Lesson 12: We Are New Creations in Christ

Overview:

Key Focus: At salvation, we are made completely new and sinless in our spirit.

Bible Story: Paul's Changes

Scriptures: Acts 8:3, 9:1–15, 17–19, 23–25, 13:9; 2 Corinthians 5:17

Memory Verse: 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV) Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Prep:

Materials Needed:

- Pictures showing: tadpole to a frog, caterpillar to a butterfly, or a seed to a plant
- Wrapping paper and 11 bows

Classroom Prep:

- Cut 11 rectangles from the wrapping paper. Fold the rectangles in half and put a bow on the top to look like a gift. On the inside of each, write one of the following: *You are loved and part of God's family. You are redeemed. You are blessed. You are a citizen of heaven. You are Jesus' witnesses. You have authority. You have promises. You are protected. You have the mind of Christ. You are the body of Christ. You are a new creation in Christ*.

Engage:

Show each picture and select volunteers to explain how each thing changes into something different. **These changes are incredible and can only happen because God created them to change like they do. Some of you have watched these changes actually happen. Did the change happen instantly?** (No, it takes a few days or weeks.) **The changes are slow and might take days or weeks to see the big difference. There are some things that change on the inside and take time also. Some of you have younger siblings and might remember that before your mother gave birth, the baby grew inside her. Your mother's body changed on the inside as your brother or sister grew. A special machine could take pictures of the baby growing inside.**

Allow the children to acknowledge they saw pictures. **Science has developed some amazing machines to see inside a person's body. Doctors are able to help treat people because they can see what is happening in the person's body.** Allow several volunteers to tell about having x-rays or other medical scans.

There are not any machines that can look into a person and see the person's spirit. The Holy Spirit lives in the spirit part of believers in Jesus Christ, but He can't be seen with our eyes or with machines. Today's lesson will help us understand a change that takes place inside people but no machine can see the change.

Memory Verse Activity:
Display and discuss the verse. Have the class form one long line facing the displayed verse. Guide the first child to read or say the first word of the verse and go to the end of the line. The next child in line continues with the next word of the verse and goes to the end of the line. Repeat this pattern until the verse is completed. Go through the verse several times.

Memory Verse: 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV) Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Bible Story:

Hold up your Bible. **This is God's Word, and it is the best guidebook for our lives. Today we will look at a person's life and see the huge change that took place when he believed in Jesus Christ as His Savior.** Read Acts 8:3 and 9:1–2. **Who is causing problems for the church?** (Saul) **Saul was a Jewish religious leader who was convinced that the Christians were not following the Old Testament laws. The people who followed Jesus were call "The Way" because Jesus had told them He was the only way to a relationship with God and an eternal home in heaven. Saul refused to believe their claim that Jesus Christ was the Messiah who the Old Testament prophets had said would come to save the Jewish people. He wanted to make them stop talking about Jesus as God's Son, so he persecuted them, which means he had them arrested, beaten, and killed. Saul believed that he was doing God's work of getting rid of the people who followed Jesus. Do you think Saul was doing God's work?** Encourage head nods for answers.

Let's see what happens next. Read Acts 9:3–5. **Did Saul really persecute Jesus?** (No.) **We know Jesus doesn't lie. Why do you think Jesus said that Saul was persecuting Him?** (Saul was persecuting believers in Jesus who are part of God's family, so it was like Saul was also persecuting Jesus.) Read Acts 9: 6–9. **What instructions did Jesus give to Saul?** (Saul was to go to Damascus and wait for instructions.) **What do think the men with Saul were thinking about what they saw**? Invite responses. Read Acts 9:10–15. **What did Jesus tell Ananias to do?** (Ananias was to go to Straight Street where Saul was praying and lay hands on him to be

healed.) **Why didn't Ananias want to obey the Lord?** (Saul persecuted Christians so Ananias wasn't eager to go to him because he might be arrested.) **God doesn't make people obey him. Ananias had a choice to make. He could choose to be safe and stay away from Saul. What would you choose to do if you were Ananias?** Allow time for several responses.

Read Acts 9: 17–19. **What happened to Saul?** (Ananias laid hands on him and he was healed.) **What did Saul do immediately after he was healed?** (Saul was baptized.) **Saul hadn't eaten anything for three days, but he chose to be baptized before eating anything. Does this sound like the Saul that Ananias had heard about?** (No.) **Saul changed when Jesus talked to him and he prayed while waiting for Ananias to come. Just think what might have happened if Ananias hadn't obeyed Jesus and gone to Saul?** (Possible answers: Saul might have gone on persecuting believers; Saul might not have been healed and baptized.) **What do you suppose Saul talked about with the disciples?** (Possible answers: Saul might have wanted them to tell him everything they knew about Jesus; he might have asked their forgiveness; they might have told him about other miracles Jesus did.)

Let's see if Saul went back to his old ways and persecuted the Christians. Read Acts 9:23–25. **Saul started preaching and convincing Jews that Jesus was the Christ. Imagine how confused everyone was. They all knew Saul was very dangerous to the followers of Jesus but now he sounded just like one of them. In fact, Saul started going on missionary trips with Barnabas to tell people about Jesus. On one of the trips, we discover something about Saul.** Read Acts 13:9. **What happened to Saul?** (He was filled with the Holy Spirit and changed his name.) **Saul had completely changed on the inside in his spirit, just like our Memory Verse.** Recite together or read 2 Corinthians 5:17. **From this point on in the New Testament, we only read about Paul. Since Saul had changed so much, he changed his name. Paul taught about Jesus and wrote many of the New Testament books. Paul preached and healed people with the same power that fills all believers when they say "yes" to Jesus. Do all believers use the power of the Holy Spirit that is inside them?** (No.) **Imagine what would happen if every Christian used their "add-on, internal, power-pack booster" gift from God! We can be very thankful that Ananias obeyed Jesus and helped Saul, who would change the world for Jesus.**

Paul had spent time learning about Jesus and changing his thoughts, words, and actions so that he became a new creation in Christ. Jesus didn't create a new person on the outside. Paul still looked exactly like he did before the light came on the road to Damascus. Our outside doesn't change when we accept Jesus' forgiveness of sins, but our inside experiences a huge change. The Holy Spirit and the mind of Christ come into our spirit inside us. Paul renewed his mind and started using the power of the Holy Spirit. His thoughts changed from hurting Christians to telling them about the love of Jesus paid for all sins and offers salvation.

When you ask Jesus to be your Savior, you will experience becoming a new creation also. The change isn't the same kind of change that a butterfly, frog, or plant show on the outside. People might not see a huge change in your behavior like they did the first time they saw Saul after he believed in Jesus and changed. But the exact same change happens inside

your spirit. The change comes inside you the moment you choose to believe that Jesus saved you from the debt of your sins because He died on a cross to forgive your sins and let you have His righteousness.

We have learned that God gives us great gifts on your salvation day, the birthday of when you decide to be forgiven of your sins and change to follow Jesus' ways. Distribute the gift cards and have each child read their gift as you review what it means. **You have so many wonderful gifts that you get at salvation—it's even better than your birthday gifts. These gifts never get old or break, but you do have to use them for them to work. Each gift helps you change and show that you are a new creation. The new creation on the inside needs to get to the outside where people see the difference in your actions and hear the difference in your words. Before salvation, your thoughts and your actions were ruled by sin. After salvation, your thoughts and your actions should look like Jesus' because you have the Holy Spirit available in you to help you. What are some ways you can use your salvation gifts to show the change Jesus has made in your life?** (Answers will vary.) Encourage each child who has received salvation to use their gifts! End the class time with a cheer for all of the gifts that help us!

Bible Story Questions:

- **Why was Saul hurting Christians?** (He was a religious leader who thought they were going against God's ways by talking about Jesus as God's Son.)
- **What happened to Saul while he traveled to persecute Christians?** (A light shone and Jesus spoke to him on the road.)
- **What did Jesus accuse Saul of doing?** (Jesus said that Saul was persecuting Him.)
- **What did Ananias do?** (Ananias obeyed Jesus and went to Saul, laid hands on him, healed him, and baptized him.)
- **What were some of the changes that happened to Saul?** (He changed from hurting Christians to preaching; his name changed from Saul to Paul; and He wrote books in the New Testament.)
- **Which salvation gift will you use this week to show that you are a new creation in Christ?** (Answers will vary.)

Bible Story Activities:

Games:

- Play a version of "Red Light/Green Light." Have the children form a line across one end of the open area and will try to reach the opposite end. They may take a step forward when you say "Paul" or "new creation" rather than "Green Light." They cannot move when you say "Saul" or "sinful nature" rather than "Red Light." If someone moves when they shouldn't, they must go back to the start line. The first child to reach the other side wins.

- Ideas for Working with Younger Kids:
  Play a version of “Duck, Duck, Goose” but instead say, “Old, Old, New.” Have the children sit in a large circle. Choose someone to tap on the head and say “Old” but then when the child says “New” the tapped child stands and runs around the circle trying to tag the tapper while everyone else says, “Jesus made me new.” The child who was tapped gets to be the tapper. Play several times so everyone participates.

- Ideas for Working with Older Kids:
  Depending on the size of your group, have pairs or small groups work together to read Acts 22 and 26 and discover the complete account of Saul’s conversion that was shared at his appearance before the Jews in Jerusalem and then again for King Agrippa. Have them list the extra details as they compare Acts 9 to his later accounts in Acts 22 and 26. Gather together and have groups share what they found.

Worksheet:
Read the page and have the children work in pairs to find the bold words in the word search. On the back of their papers, have them draw a picture or write about the change that Saul/Paul experienced.

Affirmation/Declaration:
Jesus makes me new inside in my spirit.
I will renew my mind.
I want my thoughts and actions to match Jesus’.
I want to show I belong to Jesus!

Make Connections:

Biblical Worldview Connection:
The world doesn’t understand the changes that take place inside a person who believes in Jesus. When we use the salvation gifts and the power of the Holy Spirit, we become a living testimony of the power of Jesus to make us a new creation. The world needs to see more Christians living what the Bible says and loving others well. Encourage the children to remember who they are in Christ and continue sharing about Jesus. As they let their lives show they are new creations in Christ, they can tell others how to experience a change in their spirit and welcome Jesus to be their Savior.

Missions Connection:

All around the world today, Christians are persecuted for their faith in Jesus. There are many people like Saul who hate believers in Jesus Christ. Pray for the people who are persecuting Christians to become new creations in Christ, just like Paul! Use a map to show some countries where persecution takes place, such as North Korea, Somalia, Yemen, Eritrea, Libya, Nigeria, Iran, and Pakistan. Invite the children to pray specifically for Christians to be protected as they boldly share their faith.

Family Connection:
Help your child recognize that when they say "yes" to Jesus, they become a new creation on the inside. Their outward actions should begin to reflect the inward change. Continue to review together the concepts learned about Who God is; Who Jesus is; Who the Holy Spirit is; and Who they are in Christ. As your family encourages each other to look and act like Jesus, your child will grow spiritually. Spend time reading the Bible, praying, telling others about Jesus, and using the power gifts from the Holy Spirit. Celebrate the firm foundation your child has learned and point out ways your child shows spiritual growth each day!

Prayer Points:
Allow time for praying with anyone who has not yet received salvation. Pair the children and have them share prayer requests with their partners. After they pray for each other, as time allows, have them find a new prayer partner and pray together.

Name _____

Lesson 12: We Are New Creations in Christ

Find the 18 ***bold*** *words in the puzzle.*

V P S F O E N R U S J C C P S

D Z O N Q P E O E X I G H R N

O Y O B E D R S E P K U I O O

A E J O E Z S O R G M N L T I

Y A I E X E I Z M I F E D E T

R D M O N D Y T N I W V R C A

M E O T L F S D I T S A E T E

D S I B I R V D N C N E N E R

V W Y Z L G L E E Q I H S D C

B V B T F O V Q I V S J O X F

W Q W E R I V J J J A P I O Q

K E R I G H T E O U S S Q P K

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X L O D E S S E L B F W A I W

M F A U T H O R I T Y T O V F

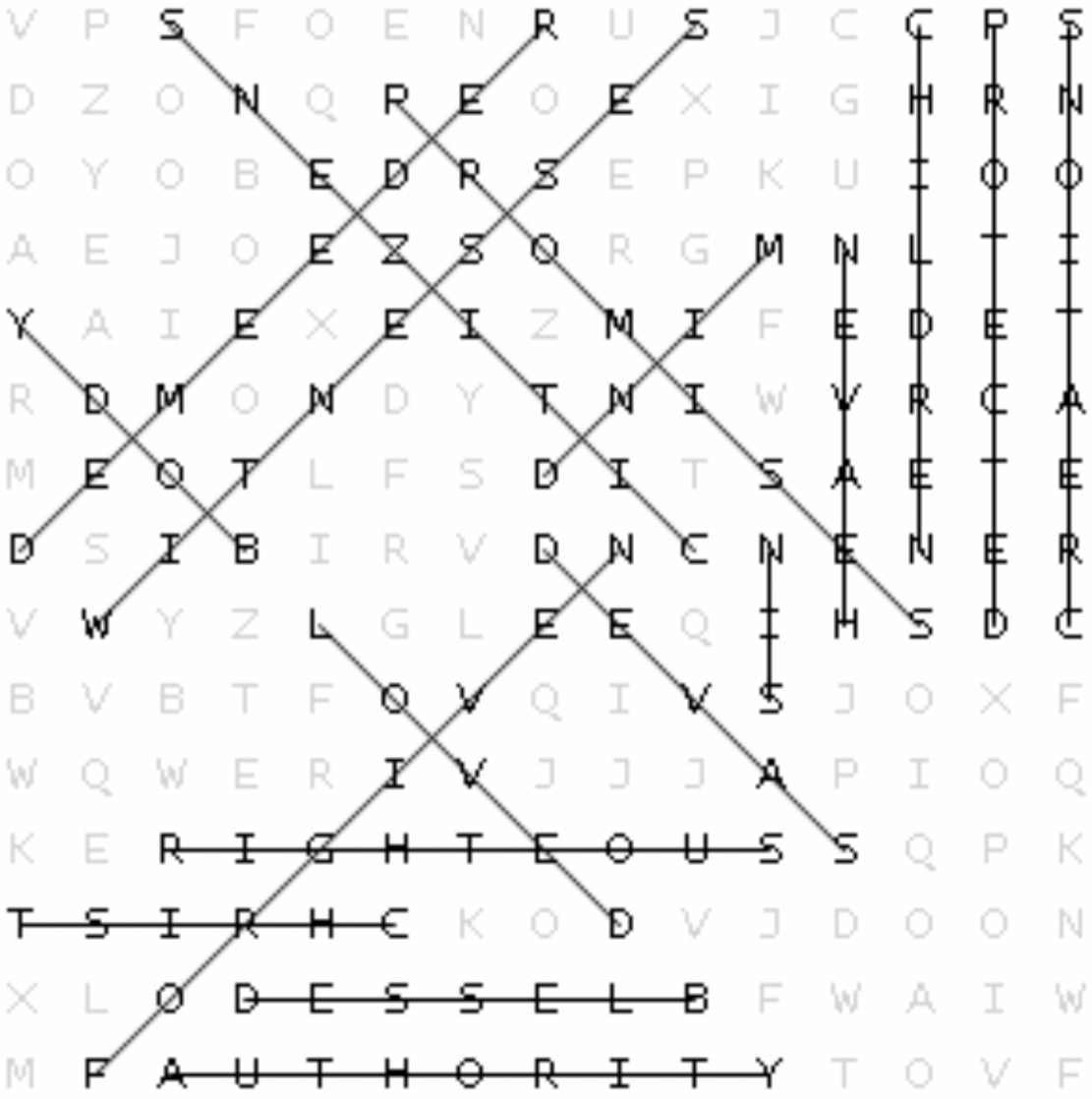
We are **saved** from **sin**, **forgiven**, and **righteous**. We are **loved** and are God's **children**. We are **redeemed**. We are **blessed**. We are **citizens** of **heaven**. We are His **witnesses**. We have **authority**. We have **promises**. We are **protected**. We have the **mind** of **Christ**. We are the **body** of Christ. We are new **creations** in Christ.

BONUS: *On the back of this page, draw a picture or write about the change that Saul/Paul experienced.*

ANSWERS

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Find the 18 ***bold*** *words in the puzzle.*



We are saved from sin, forgiven, and righteous. We are loved and are God's children. We are redeemed. We are blessed. We are citizens of heaven. We are His witnesses. We have authority. We have promises. We are protected. We have the mind of Christ. We are the body of Christ. We are new creations in Christ.

BONUS: *On the back of this page, draw a picture or write about the change that Saul/Paul experienced*

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