** *(Allow response.)* **Jesus told His followers to go to all nations and tell people about Jesus. He told His followers to teach the people they met to obey the teachings of Jesus.**

**The Sanhedrin wanted to destroy Christianity but they couldn't destroy it. Because the Christians were persecuted, they followed the Lord's command and went to new cities. When they arrived in the new cities they began teaching the people about Jesus. Soon many people believed in Jesus and became Christians too!**

**Sometimes when people plan something bad, God takes it and makes something good out of it. Can you think of an example?** *(Allow response.)*

Say: **The leaders of the Sanhedrin plotted to end Christianity, but in fact they helped it grow. If they hadn't persecuted the Christians, the Christians wouldn't have scattered to other cities and told the people in those cities about Jesus.**



God had a good plan for Saul too. Saul led the persecution of the Christians. He went from house to house and arrested people who believed in Jesus. One day Jesus came to Saul and Saul became a Christian. His name was changed to Paul, and he became a great leader in the Church. He wrote many of the books in the New Testament.



## MATERIALS NEEDED:

- marker board/chalk board
- markers/chalk



## MATERIALS NEEDED:

- A
- crayons/markers
- pencils/pens

## MEMORY VERSE

## Romans 12:21 (NIV)

“Don’t let evil overcome you. Overcome evil by doing good.”

Review the verse several times with junior soldiers. Ask junior soldiers to give examples of evil things in the world, and write them on the board. After junior soldiers finish brainstorming, review the memory verse, crossing off one item from the list each time you recite the verse.

## REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

(CHOOSE ONE OPTION)

## Eyewitness News (option 1)

Before class, make one copy of A for each junior soldier. Review today’s lesson as junior soldiers draw a picture related to the lesson. Encourage each junior soldier to write a brief description of his or her picture.

## Tag, Jesus Died For You (option 2)

Ask junior soldiers to help clear the room by pushing tables and chairs out of the way.

Say: **When the early Christians were persecuted, they scattered to other cities and shared the good news about Jesus. This game is similar to freeze tag. We’re going to pretend we’re the early Christians. The person who is “It” will be Saul. When Saul tags you, you must freeze, because you’re arrested. The only way you can be released is if another early Christian taps you on the shoulder and says “Jesus died for you.”**

Choose one junior soldier to be “It”. Instruct the junior soldiers to begin the game.

## BE AWARE!

If you have a junior soldier in your brigade who can’t participate in this activity because of physical limitations, complete Option 1 as the reinforcement activity.



## WORSHIP PROGRAM

**CHORUS:** Song #99: "Give Thanks"  
(Track #48, *Great Big Praise* CD 2)

**SCRIPTURE:** Philippians 1:12-18 (NirV)

**CHORUS:** Song #41: "In His Time"  
(Track #41, *Great Big Praise* CD 1)

### DEVOTIONAL

## Bad To Good ?

Say: Have you ever had something bad happen that turned out to be a good thing after all?

A 12-year-old girl named Susie went on a weekend vacation with her family. Everything seemed to go wrong for Susie. Her baby brother, Joey, cried the entire four-hour car ride. On Saturday it rained all day so they weren't able to go to the amusement park like they'd planned.

Susie and her family went swimming in the hotel's indoor pool, and watched re-runs on TV. On Saturday night Susie's parents took her to the mall to see a movie and play arcade games. Sure, the movie and games were fun, but she could have done those things at home.

On Sunday the family packed up and headed home. Susie was very grumpy. The family stopped for dinner, and Susie just knew she wasn't going to like it. The service was slow, and Susie was served the wrong food; but, Susie ate it anyway, grumbling the whole time.

Susie thought that maybe she'd feel better if she took a nap. In the middle of her nap, Susie woke up; she needed to stop at the rest area. On her way back to the car, Susie heard a familiar voice; it was her favorite cousin Alice. Alice and her family were on their way home from a weekend trip too.

Susie was so excited to see Alice, especially since the weekend wasn't as fun as she thought it'd be. Susie was also excited that God planned for something good to come out of what she thought was bad during the weekend.

### PRAYER



Remember to fill out the *What Do You Think Evaluation* on page 111.

