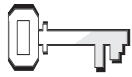


The Make-Believe Christian



References

Acts 8:5-25; *The Great Controversy*, p. 516; *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 253



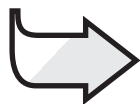
Memory Verse

"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17, NIV).



Objectives

The children will:
Know that God can change believers' lives.
Feel a desire to be changed by God.
Respond by asking Jesus to change them.



The Message

Knowing God changes my life.

Monthly Theme

We learn about God together.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

As the result of persecution, the believers in Jerusalem scatter to Judea and Samaria. They preach about Jesus wherever they go. Philip preaches in Samaria. The Holy Spirit causes many miracles, and many are baptized, including Simon the magician (sorcerer). Peter and John join Philip and pray that the new believers will receive the Holy Spirit. The new believers receive the Holy Spirit—except Simon the magician. He goes to Peter and offers to buy this power. Peter tells him that the gift of God cannot be bought with money, and that he must repent.

This is a lesson about community.

God's Holy Spirit power is free to those who believe in Jesus. This power brings blessing and positive change in the lives of members of Christ's church. Those who desire the power but refuse the change that goes along with it will not receive it.

Teacher Enrichment

"Simon may have had no more than an elementary knowledge of chemistry, by use of which he first attracted attention." People, believing that he had special powers, "came to consult with him. . . . The population of Samaria were superstitiously impressed by the so-called miracles of this vaunted 'great one' " (*The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 215).

"Early church history preserves many legends about him [Simon]. These legends represent him as a self-appointed leader of a debased form of Christianity that constantly warred against orthodox belief. . . . [Various historical] writings portray Simon as . . . a teacher whose system was largely based on astrology, angelology, and an overwhelming belief in his own divine powers" (*ibid.*, p. 218).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 1.

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	<i>A. Clean or Dirty?</i> <i>B. Balloon Walk</i>	clear plastic cups, water, several different colors of food coloring, a large clear container, a little chlorine bleach in a spill-proof jar, a dropper, Bible a balloon for each child
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	none <i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> container used last week none
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	Bible-times costumes balloons, marker, Bible Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>A. Pet Peeves</i> <i>B. Animal Mooves</i>	paper and pencils or pens, Jesus stickers (optional) none
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Butterfly Cutouts</i>	butterfly pattern (see p. 47), markers or crayons, pens or pencils, scissors

***Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.**

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Give directions for the Readiness Activity of your choice.



Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- clear plastic cups
- water
- different colors of food coloring
- a large clear container
- a little chlorine bleach in a spill-proof jar
- a dropper
- Bible

A. Clean or Dirty?

Form groups of four or five. Give each child a clear plastic cup with about an inch of water in the bottom. Talk about how sin makes us dirty as you add a drop of food coloring into each child's cup—a different color in each (have adults assist as needed). Then let the children experiment with mixing colors with others in the group who have different colors. (You may need to supply additional cups.) After several minutes, ask all the children to pour their water into one larger clear container. By this time the water will be a gray or brown color. (Our lives are really dirty with sin.)

Debriefing

Ask: **What can we do to make the water clean again?** Accept all reasonable responses, then add a few drops of bleach, a little at a time. Gradually, the water will become clear. **Sometimes we do wrong things and our life becomes dirty with the consequences of sin, like the water. When this happens there is only one solution to make it clean again. What do you think that is?** (Adding Jesus and/or God to our lives; accepting Jesus' love; giving ourselves to Jesus; making God first in our lives; etc.)

Read aloud 2 Corinthians 5:17. **In our lesson today we will learn more about how God can change our lives. And that's what today's message is all about:**



KNOWING GOD CHANGES MY LIFE.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- a balloon for each child

B. Balloon Walk

Give each child a balloon to blow up and tie. Adults assist as needed. Have them place their balloon on their shoulder and try to walk. The balloons will fall off. Now have them quickly rub their balloons on their clothes several times and try it again. The static electricity in the balloon should make it stick to their shoulder while they walk.

Debriefing

Ask: **What happened?** (The balloons fell off; we rubbed them on cloth; then they stayed on.) **What made the difference?** (Static electricity was made when we rubbed the balloons against our clothes.) **Sometimes we are like the balloons. We don't stay close to Jesus and we do bad things. How can we keep from "falling away" from Jesus?** (We can find ways to stay close to Jesus and God, such as prayer, Bible study, etc.)

Read aloud 2 Corinthians 5:17. **God can change us. He can help us cling to Him just as the balloons stayed with us. What do you think about that? In our lesson today we will learn more about how God can change our lives. And that's what today's message is about:**



KNOWING GOD CHANGES MY LIFE.

Say that with me.

Prayer and Praise

Any
Time



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Review the memory verse and allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special warm greeting to all visitors.



Suggested Songs

- "Jesus Bids Us Shine" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 133)
- "Anywhere With Jesus" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 45)
- "More About Jesus" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 38)
- "This Little Light of Mine" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 134)



Mission

Share a story from *Children's Mission*. Identify how God changed someone's life.



Offering

Say: **Look around the room. Do you see anyone who looks exactly like you? Do you look the same as you did a year ago? Will you look the same in a year's time? Why not?** Allow time for responses. **Just as we grow physically, Jesus wants us to change on the inside. Our offerings will be used to help other children learn about Jesus and to help them change on the inside too.**

You Need:

- offering container used last week



Prayer

Ask: **Do you know of someone who needs to come to Jesus and be changed?** Allow time. **I will start a prayer and then pause so you can pray silently for that person.** Close by asking Jesus to change us and thank Him for the special work He does in us and those for whom we prayed.

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- Bible-times costumes

Experiencing the Story

Invite children to be Philip, Peter, and John and have them act out the story. The rest of the class plays the role of the crowd. Because it is best not to have the children act out a negative character, do not assign a child to portray Simon.

This story is about change. Have the children be "change" detectives. When something changes in the story, ask them to raise their hands. You may want to assign a helper to lead them in doing so.

Read or tell the story.

After Stephen was stoned, things changed for the believers. The people of Jerusalem treated the Christians as enemies, trying to hurt them, all because they followed Jesus. *(Change #1, raise hands.)*

Many believers were put in prison; some lost their lives. *(Change #2, raise hands.)* The rest of the believers quickly moved away from Jerusalem to towns and cities where they felt safe. *(Change #3, raise hands.)* And everywhere they went, the believers preached the good news that Jesus died to save sinners. *(Change #4, raise hands.)*

A deacon named Philip moved to Samaria where he preached to crowds of people. The Holy Spirit really blessed Philip's preaching and healing work. *(Change #5, raise hands.)* "Evil spirits came out of many" and those paralyzed with crippling diseases were healed. "So there was great joy in that city." (See Acts 8:8, NIV)

Simon the magician was one of the famous people of Samaria. People followed him everywhere. They wanted to see the amazing things he could do. They

thought Simon's power was from God, but it was not.

When Philip came, the crowds that once followed Simon now followed Philip. *(Change #6, raise hands.) (The children hurry to stand behind Philip.)* And Philip led the people to God.

As the men and women of Samaria learned about Jesus, they changed. *(Change #7, raise hands.)* Soon many were asking to be baptized. *(Change #8, raise hands.)* Simon also believed and was baptized. *(Philip pretends to baptize someone.)* Simon was so enthusiastic about God's power that he followed Philip everywhere. *(Change #9, raise hands.)* Simon was fascinated by the great wonders and miracles that the Holy Spirit did through Philip.

Soon the believers in Jerusalem heard about all the people accepting Jesus in Samaria. So they sent Peter and John to Samaria to help. *(Bring out two children who represent Peter and John.)*

These two apostles prayed for the new believers. *(“Peter” and “John” bow their heads.)* Peter asked for the Holy Spirit to come down on these believers, too, as He had on the believers in Jerusalem. Then Peter and John laid their hands on the believers *(“Peter” and “John” lay their hands on some other children.)*, and they were changed. *(Change #10, raise hands.)* They, too, received the Holy Spirit's power.

Simon noticed that power came when the apostles placed their hands on people. He was impressed. "Give me also this ability," Simon begged the apostles. And he offered Peter and John money, saying, "Give this power to me too."

Peter was shocked. "Money can't buy you a place in this ministry," he said. "The gift of God is for those who believe." Then Peter spoke in love some hard truths for Simon.

"Your heart is not right with God," Peter said. "Pray for God's forgiveness." Peter said that because the Holy Spirit is a gift of God's grace. It is free.

The Bible does not tell us if Simon truly changed or not. The important thing we can learn from Simon's experience is that we must truly know God and desire to be changed by His Holy Spirit. Then He will give us His Holy Spirit power and a changed life. Knowing God changes a believer's life.

Debriefing

Say: **What did the people in Samaria do to get a changed life?** (They believed the Word of God; they received the Holy Spirit after the apostles prayed and laid hands on them.) **What do you think a changed life might be like today?** (happy, believing, helpful, truthful, faithful, etc.) **What do you need to do to have a changed life?** (Believe; ask for the Holy Spirit in your life; pray every day; choose Jesus.)

Let's remember our message:



KNOWING GOD CHANGES MY LIFE.

Pray with the children that they will receive the Holy Spirit and have a changed life.

Memory Verse

Print today's memory verse on inflated balloons, one word to a balloon. (Exception: the word "the" may be printed on the same balloon as the word that follows.)

Have the children form a line. The person with the first balloon says the word on the balloon and tosses it into the air. The second person says the second word, tosses their balloon in the air, catches the first balloon, and goes to the

end of the line. The third person repeats the action. Continue until all the words have been said. If the balloon is missed, the person goes back and does it again. For even more fun, use two teams. (From *Quick Access: Children—Ideas for Ministry*, compiled by Barbara Manspeaker, Lincoln, NE: AdventSource, 1999.)

Bible Study

Say: **The Bible has many stories that tell about people who accepted Jesus and their lives were changed. Let's read about some of them.**

Adult helpers assist. Have all the children find the same verse—unless there are more than 12-15 children. As time allows, have the verses read aloud and write where all can see the names of those who were changed.

Acts 8:14-17 (the Samaritans)
Matthew 26:69-75; Acts 5:27-29 (Peter)
Luke 8:27, 35, 36, 38, 39 (demon-possessed man)
Luke 19:1-10 (Zacchaeus)
Acts 9:1, 18-22 (Saul)

Debriefing

Say: **What do you think when you hear about people whose lives have been changed? Accept reasonable responses. When I hear about lives that have been changed, I want to change my life too.**

How can we stay changed after we first know God? Read aloud Colossians 2:6, 7; John 15:5; 17:17. **What do these verses tell us? Yes, knowing God changes our lives. Let's say our message together:**



KNOWING GOD CHANGES MY LIFE.

You Need:

• Bibles

3

Applying the Lesson

You Need:

- paper and pencil for each child
- Jesus stickers (optional)

A. Pet Peeves

Explain that a pet peeve is something that someone else does that bothers or annoys you. Ask the children to name some pet peeves. (People who don't take turns; kids who push or shove; etc.)

Give each child a piece of paper. Say: **This will be about your pet peeve. So tell the person next to you what your pet peeve is. Choose just one.**

Signal for their attention. **On your paper, write or draw what you feel like doing when you experience your pet peeve. Do you want to yell, hit someone, or say a bad word? Write down or draw what you feel like doing.**

Then pass out Jesus stickers (or write *Jesus* on the board). Say: **After we get angry and do something hurtful, we really don't feel good inside. Jesus knows how we feel. He says, "Wait! I can change you. Give your life to Me."**

Would you like Jesus to change you? Raise your hand if you would. Allow time. **Great! Jesus can change your life. So let's make a change on our paper.** Have the children add the Jesus sticker or write *JESUS* over their pet peeve.

Debriefing

Ask: **Can we make these changes without Jesus?** (No, it's too hard to do.) **Let's pray together right now and ask God to make these changes for us.** Encourage the children to pray silently, then add an oral prayer to theirs. Ask: **What do you know for sure about God and you? Yes, our message today reminds us that . . .**



KNOWING GOD CHANGES MY LIFE.

Say that with me.

B. Animal Mooves (for younger children)

Give the children a chance to get out the wiggles by asking them to make animal noises and movements. When you call out the name of an animal, they should all make the noise and movements that animal makes. Try several different animals before you ask them to "moove" back to their seats.

Debriefing

Ask: **Would you like to be able to do something a** (name of the last animal they imitated) **can do? Can you become a** (name of that animal) **? Is sounding or looking like a** (name of that animal) **enough to make you be one?**

You can't be a (name of animal) **and a** (name of animal) **can't be you. It's not in your nature or theirs. Your nature is how you are inside.**

Simon wanted to do exciting things, but not in the name of Jesus. He didn't want to know God. He couldn't do something that wasn't in his nature. He couldn't do these things unless he really knew God.

Raise your hand if you want to know God better. (Allow response time.) **Now let's say our message together:**



KNOWING GOD CHANGES MY LIFE.

4

Sharing the Lesson

Butterfly Cutouts

Photocopy the pattern below for each child. Or encourage them to draw a large butterfly on paper. Have the children color their butterflies. Then help them write, "In Christ I Am a New Creature," sign their name, and cut out the butterfly.

Debriefing

Say: **Tell the person next to you what it means to become a "new creation" in Jesus.** Allow time. **Now think**

of someone else you can share that good news with, someone you will tell how God has changed your life and can change theirs. Allow time for sharing. Encourage the children to show their butterfly and share the message with someone this week. Then say: **Let's remember our message . . .**



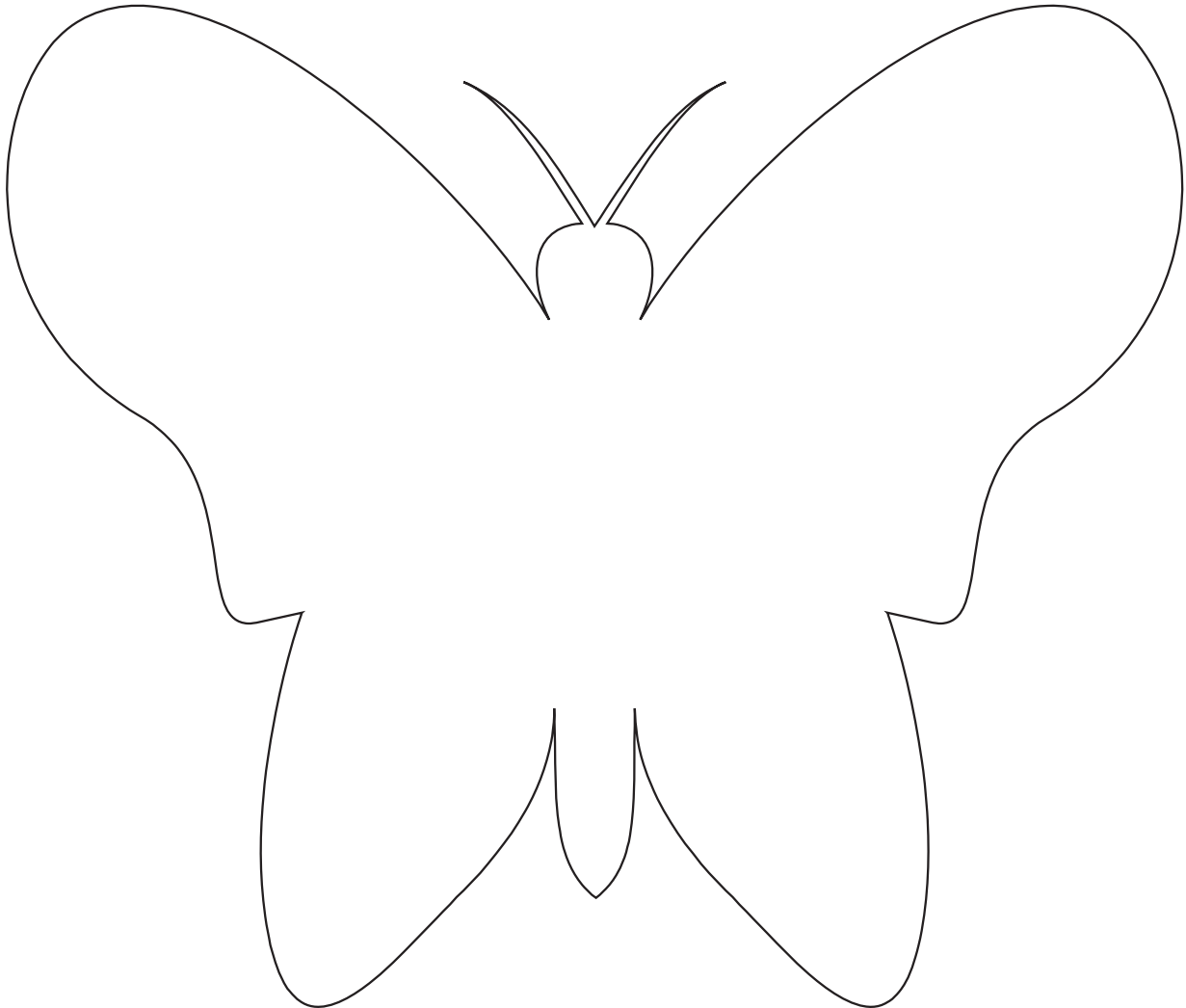
KNOWING GOD CHANGES MY LIFE.

Closing

For closing prayer, sing "Into My Heart" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 125).

You Need:

- butterfly pattern
- writing instruments
- markers or crayons
- scissors for each child



The Make-Believe Christian

References

Acts 8:5-25; *The Great Controversy*, p. 516; *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 253

Memory Verse

"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17, NIV).

The Message

Knowing God changes my life.

Pierre and Marie caught a creepy, crawly caterpillar and put it in a big glass jar. Marie added a little stick for it to crawl on.

Each day Pierre and Marie brought in leaves to feed it. One day, they watched the caterpillar wrap itself in silky threads. After a while, it was all covered up and hanging from the stick. Mother told them that the caterpillar was in a cocoon. After many days Pierre and Marie saw something very special. The cocoon opened and out came a beautiful butterfly! What a change from the creepy, crawly caterpillar!

Our Bible story today tells about people—some people who changed, but one man who did not.

Philip took a deep breath of the fresh early morning air. It was *good* to be alive! It was good to be working for the Lord! He looked around. The merchants were setting up their stalls in the marketplace. Soon the women would begin shopping for the day.

Men and women smiled at Philip and greeted him as they passed. He smiled back. The city was a different place now. The people had listened carefully to the message Philip had preached. They had listened,

believed, and were baptized. They had seen miracles done in the name of Jesus. Many, many evil spirits had been driven out of people. And many weak and crippled people had been healed. The town was different all right. People now had hope, and joy, and a reason for living!

Philip glanced up and saw Simon approaching. Simon had lived in the city for a long time. He had been a magician, amazing the people of Samaria with his tricks. If Samaria had had television, Simon would have been a star.

Simon had joined the crowds listening to Philip. He had seen the miracles. He wanted to be a part of this too. So Simon was baptized and stayed close to Philip. He was amazed at the great wonders and miracles that Philip did in Jesus' name.

One day Peter and John arrived from Jerusalem. Philip greeted them with big hugs. It was so good to see his brothers in the Lord! Peter and John joined Philip in his work. Together, they asked the Holy Spirit to come to the new believers just as He had to the believers in Jerusalem. Then Peter and John laid their hands on the believers. And the Holy Spirit came upon everyone—except Simon.

Simon thought this was the neatest trick he had ever seen! He wanted to lay his hands on people like that! He pulled Peter and John aside and showed them his fat purse. He whispered, "I can pay. Give this power to me too."

Peter's face turned red. "You have no part or share in this ministry," he exclaimed. "Your heart is not right before God. Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps He will forgive you for having such a thought."

The Bible does not tell us what Simon did. But we know that Simon did not understand the free gift of God's grace. He knew *about* God, but he didn't really *know* God. That is why he wasn't changed. Knowing God changes lives!



Daily Activities

Sabbath

- Go for a nature walk with your family. Look for things that have changed—leaves changing color, rivers higher or lower, caterpillars becoming butterflies, etc. Make a list of what you find.
- Find a quiet place and read your lesson together. Then read 2 Corinthians 5:17 together. What does it mean to you?

Sunday

- For worship today, read Psalm 40:1-3 together.
- Draw a person on each of two pieces of paper. Cut them out. On one, write “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.” On the other, write “the old has gone,” then crumple this paper and throw it away. On the first cutout, add “the new has come.”
- Pray for God’s Spirit to change you according to His will.

Monday

- Find out about the life cycle of a butterfly. Tell your family about it during worship.
- Read the lesson story in Acts 8:5-25 together. Ask your family to tell about someone who was changed by the Holy Spirit.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to be in you and your family. Then say your memory verse together.

Tuesday

- In family worship read Galatians 5:22-26 together. Then discuss: What would these people be like if God’s Spirit filled their lives?
 - a complainer
 - a liar
 - a thief
 - a tattletale
- What happens to water when it boils? When it

freezes? What happens when God changes lives?

Wednesday

- For family worship, read and discuss Acts 8:18-23.
- Ask a family member to help you gather a few things that need minor repairs. (Find things that you can fix. Avoid sharp things.) Try to fix them. Can the broken things fix themselves? God will “fix” you and make all things new, if you want to know Him.
- Thank God that He is always willing to “fix” us.

Thursday

- With your family, read Acts 8:14-17. How did people in Samaria receive power to change and live for Jesus?
- How many sources of power can you find in your house? Are they the same as God’s power? Why?
- When Jesus was arrested in the Garden, Peter ran away. Later he cursed and said he did not know Jesus. How had Peter changed when he went to Samaria? Who do you think changed Peter’s life? (Read John 21:15.)
- Say your memory verse while standing in front of a mirror.

Friday

- For family worship, tell your Bible lesson story in your own words.
- Think of someone to whom you have been unkind. Talk about it with your family. What can you do to make things right? Ask Jesus for courage to do it.
- Sing a prayer song together, then make your memory verse into a prayer