

Object Lesson: Explaining Conversion with Brownies (Acts 9:1-31)

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Sometimes the simplest things can make the best illustrations. Object lessons are so powerful because they leave a lasting impression and make sense to kids. If you are hunting for your next exciting and unique lesson, consider adding a little baking lesson to the mix. As always, specifics are quite flexible, and the suggestions here are merely that—possibilities. But the main point is to have fun and engage audiences in a novel way.

Age Range: Elementary ages (adaptable for older or younger)

Materials Required: Brownie mix and accompanying necessary ingredients; bowl(s), pan(s),

Scripture Reference: Acts 9:1-31; 2 Corinthians 5:17

Chemical Reactions, Cooking, and Conversions Exploring Transformations

Opening: Transformation...share with students that today's special lesson will feature an exciting range of topics, as you talk about things that change. Brainstorm some characters in the Bible who experienced change or re-direction in their lives...you might come up with Abraham and Sarah, Moses, Mary, Ruth, David...there are many possibilities (and this lesson

can go with any of those stories, really). One potential “180 changer” to highlight is Paul. Remember, he was headed down the road to destroy Christians (literally!) when God found him. Well, just like that, we can be transformed and changed from the inside out, too, when we listen to God.

Lesson: Present students with the elements needed to bake a pan of brownies (or if you prefer, cake or some other treat). Show them the ingredients one at a time: oil, mix, eggs... invite them to taste them if they like (not the egg, of course), and point out that on their own, these things are not much. It takes putting them all together to make a treat, along with some other action...remind the students of Paul’s life before he met Jesus:

Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord’s disciples. He went to the high priest 2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. -Acts 9:1-2

On his own, Saul was pretty destructive. He was pouring out murderous threats (add liquid ingredients to mixing bowl) and wanted to hurt people (crack eggs in). But God was about to mix his life right up! Begin mixing the wet ingredients, passing the bowl around to give each child a turn. When they have been incorporated, add the dry brownie powder and again take turns mixing it all together. Observe how the individual items are now mixing together to create a new thing! But would we want to cut these up and eat them yet? Of course not. Pour the brownie batter into the pan and describe the final step in the process...it is time to place the brownies in the oven to cook. Just like Paul was “on fire”...

As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. 4 He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?”

5 “Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked.

“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” he replied. 6 “Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

7 The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. 8 Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. 9 For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything. -Acts 9:3-9

God grabbed hold of Saul’s life quite drastically...he was blinded and for three days he prayed. Fortunately, these brownies won’t take three days, but it may seem like a long time to be patient as we wait for them to cook. When God works in our lives, it often takes time, patience, and sometimes difficult circumstances. Waiting is not easy, but in the end it is worth it! Remind students of Ananias and his role in Paul’s healing, and emphasize the end of the story:



Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” 18 Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, 19 and after taking some food, he regained his strength. -Acts 9:17-19

Saul (Paul) was totally changed, transformed into something brand new. When we mixed the brownie ingredients and baked them, the chemical reactions made them into something radically different. We no longer have wet batter, but real tasty chocolate brownies!

After the brownies are finished (timing may vary), remove them carefully from the oven and show the new creation. After a few minutes to cool, allow students to sample the treats!

Close with prayer, thanking God for transforming our lives and asking for patience as He does so.