

## WEEK 1 ELEMENTARY LESSON GUIDE

the messengers



### THE BIG IDEA

We are God's messengers.

### THE BIBLE

**Saul's Conversion:** Acts 9:1-20;  
I Corinthians 15:1-9

## LARGE GROUP TIME

*WHAT? What are we talking about today?*

#### MUSIC | Worship

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** You can lead kids in worship with any songs you like best, but here are a few songs that go along with this month's theme. Make sure you have purchased any licenses required to play or perform these songs. For more information, [read this!](#)
  - "Messengers" (Lecrae)
  - "Send Me" (Yancy)
  - "As the World Shakes" (Hillsong Kids)
  - "Spirit Move" (Bright Ones)
  - "Love One Another" (Newsboys)

#### ACTIVITY | Pizza Delivery

- Hello, friends! Today, we start a new series called "The Messengers." We'll explore different ways that people deliver messages, and how it all connects to the way people delivered the message about Jesus!
- But first, let's have some fun with a special delivery. **Have you ever had a pizza delivered to your house?**
- Today, you're going to be messengers of delicious news. You're going to deliver pizzas!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For the first part of this activity, have kids make their own pizzas. Give each kid a paper plate, glue, and construction paper pieces shaped like pizza toppings to place on the “dough.” Then have them play a game! Create teams and give each team a pizza box. One kid from each team will use the box to try to catch pizzas being thrown (one at a time) by their teammates from a line about 10 feet away. The first team to catch five pizzas in their box is the winner! At the end, give the catcher a chance to throw their pizza while someone else catches with the box.
  - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Provide real toppings (e.g., pepperoni, mushrooms, anchovies, pineapple slices, olives, broccoli, gummy bears, etc.) and ask one person from each team to catch all the toppings in their pizza box. (If you’re feeling brave, you can have a volunteer catch it in their mouth!) Make it a competition to see which team can catch the most in a certain time period or which team can catch all of the toppings first.
  - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Provide felt pieces, like [this](#), to make throwing the pizzas a little easier!

### ACTIVITY | Snail Mail Race

- **How many people here have ever received an email?**
- **How about “snail mail”?** Snail mail is regular mail that gets delivered by a postal worker. We sometimes call it “snail mail” because it’s a lot slower than email.
- Even though it’s slow, snail mail still gets messages delivered! Let’s play a game – a snail mail race!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give each kid a [wooden wheel](#) to decorate like a snail shell. Use masking tape to mark two lanes, approximately 6’ long, with a starting line at one end and a goal at the other end of each lane. The goal will be a paper mailbox with the door open toward the start line. Kids will line up at the start, two at a time, and try to roll their snails into the mailbox without them falling over. If the snail falls over along the way, kids can stand them back up and roll again from that point. The kid who gets their snail into the mailbox in the fewest number of tries wins!
  - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Compete in multiple rounds and increase the difficulty by creating obstacles that they must work around or ramps they have to roll it over to get to the mailbox (think miniature golf).
  - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Prepare a few snails that are already made ahead of time for friends with special needs. You could also use larger shapes to make rolling slightly easier.
- In today’s Bible story, we’ll find out that the news about Jesus traveled everywhere . . . and their snail mail was way slower than ours is today!

### QUESTION | Have you ever hit a detour while traveling?

- A detour is when you’re traveling from one place to another and something comes up that makes you change directions.
- Maybe the road is closed so you have to take a different road.
- Sometimes, when you’re traveling by plane, a storm might force your plane to land at a different airport.

- **Have you ever hit a detour while traveling?**
  - **What happened?**
  - **Did you finally get to where you were supposed to go?**
  - **What did you have to do differently to get there?**

## SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

### BIBLE STORY | Saul's Conversion

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Immerse the group in this story from Acts 9:1–20 by using lights and sound. For the voices of Jesus and God, use a projected voice offstage (or prepare a recording in advance).
  - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Be aware of health conditions in your group that strobe lights could trigger negative effects for kids with light sensitivity. You could use a piece of bright paper to represent the light instead of using a light source.
- Today's story is about a man named Saul. He didn't like people who followed Jesus. Saul would even try to track them down and throw them into prison! Let's learn more about his story.
- [Read verses 1–3. Turn on a strobe light or wave a flashlight to show the flashing light from heaven.]
  - Saul was very confused. Maybe even a little scared. But what happened next was probably even more terrifying.
- [Read verses 4–8. Have the words of Jesus spoken offstage through a loudspeaker. On verse 8, when Saul is blinded, turn down the room lights and make it as dark as your group is comfortable with]
  - Imagine being Saul and hearing the voice of Jesus, the very person whose message you were trying to stop from spreading!
- [Read verses 9–17. Have the words of God be spoken offstage through a loudspeaker.]
  - Now I totally get Ananias! I would be concerned about going to help someone who was famous for putting followers of Jesus into prison. But Ananias trusted and obeyed God. And do you know what happened?
- [Read verses 18–20 as you turn all the house lights back on as you read the part when Saul gets his vision back.]
- **Did Saul seem like he would ever be a messenger for God?**
- **What changed him? How did he become one of Jesus's most powerful messengers?**
- God sometimes uses the most unlikely people as messengers — including you and me!

### BIG IDEA | We are God's messengers.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Enlist a volunteer to play the part of a Special Messenger (SM). Preferably this would be the same person each week and should be dressed in a delivery costume. SM will enter carrying a large delivery box of your choice. It could be a take-out box, a pizza box, or a mail bag — anything that deliveries would travel in!
- [Special Messenger enters, "interrupting" the lesson, carrying the delivery.]
- **SM:** Special delivery, special delivery!

- **Storyteller:** Wow, what might this be?
- *[SM reaches inside the delivery box/bag and pull out a scroll that has the Big Idea written on it in large block letters. Hold it up and read it out loud.]*
- **SM:** It says, “**We are God’s messengers.**”
- **Storyteller:** Hey! That’s the Big Idea for today! **We are God’s messengers!**
- **SM:** I told you this was a special delivery! Can you all say the Big Idea with me? **We are God’s messengers!**

### VIDEO | The Messengers, Episode 1

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play this week’s episode of [Grow TV](#).

### STORY | Unlikely Messengers

- God uses unlikely people to spread the good news of God’s love!
- Saul was the last person you would have expected to be a messenger for Jesus. He had been trying to put all of Jesus’s followers in prison.
- You might not think you’re a messenger for God, but you are. **We are God’s messengers!**
- Here’s a story of someone else you might not have expected to be God’s messenger.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Tell the story of someone who does a good job of sharing God’s love. Ideally, it would be someone from your church. You can also tell the story of how someone shared about Jesus with you.
  - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Find a video to show of kids or grownups who are “unlikely” messengers of the gospel. They might be people with special needs or people who had been against being a follower of God like Saul.

### ACTIVITY | Messenger Pigeons

- Even though Saul had actively worked against Jesus for a good part of his life, after he met Jesus on that road to Damascus, he spent the rest of his life working for God!
- Let’s discuss another unlikely messenger — a pigeon!
- **Did you know that people used to send messages by tying them to pigeons?** The birds would fly hundreds of miles to deliver them!
- Let’s make messenger pigeons to share the good news with others!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Provide each kid with pieces to make [these paper pigeons](#). After they assemble the pigeons, ask kids to write good news, like “Jesus loves you,” on a strip of paper for someone else to receive. Roll the message up into a scroll, tape it closed with washi tape, and tuck it inside of the paper pigeon. Kids can give this message by pigeon to someone else!
- Okay these pigeons can’t really fly . . . okay, they’re not even real. But they are still carrying an important message!
- **Who is someone you can send (give) this messenger pigeon to?**

### BIBLE | I Corinthians 15:1-9

- After Saul, who is also known as Paul, chose to follow Jesus, he traveled a lot to spread the good news about God. He also started new churches!

- Paul would often write letters to the churches after he had moved on to new places. Many of those letters are now part of the Bible.
- Here's part of a letter Paul wrote to the church he started in the city of Corinth!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read *I Corinthians 15:1–9* to the group.
- Paul didn't think he deserved to be one of God's messengers because of the bad things he had done. But he ended up becoming one of God's biggest messengers!
- **Can you think of a reason why you might feel like you're not qualified to be a messenger for God?**
- No matter what you think of yourself, God still calls you to tell others about Jesus. **We are God's messengers**, simply because God called us to be!

**NOW WHAT?** *What does God want us to do about it?*

**REFLECTION | What's the Message?**

- We have been talking a lot about delivering a special message for God because, well, **we are God's messengers!**
- But let's back it up just a little. Before we can become a messenger, we need to know the message.
- **What message about Jesus do we need to tell others about?**
- There are many things we can tell people about Jesus but the thing we cannot leave out is the fact that Jesus loved the world so much that he gave his life for us. And that's not all, he came back to life and showed us he has the power to forgive sins!
- Take a minute and share this message with a partner. Take turns telling each other about Jesus and say in your words why you love Jesus so much!

**RESPONSE | Messenger in the Making**

- A messenger, like we've been talking about, is someone who delivers a message. Some messengers give speeches or sermons. Others write letters, articles, or books. And some deliver their messages through songs.
- **Who do you know that is a messenger?** A teacher? A pastor? A parent? A favorite singer?
- **What does it take to be a messenger?** Do they need to have a great speaking voice? Do they need to be dramatic actors? Or do they just need to have a message to pass along?
- To be God's messenger, you don't need to have special talents. You just need to be willing, like Paul was.
- And when you are willing, you will find that you do, in fact, have skills and talents you can use to tell others about God.
- Paul traveled around and started churches. He also wrote letters to encourage the churches he had started so they could keep on doing God's work faithfully.
- **How can you be God's messengers?** Think of some ways. Do you write letters, like Paul? Do you travel from place to place, telling people about Jesus? Or do you pray for someone, like Ananias?

- Think of different ways you can share the message about Jesus because **we are God's messengers**. Then, raise your hand and tell me. I'll write your ideas on the board.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *After you've written down the kids' ideas, read them out loud with the group. Emphasize that everyone in the group can do something listed.*

### MEMORY VERSE | Scripture Take-Out

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Collect as many different take-out containers as you can find (e.g., pizza, Chinese, Happy Meal, bento boxes, etc.). Print out a copy of the Memory Verse graphic, and cut them up into 12-16 pieces. Put the pieces and a roll of tape inside each container and assign a different box to a group of 4. Have them quickly puzzle the verse together using tape, stick it back inside their take-out container and "deliver" it to the front of the room.*
  - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *Give each kid the original memory verse image that they can glue the pieces onto so they know where each piece goes.*
- Wow, you all really delivered! Let's say the memory verse together. It comes from Isaiah 6:8 (NIV): **"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!"**

### PRAYER

- God, thank you for making us all your messengers! We are grateful that we don't need any special talents to deliver your message. We just need to be willing, like Paul was. Please help us to deliver the message about Jesus to the people around us this week. Amen.

## SMALL GROUP TIME

### DISCUSSION

- **What happened to Saul on the road to Damascus?**
- **What happened to Saul after he heard the voice?**
- **How was Ananias a messenger for God?**
- **Read Acts 9:11–15. How do you think Ananias felt about helping someone like Saul?**
- **How can you be a messenger of God?**
- **What is the message we need to deliver?**
- **Who can you deliver God's message to this week?**

### ACTIVITY | Mailed It!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Distribute a copy of the printable, something to write with, and a pair of scissors. Have kids fill out the printable, cut it out, then fold it up into an envelope. You could even provide [postage stamp stickers](#) (or real stamps if they're mailing it).*
  - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Challenge preteens to write a note to a specific family member. Encourage them to pack this family member's lunch one day this week and slip the note in. Take note of how that family member reacts. Allow them time to share the experience the following week.*



✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Draw lines on the other side of the printable so it's easier for kids to write. You could also have kids draw a heart or a cross. Provide stickers that say "God loves you" or other encouraging sayings they can stick on the card.

- An easy way to be God's messenger is to tell someone else that God loves them. **We are God's messengers**, and we are all given the job of delivering this special message as often as we can!
- Think about someone you might want to give this message to. Write them a letter about or draw them a picture of the story of Jesus!

#### MEMORY VERSE | Isaiah 6:8 (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Practice this month's memory verse with the signs (a combination of SEE and ASL) we've provided in your Programming folder or at [growcurriculum.org/Isaiah6-8](http://growcurriculum.org/Isaiah6-8).
- Let's practice this month's memory verse together!
- **"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!"**