

MISSIONS:

Kids Around The World



LARGE GROUP LESSON

BOTTOM LINE:

It's possible for God to change lives.

OBJECTIVE:

Kids will learn how God uses missionaries to change people's lives.

KEY PASSAGE:

Acts 9:1-19. Saul's conversion.

INTRO

Before Jesus went up to heaven, he commanded his followers to go into all of the world and make disciples of every nation. That's something all of us can do. We can share Jesus with our friends and family right here in this city.

God leads some people to travel to other places to share the truth about Jesus. We call these people missionaries. Today, there are missionaries everywhere – men and women who go wherever God calls them to tell people about Jesus.

In some of these places, the people are eager to hear the good news. In some of these places, the people or the government are hostile. They don't want people speaking the name of Jesus. The missionaries in these places face great hardships because of their faith in Jesus.

This is nothing new. The first Christians faced persecution because they were speaking the name of Jesus. Many were forced from their homes. They were threatened. But they kept sharing the good news of who Jesus was and what he had done.

One man named Saul was determined to stop these Christians. He started out on a trip to find Christians and arrest them. But while he was on the road, Saul had an encounter with Jesus that changed his life.

READ Acts 9:1-19.

LARGE GROUP LESSON

MAIN POINT

When this story takes place, the church was still very young. It hadn't been that long since Jesus had gone back up to heaven. The once timid disciples were preaching boldly about who Jesus was and how salvation came only through him. The church grew very quickly.

The religious leaders didn't believe and they wanted to put a stop to this new church. One of the people bound and determined to arrest the Christians and even kill them was a man named Saul.

Considering Saul's hatred of the Christians, he seems an unlikely person to become a missionary for Jesus. But with God all things are possible. God changes lives and he changed Saul's life on that road to Damascus.

After Saul was blinded, God gave him a vision of a man named Ananias coming to restore his sight. At first Ananias was frightened to go to Saul – he knew who Saul was and that Ananias could be arrested and killed if he went to Saul. But Ananias also knew how Jesus can change lives. He trusted God and went.

Saul received a few things that day. He got his sight back. He also accepted Jesus and was filled with the Holy Spirit. And he also received a completely changed life. No longer would he be Saul, the man who hunted down the Christians. He would be Paul, a Christ-follower and the first great missionary of the Christian faith.

For the next several weeks, we are going to look at Paul's missionary journeys. How God can use anyone to help change the lives of people. And we're also going to look at some of the places where God has missionaries serving today.

DRIVE IT HOME:

LEADERS NOTE: This could be a great time to show pictures of the Hammonds' work, as well as pictures of Haiti and the devastation of the earthquake. These pictures could be inserted during the following section of teaching. You can find pictures on www.hammondsinhaiti.com

Today's trip is to Haiti, a country of about 9 million people, located in the Caribbean . Many of the people in Haiti practice a false religion called voodoo. They don't know that Jesus is the Son of God and the only way to be saved. Missionaries like Brad and Susan Hammond are in Haiti to teach and share the love of Jesus with the people of Haiti.

In 2010, a huge earthquake hit Haiti and devastated the country. Buildings were destroyed. Power was lost. Over 300,000 people died. Even now, the nation is struggling to rebuild and restore.

LARGE GROUP LESSON

Christian missionaries in Haiti are not only telling people about Jesus, they are building new houses for people who lost homes in the earthquake. They are feeding the hungry. They are forming schools and educating people. Missionaries are sharing the love of Jesus not just with their tongues, but with their hands and feet too.

And God is moving through them to change lives forever.

CLOSE WITH A SIMPLE PRAYER

Dear God,

With you, all things are possible. Thank you for allowing us to be missionaries to bring people into your kingdom.

*In Jesus' name,
Amen*