



OPERATION TRANSFORMATION

Leader's Guide



A **Vacation Bible School** Curriculum for the Church of the Nazarene, Inc.

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Week at a Glance

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...”
Romans 12:2a

	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4
PASSCODE	Jesus' love transforms my identity	Jesus' power transforms my life	Jesus' presence transforms my choices	Jesus' call transforms my mission
FOCUS	Salvation	Sanctification (Initial)	Sustaining	Sending
ICON	 Thumbprint	 Footprint	 Flashlight	 Cross
AT A GLANCE FOR TEACHERS	God gives us new life through Jesus. Saul the murderer becomes “Brother Paul” the Christian.	Jesus leads me where I never imagined. As I trust and follow Him, Jesus transforms me.	Jesus is always with me. He equips me with wisdom, provides for my needs, and shows me the next step when I persevere.	God calls me to share my transformation with others.
BIBLE STORY	Saul's transformation Acts 9:1-19	Saul meets the disciples in Jerusalem Acts 9:20-30	God works through Paul in prison Acts 16:16-34	Paul remembers God's call Acts 22:1-16
MEMORY VERSE	Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. John 1:12	My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. John 10:27	He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way. Psalm 25:9	Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ... John 17:3a

	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4
MUSIC	<p>Theme song</p> <p>Today's memory verse song</p> <p>Optional worship song theme: <i>Jesus our Savior and God's love</i></p>	<p>Theme song</p> <p>Today's memory verse song</p> <p>Optional worship song theme: <i>Jesus our Lord; surrender; or trust</i></p>	<p>Theme song</p> <p>Today's memory verse song</p> <p>Optional worship song theme: <i>Jesus our friend, guide, and strength</i></p>	<p>Theme song</p> <p>Today's memory verse song</p> <p>Optional worship song theme: <i>Jesus our King; our obedience; God's call</i></p>
MISSION BRIEF	Flower Power	Caterpillar Soup	Decode God's Perspective	A Tale of Two Balloons!
CRAFT LAB	Identity Badges	Butterfly Footprints	Invisible Ink	Salvation Bracelet
RECHARGE STATION	Road to Damascus	Sheep Snacks	Paul In Prison Snack Mix	Popcorn Transformation
AGENT TRAINING FIELD	Hold On, Saul! (Statues Game)	Follow Me	I Know My Shoe!	Helper and Friend (3-legged Race)
INFILTRATION SERVICE PROJECT	Giving something that points to new life through Jesus	Doing something that will transform someone's day	Being a help and a friend to someone because Jesus is our Help and Friend	Doing something that will share Jesus with others

Welcome to *OPERATION TRANSFORMATION!*

Dear Vacation Bible School Leader,

Get ready! *Operation Transformation* takes us on an adventure of a lifetime as we learn lessons from Paul's personal journey of transformation through Jesus' love, power, presence, and call!

Paul was earnest in his zeal for God. He was just going in the wrong direction and didn't know it! Paul started on a journey to capture and persecute Christians but found himself captured by Christ Himself. The blinding light, Jesus' voice, and the revelation of God's love transformed Paul's life and his mission!

Operation Transformation invites children to become God's agents-in-training, to be transformed, and to join in the mission to transform the world with the Good News of Jesus. Each day, Special Agent Tre (code name "Trinity") and his sidekick Buddy (code name "Barnabas") will teach kids why it is important to follow Romans 12:2a and "not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Kids will learn that personal transformation affects many other lives and advances God's mission to spread the Good News to the world.

One week at *Operation Transformation* offers kids a TRANSFORMED LIFE!

When children join *Operation Transformation*, they learn a daily passcode that highlights each day's lesson focus. They see an icon throughout the day that will prompt them to say the passcode. The daily song underscores the memory verse, making it easier to memorize. The Transformation Station activities reinforce the lesson themes:

- **Salvation:** Jesus' love transforms my identity and gives me new life as a child of God. (John 1:12)
- **Sanctification (initial):** Jesus' power transforms my life as I trust and follow Him. (John 10:27)
- **Sustaining:** Jesus' presence transforms my choices as He equips me with wisdom, provides for my needs, and shows me the next step when I persevere. (Psalm 25:9)
- **Sending:** Jesus' call transforms my mission as God calls me to share my transformation with others. (John 17:3)

This week, look for opportunities to help children relate to Jesus in these ways:

- As our **Savior** (We accept His free gift and thank Him for coming to rescue us.)
- As our **King** (We follow and obey this King that loves us so much.)
- As our **Friend** (We talk to and listen to our Friend. We love others because we have such a Friend that loves us.)

This curriculum provides scripts, skits, crafts, games, songs, Bible stories, helpful tips, and ideas to communicate and emphasize the message of the Gospel with kids and their families. The activities are optional. Choose what fits best in your setting. This Leader's Guide is a planning and training tool. Use it to help you host a dynamic, fun, and successful Vacation Bible School for your community.

We encourage you to end the week with a Celebration and Connection Service. Share the vision with your pastor and church staff; be sure to enlist their support well in advance. Invite all the *Operation Transformation* kids and their families to join your Sunday morning worship service following VBS. Feature portions of the skit, have the children sing their songs and recite memory verses, and share testimonies of changed lives from leaders, children, and even parents. The goal is to celebrate the Good News of transformation in Jesus Christ! Ask your pastor to close with an invitation to accept God's offer of new life through Jesus.

We are excited about your involvement in Vacation Bible School this year. We believe this ministry is one of the most powerful tools available to reach children and their families for Christ! We know that God will bless your efforts. Know that we have prayed for you and for the children, that they will receive the transforming message of the Gospel throughout this important week.

**Your Sunday School & Discipleship Ministries Team,
Church of the Nazarene**

OPERATION TRANSFORMATION Toolkit

Mission

To make disciple-makers in all the nations.

Theme Memory Verse

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”
Romans 12:2a.

What is VBS?

Typically, VBS is a four- to five-day program that is two to three hours each day. Some churches may choose to have one or two day events. VBS is designed to invite children and their families into a relationship with Jesus. VBS is a tool for the local church to draw others into their church fellowship for the purpose of making disciples in all nations and helping them grow into disciple-makers.

Why invest in a VBS?

Our mission is to reach all children with the Good News of Jesus Christ that they may be transformed by His saving grace, live Christlike lives through the power of Jesus’ presence, and share His love to transform the world.

How can VBS work?

Vacation Bible School can be approached in many different ways.

- **Backyard Bible Clubs:** Held at the homes of church members, culminating in a weekend church service or event.
- **On-Site VBS:** Held in the church building, culminating in a weekend church service.
- **Community-Site VBS:** Held in a central location in a target ministry area. This can be in a community center, a playground or park, or a building you rent for the week close to the neighborhood your church is strategically targeting. The activity can culminate in a weekend church service.

Strategy

- To **reach** children and their families in your community with the Good News of Jesus Christ
- To **connect** with children and their families in meaningful, practical, and helpful ways
- To help children **grow** spiritually through Biblical principles
- To provide opportunities to model Christlike **service**

Target Age

The recommended ages are 5 to 12 years old, or Kindergarten to sixth grade.

Including Preschoolers (optional)

Some groups may include a number of preschoolers among them. This can be a very good thing! Since our material is targeted at children Kindergarten through sixth grade, we are asking that preschoolers who attend (and they are welcome to attend!) be accompanied at all times by a parent or guardian. This will give them the security of having a familiar adult near them should they become bored, restless, or fearful.

A few helpful suggestions for including preschoolers in your VBS:

- For liability reasons, parents/guardians of preschoolers MUST accompany them at all times.
- Be sure preschoolers complete a registration form.
- Preschoolers can be included in the Transformation Stations with their parents/guardians to ensure they stay focused and on task.
- If more than three preschoolers attend, consider forming a preschool group that rotates separately to the Transformation Stations.
- Invite the preschoolers and parents who participate in the *Operation Transformation* Celebration to learn more about your preschool ministry.

Getting Everyone's Attention Quickly: The Top Secret Hand Signal (optional)

Teach this top secret hand signal to the children on the first day. It is our sign for everyone to be super quiet because something important is about to happen. Make sure all staff members know it so they can do it with you when you teach the kids.

When they hear a teacher start the signal, they are to stop what they are doing and join in. You can use this anywhere during VBS. It is effective when leaders lead by example and emphasize participation.

Tap-tap, clap-clap, snap-snap, "Shhhhhh!"

Tap-tap: Pat the top of your legs with both palms.

Clap-clap: Clap your hands twice.

Snap-snap: Snap your fingers twice.

"Shhhhhh!": Say, "Shhhhhh" while bringing your index finger in a slow sweeping motion to your lips.

Prizes and Giveaway Ideas (optional)

In order to help kids stay engaged, consider these optional incentives:

1. Print mission money (found in resources) that children can earn each day and spend at the Special Agent Store.
 - Each day, children can earn mission money by:
 - › Bringing their Bible (1)
 - › Learning their memory verse (1)
 - › Participation or answering a question in review or lesson (1)
 - › Bringing a friend (2 for each friend)
 - › Additional ideas: Act of kindness, listening carefully, keeping hands to yourself, etc. This can be used as an effective tool to reward good behavior.
 - Write the child's name on the back as they earn it.
 - Let them spend their mission money at the Special Agent Store at the end of the day or week.
 - Special Agent Store—Invite your church to donate small toys, school supplies, or candy that the kids can purchase with their mission money.

2. Make a Mission Accomplished Punch Card for each child. Use the same list as the one above for earning mission money. When they reach 10 punches, they can turn the card in for a prize from the Special Agent Store.

3. Have a prize box of donated items (small toys, school supplies, snacks, or candies) children can choose from at the end of each day.

Sample Daily Schedule

3-Hour Onsite Morning Schedule

8:45-9:00	Leaders meeting & prayer
9:00-9:10	Kids arrive
9:05-9:40	Welcome and opening music & skit
9:45-10:15	Transformation Station
10:15-10:45	Transformation Station
10:45-11:15	Transformation Station
11:15-11:45	Transformation Station
11:45-12:00	Closing skit

2-Hour Backyard Club Evening Schedule

6:00-6:15	Leaders meeting & prayer
6:15-6:30	Kids arrive
6:30-6:35	Welcome and opening music & skit
7:00-7:20	Transformation Station
7:20-7:40	Transformation Station
7:40-8:00	Transformation Station
8:00-8:20	Transformation Station
8:20-8:30	Closing skit

These are *suggested* sample schedule options! Choose a schedule that works best for you. This suggested schedule allows the children to hear the story and daily themes before they go to Transformation Stations and provides a biblical review before they leave.

Intentional Connections: Before, During, and After VBS

Create a culture of connections. Our ultimate goal is to help children develop a lifelong relationship with Jesus. We believe that is best accomplished by connecting to a community of believers. Because of this, VBS is a strategic time to identify “prospect families” who may be interested in coming to your church. Prospect families are families not actively attending another church. It is important to recruit host volunteers who will focus on making connections with these families.

On the first day of VBS attendance, your team will identify children of prospect families and connect a VBS host volunteer with that family. The host volunteer will be their host for the week. The host should use each day to develop a relationship with prospect children and parents through conversation and interaction in order to create a connection.

Intentional Connection Activity Plan

Connecting with prospect families begins before VBS and continues after the four days of VBS are over. Consistent connections don’t happen accidentally. We must be intentional to create connections:

1. **Prior to VBS:** Host a launch event as an all-church activity.
2. **Monday–Thursday:** VBS. Announce this as an all-church event. Encourage church-wide involvement.
3. **Friday, Saturday, or Sunday:** Use Connection Activities. (See page 12)
4. **Sunday:** Hold a VBS Celebration Service. Invite everyone to see what God has done during the week.
5. **After VBS Week:** Use Connection Activities. (See page 13)

1. Connection Activities Prior to VBS

- Hand out invitations personally to the parents of children whose lives already intersect with yours. Invite them to VBS by:
 - › Going door-to-door in your neighborhood
 - › Visiting your children’s school
 - › Talking to fellow parents of your child’s sports team or class
- Send follow-up phone calls or texts. Inform parents if your church is equipped to offer transportation.
- Sponsor a launch event the weekend before VBS to invite families in the church’s neighborhood (grill hot dogs or potluck).

2. Host Connection Activities During VBS

- The host volunteer connects with parents after their first day and lets them know how glad they were to have their child/children at VBS and that they are looking forward to having them back.
- If a child/family misses any days during the week, the host volunteer will follow-up to let them know they were missed.
- The host volunteer connects with them in person or by phone, invites them to the celebration service, and plans to attend with them.
- The host volunteer should make efforts to greet the parents of the children at arrival and dismissal times.
- Churches can hold a class or fellowship for parents during VBS.
 - › Introduce them to your church, what the Church of the Nazarene believes, what a walk with God looks like, etc.
 - › Review what the kids are learning each day.
 - › Allow time for parents to ask questions.
 - › Provide light snacks (muffins and coffee).
 - › Provide childcare for younger siblings to allow parents to participate.
- Encourage kids to put prayer requests in a designated box and pray for each request.

3. Host Connection Activities After VBS Prior to the VBS Celebration Service

- Invite prospect families to Sunday's celebration service and let them know you will be looking for them.
- Tell them the good things you saw in their child ("Tommy has been such a great listener this week" or "I really enjoyed getting to know Sally. Thank you for bringing her this week!")
- Invite them to sit with you at the dinner after the celebration service.

4. VBS Celebration Service

Invite the children and families to attend the Sunday morning worship service at the end of your VBS week. This service should be designed around VBS participation. Intend to reach new seekers. Invite VBS participants to the platform to sing the VBS songs and recite the memory verses. Feature a multi-media recap of the week through videos or a slide show.

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR DIRECTOR: *Before VBS begins*, recruit an artistic director who will assemble a team to document the VBS experience from beginning to end through video, photos, or both, and prepare an edited 3-4 minute VBS video or PowerPoint presentation that will be featured in the VBS Celebration Service.

Plan for a community meal following the service and invite all prospect families and children. Be intentional about seating hosts and leaders among prospect families and children.

5. Connection Activity Ideas After the VBS Celebration Service

- Stop by a prospect family's home briefly with a gift and invite them to join you for church. Here are a few gift ideas:
 - › A mug with the church's name filled with candy.
 - › A card with your hand-written comments thanking them for bringing their child to VBS and inviting them to church as your personal guest. If you do this, look for them in church. Remember their names. Greet them, introduce them to others, and sit with them in the service. If possible, invite them to be your guest for a meal afterwards.
- Send a text or email checking on their child. "I was just thinking about Tommy and wanted you to know what a joy it was to have him in VBS. He has been on my mind today. Let me know if there is anything I can pray about for him/her or your family."
- If you know the child plays an organized sport, attend one of their games/matches and cheer them on. Connect with the child and parents afterwards.
- Intentionally connect throughout the year, following up every month or so without becoming a nuisance. Invite them to special services (Christmas and Easter) or any age-appropriate activity that your children's ministry is having.
- If you see them in public, address them by name and let them know you care.
- Follow Ephesians 5:16 and "make the most of every opportunity" with these precious children and families.

Prayer

It is never too early to engage your prayer team in VBS!

Anyone can design a fun, entertaining, and engaging VBS. We can stir up excitement about Bible stories and even get people to start coming to our church. But if we want to accomplish more than just entertainment, if we want people to come to know Jesus Himself through our VBS, we will need the Lord to do what only He can do!

Psalm 127:1 says, “Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain.”

Probably the most important preparation you make for VBS is prayer. Pray:

- For provision (the materials, the prizes, the children that need to hear this message, the families that need this church).
- For inspiration, ideas, creativity, and excitement.
- For the Holy Spirit to be present at every planning meeting and every single moment of VBS.
- For discernment for the leaders and protection of each child.
- For the families that will come to the church through this VBS. If possible, pray for them by name.
- For the church family to be ready for the harvest God is preparing through VBS. That the church would love these people well, and that we would look more and more like Jesus.
- For the story of Paul’s life to powerfully communicate God’s love and redemption.
- For the Bible to be elevated to its proper place in the children’s hearts and minds—that they will see it as a source of strength, wisdom, and comfort.
- For the workers to be granted wisdom to answer the children’s questions.
- For the Name of Jesus to be magnified.
- For many to be led to repentance and a deeper relationship with God and others.
- For God’s kingdom to come and His will to be done in VBS and beyond.

Preparing your Team with Training

Provide team training at least one month prior to VBS.

- Train Volunteers on Nazarene Safe policies and practices.
- Introduce Transformation Station leaders, skit characters, and other key leaders.
- Teach the secret hand signal.
- Teach all songs and motions.
- Review all elements in the daily schedule.
- Discuss how to lead a child to Christ.

Operation Transformation Daily Schedule

Leadership Meeting

Plan to meet together each day to read the Bible story, review the day, and pray. This meeting is scheduled to last 15 minutes. This is your time to focus as a team. Plan to have all decorating, instruction, preparation, memorizing, reviewing, etc. completed before this opening meeting.

Kids' Arrival

Everyone should greet the children as they arrive. Provide assigned greeters in the parking lot and at the front doors. Show children and parents where to register or check in. Let them know we've been expecting them and are glad they are here.

Opening and Welcome

The director will welcome everyone, review the daily passcode and verse, and make announcements.

Music

A worship leader or team will lead music during the opening and closing sessions, using hand motions to emphasize the words. All of our songs are Bible verses.

ALL adults should fully participate in the singing and hand motions (even if they're tone deaf!). When kids witness non-participating adults, they get the message that participation is optional. All adults present should lead by example through enthusiastic, cheerful participation.

To help the children become familiar with the songs, play the music in the background during transitions from one activity to the next.

The children will be singing this week's VBS songs at the *Operation Transformation* Celebration Service.

We are providing five theme songs and two bonus songs:

1. *Operation Transformation* theme song (Romans 12:2)
2. Day 1 (John 1:12)
3. Day 2 (John 10:27-28a)
4. Day 3 (Psalm 25:9)
5. Day 4 (John 17:3a)
6. Bonus Song 1 (Timothy 6:18)
7. Bonus Song 2 (Psalm 46:1)

Opening Skit

Dialogue has been provided between three characters to introduce the Bible story. The story is explored in greater depth in the Mission Brief Station. The skit emphasizes the main points of each day's Bible story and demonstrates the joys, responsibilities, and privileges of Christian life through special agent parables.

Skit Characters:

- **Special Agent Tre (Code Name Trinity):** Wears "spy" clothes, hat, and sunglasses.
 - › This is your main speaker. A pastor or leader with an engaging personality is the best choice for this part. He or she will be training Buddy (and the kids) about becoming a Christian and growing in Christ.
 - › Either a man or a woman can play this part. We will use the pronoun "he" for simplicity's sake in the curriculum. Please feel free to change that if your actor is a female.
 - › Regardless of gender, this person needs to be a mature believer; someone the children and parents can respect as a Christian role model even after VBS is over.
- **Agent-in-training Buddy (Code Name Barnabas):** Buddy is a seeker, a clumsy but loveable and curious sidekick who really wants to be a special agent.
- **Agent Strange (Code Name Scout):** The antagonist, an impostor who tries to thwart Tre's missions. Also wears "spy" clothes, hat, and sunglasses. By the end of the week he becomes "Scout" as he responds to God through Special Agent Tre and Buddy.
- **VBS director:** Also a special agent, this person is the VBS master of ceremonies (emcee). Opens and closes, gives direction as needed, and makes sure the schedule is followed.

Transformation Station Options

For large groups, split children into smaller groups by age. Each group has an adult leader to guide them to the appropriate stations according to the schedule. For Backyard Bible Clubs or very small groups, all children can rotate stations together as one large group.

The same person or people should lead the same Transformation Station each day. This provides important continuity and connection. Familiarity gives children a greater sense of security and increases their comfort level. As a bonus, the leader's familiarity with each lesson will help them "connect the dots" between each day's story. Because of the importance of the Mission Brief Station, be sure the same person leads it every day, even if that is not possible for other stations.

Mission Brief

This is the most important Transformation Station. If you only have time for one station, make this the one. This is where children will receive a detailed explanation of the Bible story prefaced in the skit and an object lesson that illuminates the daily theme and verse. The importance of this station cannot be overstated.

Evidence Vault

Teach hand motions to the daily memory verse, explain the meaning of the verse, and answer children's questions about how it applies to them.

Craft Lab

Help the children create something that will reinforce the daily theme.

Recharge Station

Facilitate discussion of the day's Bible story as children enjoy creating and eating a snack that reflects the story or theme.

Agent Training Field

Through physical activity, each game emphasizes the theme or memory verse and points out real-world applications.

Infiltration Service Project

The congregation participates in this option by providing supplies for VBS service projects. These projects have a dual purpose: community outreach and teaching the children the power and importance of loving others through service. Choose service projects that require some physical activity. Multiply the impact of their service time by incorporating and reinforcing the theme for the day. The service project ideas should be adapted to fit your church and community needs. The examples we provide are simply suggestions. *(See page 5 for each day's theme)*

Closing Skit

The director ends the closing skit with announcements, offering totals, and a closing prayer. If time allows, end with singing the daily song.

Leading a Child to Christ

God will bless your availability and your willingness to pray with a child. Let go and let God do the leading. If you are praying at an altar, always ask the child if you can pray with them and if they know what they want to pray about. Sometimes a child may be thinking of a sick pet or family member. Children seeking salvation usually express this by saying, "I want Jesus to be my friend" or "I want to be a Christian."

Once you know a child is seeking a relationship with God, lead the child through the following conversation. You can use this as a script or say it in your own words. Pause periodically and ask if they understand what you are sharing. Start by asking the child the following questions:

1. Do you believe that God loves you?

God loves you and all people. He wants to have a loving friendship with you. John 3:16 tells us that God loves us so much that He sent His one and only Son, Jesus, to make forgiveness possible.

2. Do you know what sin is?

Sin is disobeying God. Sin breaks our friendship with God. Romans 3:23 says, "Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God's glory." Everyone has disobeyed God. The Bible says in Romans 6:23 the consequence of sin is death, but the gift of God is life forever in Jesus. Jesus saves us from sin and death. That is good news! **Although we do not deserve it, God loves us so much He made a way to fix our broken relationship with Him.** 1 John 4:9 says, "How did God show His love for us? He sent His one and only Son into the world so that we could receive life through Him."

3. Do you know who Jesus is?

- I. Jesus, God's one and only Son, came as a little baby. He grew to be a man that told everyone about God's love and showed people how to love with God's perfect love. He fed hungry people, healed sick people, and made dead people alive again!
- II. Some people did not believe that Jesus was God's son and decided to kill Him. Jesus allowed this to happen to show the world God's great love. God brought Jesus back to life again and showed His power over sin and death!
- III. Jesus is alive today! He loves you and wants to be your Savior and Friend forever. All you need to do is ask God to forgive you for disobeying Him and believe that He will do it. We do not have to stay separated from God! We can accept Jesus' gift of forgiveness and life.

4. Would you like Jesus to be your Savior and best Friend and to begin to live as a child of God?

It is as easy as A-B-C!

A: Admit that I have sinned and I need God to forgive me and to help me change.

B: Believe that God loves me and sent His only Son, Jesus, so I can be forgiven.

C: Claim Jesus as my Savior and claim my new identity as a child of God.

5. Would you like to pray with me as I pray for you?

“Dear God, thank You for loving me and sending Jesus to earth. Thank You for allowing Jesus to die for the things that I have done wrong and for raising Him to life again. I am sorry that I have disobeyed You. Please forgive me. I want Jesus to always be with me. Help me to obey You every day. I believe You love me and have forgiven me. Thank You for making me your child. I believe that You will be with me forever! Amen.”

When Jesus is our Savior, He will always be with us. He will help us to live the way that God wants us to live. Romans 12:2 says, “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Living for God means that we will act differently toward others than we did before. We will want to know His will and do things that please Him. We will want to be kind and loving. We will talk to God in prayer and listen to God in His Word. (This is how we become God’s friend.)

Tell the child how excited you are that they are now a child of God. Let them know that you will pray for them. Invite them to come to church. Tell them that it will be important for them to learn more about God through reading the Bible and by talking to Him through prayer. Make sure that you let the child’s leader know that the child made a decision to become a Christian so that the people in the church can follow up with this precious new believer and their family.