



OPERATION TRANSFORMATION

DAY ONE

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 Badge	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

Leadership Meeting

- Greeting and appreciation
- Our goal is to *help kids experience life-transforming encounters with Jesus Christ.*
- Review training meeting highlights (bathroom policy, safety policy, discipline, what to do in case of illness or emergency, releasing children at day's end, etc.). Since the details were provided at a prior training, offer these on a single printed page as a reminder.
- Remind leaders of the special offering project.

Day 1 Overview:

Today's Passcode:

**Jesus' love
transforms my
identity!**

Today's Theology Focus:

Salvation
Use every opportunity to
weave this into your time
with the kids.

Today's Bible Story:

Acts 9:1-19
(read aloud)

Review Today's Memory Verse:

John 1:12

"Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name,
he gave the right to become children of God."

Review Top Secret Hand Signal:

Tap-tap, clap-clap, snap-snap, SHHHHHH!

Pat palms on top of legs two times, clap hands two times, snap fingers two times, and place finger to lips while shushing.
NOTE: some people have difficulty snapping their fingers; encourage them to close all four fingers onto their palms.

- Review today's songs. Motions to John 1:12 are included on the media section of nazarene.org/vbs.
- Review today's schedule.
- Questions, comments, or concerns?
- Close with prayer at least 15 minutes before start time.

OUR PRAYER FOR YOU:

Father God, we worship You for Who You are.

There is no one like You, Who loves, seeks, and saves the lost.

All of our preparation has brought us to this moment.

Now, Father, bring the children You know need to be here today.

Cut out all distractions so the Good News will go forth without hindrance.

Give us ears to hear Your Spirit and the right words to communicate Your love to the children.

Help us remember what we have prepared to present to the children today.

Give us the energy and enthusiasm to make Your Word

as exciting, engaging, and powerful as it truly is.

We pray the children will fall in love with You and with Your Word.

Draw them by Your grace into a right relationship with you.

Grant us strength to carry out Your work here today.

Protect these kids and these workers.

Take care of our families at home while we seek to expand your Kingdom here.

May Your Kingdom come and Your will be done here today.

We will be careful to give You all the glory.

In Jesus' name and for the sake of His Kingdom,

Amen.

Opening & Welcome

Be prepared to transition quickly from music to dialogue to music to skit to keep attention focused.

Sing Theme Song with Hand Motions

Starting with music engages everyone's attention and participation.

Welcome

The following is a suggested script:

Director: Welcome to *Operation Transformation!* I am Special Agent _____ and it's so great to see all of you today! I have been looking forward to being on this mission with you. We are going to have a great week! Did you know you have just learned our memory verse for the week? (*Say the verse you just sang.*)

Top Secret Hand Signal

Director: The first thing I need to do is teach you the *Operation Transformation* top secret hand signal. Signals tell us what to do, right? A stop sign signals drivers to do what? (*Pause*) Correct! It tells them to stop. Our top secret hand signal tells us to stop and listen quietly so everyone can hear what's about to happen. If you have anything in your hands, put it under your chair or the chair in front of you. Your leaders will do it first to show you how it's done. Stand up, leaders! Ready, set, go!

Tap-tap, clap-clap, snap-snap, SHHHHHH!

Alright! Now everybody stand up and let's try it all together when I say "Go." Ready, set, go! (*Pause*)

YES! That was OUTSTANDING! Alright, everybody sit down.



Offering

Director: We are going to do something VERY special this week! We will receive an offering each day. The boys will place their offering here (*Show boys' bucket*) and the girls will place their offering here (*Show girls' bucket*).

An offering is a gift we give to help God's people share the Good News of Jesus with others. All the money you give this week will help kids around the world to join the mission through the Kids Reaching Kids offering project. (*Explain your mission project. You can find information about the Kids Reaching Kids Offering at nazarene.org/sdmi.*)

With *Operation Transformation*, we are going to MAKE A DIFFERENCE in the lives of girls and boys around the world! Pretty cool, right? In a minute, some special agents are going to teach us our theme song for the week. So when you hear the music begin, follow your leader to bring your offering—and be sure to put it in the right place! Don't worry if you don't have anything to give today; follow your leader anyway. Now that you know, you can bring it tomorrow. We'll all meet back here before you go home and that's when we'll see if the GIRLS or BOYS won!

(Play the theme song and receive the offering. Use this time to make any other special announcements. When everyone has returned to their seats, lead them in the top secret hand signal to get their attention.)

Great job everyone! You just heard the official *Operation Transformation* theme song. We'll be singing it every day—but of course we have to learn it first! So let's meet the special agents leading music this week (*Introduce worship team*).

Sing Theme Song with Hand Motions

Sing Day 1 Song with Hand Motions

Opening Skit

Props & Characters:

- **1 box with a lid**, clearly marked "Top Secret" in large red letters with a "thumbprint scanner" (found in the resource section of nazarene.org/vbs) on the lid. This is the special agent lockbox. Feel free to be creative. For instance, placing a battery operated light inside will make the box glow and add mystery to the contents.
- **1 white flower** (preferably a carnation) and an **NIV Bible or New Testament**. These are placed inside the lockbox beforehand. Make note of Acts 9:4-6.
- **1-2 chairs**
- **Small table** with a **clear vase**
- Optional **clipboards** for Tre & Buddy (holding their scripts to access when cues/prompts needed)
- **Special Agent Tre** (Code Name: Trinity); dressed like a spy, with a hat and sunglasses
- **Agent-In-Training Buddy** (Code Name: Barnabas); dressed in street clothes

Note: Use any additional props available to increase interest. Encourage the characters to move often and to use the whole platform/stage.

Dialogue:

Director: Hey everybody! I want to introduce a friend of mine. He's here to recruit our help for a secret mission. The thing is, I don't know his real name because...well, because he's a special agent! His code name is Trinity but I've always called him Tre! So stand up and let's all welcome Special Agent Tre with our top secret hand signal!

Tap-tap, clap-clap, snap-snap, shhhhhh!

(Tre strides confidently onstage.)

Agent Tre: Wow! I'm not used to all this attention. Thank you for that wonderful welcome! That reminds me of a song...

(Starts shouting/singing) "Yet to all who did receive him..."

(Interrupting himself) Hey! That song goes perfectly with today's secret passcode. I'd love to share it with you but I can't...unless...

(Ponders for a moment) ...unless you all became official Operation Transformation recruits.

Then I could tell you the passcode AND you could help me with my mission! Sound like a good idea? OK! Everybody who wants to be an official recruit stand up. Let's start with the top secret hand signal. Ready?

Tap-tap, clap-clap, snap-snap, shhhhhh!

OK, raise your right hand *(Raises right hand shoulder-high)*.

By the power vested in me, I hereby appoint you official *Operation Transformation* recruits. Great! Have a seat.

Here's today's secret passcode: **Jesus' love transforms my identity!**

Got it? Let's say it together: **Jesus' love transforms my identity!**

Now just the girls: **Jesus' love transforms my identity!**

And now just the boys! **Jesus' love transforms my identity!**

Now all together: **Jesus' love transforms my identity!**

What a great group of recruits! Thanks, Special Agent _____!

(Director walks offstage)

Buddy: *(Stumbles in from offstage and faces Tre, oblivious to the crowd)* There you are!

Agent Tre: *(Very serious)* Passcode?

Buddy: Oh, right.

(Stands at attention and says loudly) **Jesus' love transforms my identity!** Sorry I'm late, Tre. I wasn't sure if this was the right place. You said we were having a secret meeting here but when I saw all the cars, I thought I must be in the wrong place because I didn't see how we could hold a secret meeting with all these people around. But I decided to look anyway and I'm glad I did, because here you are! And...

(Looks around as if seeing the kids for the first time; drops his voice to an exaggerated whisper) Here they are! Oh man! I hope they didn't just hear everything I said...because then our secret meeting wouldn't be a secret...I guess there's only one way to find out.

(Faces the kids, speaking in full voice) Excuse me; excuse me—did anybody happen to hear anything I just said to Tre?

(Expect kids to holler "yes, we heard you;" "no, we didn't hear you;" etc.)

OH NO! I am SO sorry Tre; I've ruined everything! Sharing secret information in front of strangers. Now I'll never become a special agent! *(Head in hands, Buddy collapses into a pitiful puddle)*

Agent Tre: Hold on a minute. These aren't strangers; they're just new friends you haven't met! *(Turns to audience)* Am I right, kids? Recruits, this is Agent-In-Training Code Name Barnabas—but you can call him Buddy. Everybody, say hello to Buddy. *(Turns to Buddy and gestures to the audience)*

Buddy, *these* are the new recruits I was telling you about! They're going to help us with *Operation Transformation*. And some of them might even become agents-in-training like you. And if you think there are a lot of them here today, just wait 'til they've had a chance to tell all their friends about *Operation Transformation*!

Buddy: That's awesome, Tre! It seems like only yesterday that I was a brand new recruit just like them.

(Suddenly fearful) Have you told them about Deceptor, yet? What if *he* shows up?

Agent Tre: Don't worry about Deceptor, Buddy. I have a plan to deal with him. Now, where was I? Oh... right! I was getting ready to show these recruits the latest piece of equipment from Headquarters. It's a special agent lockbox.

(Tre pulls the box to center stage and makes a big deal of "scanning" his thumbprint on the scanner. He opens the top and begins to insert his hand when Buddy interrupts.)

Buddy: Whoa! Wait a minute! Did I just see what I thought I saw? Please tell me you didn't just scan your thumbprint to unlock that box!

Agent Tre: Well, as a matter of fact, I did. *(Closes the box again without removing contents)*

Buddy: AWESOME! That is so cool! Can I try it?

Agent Tre: OK...but you won't be able to... *(Chuckles to himself and looks knowingly at the kids as Buddy "scans" his thumbprint)*

Buddy: *(Buddy tries to open the box but can't. He huffs and puffs, gets frustrated, tries repeatedly, seems to pull even harder on the lid as if it's been nailed shut. Buddy can really play this up like he's giving it ALL he's got to open the box but to no avail.)*

What is WRONG with this BOX? You need to take it back to Headquarters, Tre. It's obviously not working right. Unless I broke it. Did I break it? Oh no! I can't believe I broke it! I am SO sorry, Tre! I wasn't trying to break it. You saw me, right? I scanned my thumbprint, just like you, but the lid wouldn't budge!

Agent Tre: You didn't break it, Buddy. It can only be opened by the special agent it's assigned to. That's what makes this scanner so awesome! If it was locked with a key, or a combination, or even a password, anybody who found the key, combination, or password could open it. But no two people on the entire planet have the same fingerprints—not even identical twins! That's how God made us and *that's* why I'm the only one who can open *this* lockbox! *(Scans his thumbprint, easily opens the box, and removes a white carnation and NIV Bible)*

Buddy: THAT/IS/SO/COOL!!! You know, I'm grateful to be an agent-in-training because I'm learning so much, but I cannot WAIT to become a special agent like you. When will that happen, Tre?

Agent Tre: Well, it's different for everyone, Buddy. Both of my parents were special agents and as long as I can remember, that's all I ever wanted to be. *(Tre puts down the flower but holds on to the Bible)*

But that's not how it is for everybody. For example, take the story of Special Agent Paul written in the Handbook. His transformation was so radical that he changed his name from Saul to Paul. As you know, the Bible is the Official *Operation Transformation* Agent Handbook. You can find the beginning of Paul's story in the book of Acts.

Paul grew up in a very religious family who named him Saul and taught him that the only way to please God was to carefully follow all of the religious rules. And that's what he did. So when he grew up, he would get very angry with anybody who said that following Jesus was the only way to please God. He hated anyone who had anything good to say about Jesus.

Buddy: But wait...I'm confused. I thought you said he was trying to please God.

Agent Tre: He was, but he was deceived by you-know-who.

Buddy: Deceptor?

Agent Tre: Yes sir! Deceptor convinced Saul that he was pleasing God by attacking Christians! Then the strangest thing happened! He was on his way to Damascus to arrest a bunch of Christians when a bright light came out of nowhere and blinded him. It says it right here in the Handbook, in Acts chapter 9, verses 4-6.

(Reads from Bible taken out of lockbox): He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." *(Close the Bible and set it back on the table)*

In case you don't know, to persecute means to badly mistreat an innocent person or a group of people, usually for a long time.

Buddy: Man! That IS dramatic. So, did the bright light and voice turn him into a special agent?

Agent Tre: Oh, no. They just got his attention. Like everybody who becomes a special agent, he had to confess his sins, believe that Jesus was God's son who died for his sins, claim Jesus as his Savior, and receive God's forgiveness. He was even baptized to show everyone that he was following Jesus, just like those he used to bully!

He was one of the original *Operation Transformation* special agents. He actually wrote several sections of the Special Agent Handbook.

Buddy: Wow! Headed the wrong way...totally convinced he was going in the right direction...bright light...voice from heaven. He did a total 180...new life, new mission, new everything! That's a lot to take in.

Agent Tre: Yes it is! But as you know, Buddy, the more you learn about *Operation Transformation*, the more it all starts to make sense. Oh! Oh! *(Starts laughing and hopping on one foot)* Hang on. Someone's calling me on my special agent shoe phone! *(Takes off his shoe and sticks it to his head like a phone)*

Buddy: *(Looking at the kids)* Phone? I didn't hear a phone; did you hear a phone?

Agent Tre: *(Covers the "phone" and whispers to Buddy)* It's silent of course...but when it vibrates it really tickles!

(Now talking on the phone) "Hello, this is Tre. Excuse me? The passcode? Oh, right, **Jesus' love transforms my identity!** Sorry sir; yes sir. I'll leave right away, sir. Thank you, sir." *(Pushes something on the shoe to "hang up the call" and puts it back on his foot)*

I'm sorry, Buddy, we'll have to finish our meeting later. The Boss just gave me a new assignment and I have to leave right away. *(Starts walking offstage)*

Buddy: Wait! What about the flower?

Agent Tre: *(Keeps walking offstage)* The kids will learn about it in their Mission Brief.

Buddy: Can I go with you?

Agent Tre: If you hustle!

Buddy: *(Running after him)* Hold on, I'm coming! Bye, kids!

(Director walks onstage)

Director: I wonder what's so special about that white flower? Oh well, Tre said we'll find out in the Mission Brief. So everybody follow your team leaders to your first activity and I'll see you back here at the end of the day to share what we learn about that flower and to find out about the offering!

Closing:

If time allows, sing 1-2 songs focused on salvation, God's love, and Jesus our Savior.

End with Day 1 Song, "John 1:12, Yet to all who did receive him," with hand motions.

Kids are dismissed by groups and given any instructions they need to get to their Transformation Station.

Play theme song as children exit.

Transformation Station



MISSION BRIEF: FLOWER POWER

Conduct an experiment to show how accepting Jesus' love, reading God's Word, and spending time with God's people transforms us to be like Christ.

Preparation:

- If possible, the leader should wear a **white lab coat**.
- Prepare a **large manila envelope** with "MISSION BRIEF #1" written in large letters on the outside. Place a copy of the **script** inside.
- Gather flower transformation experiment materials: **white flower, clear vase or glass, water, red food coloring, knife or scissors**.
- Have a current **NIV Bible** with your supplies.

Directions:

View the links below and choose an experiment to conduct with the children. Practice your experiment at home one week prior to VBS. The longer the flower sits in colorful water, the more colorful the flower becomes. This provides an example of continuing transformation over time.

Take a picture immediately after placing the white flower in the red water. If possible print the picture and place where the group will be able to see it tomorrow. Each day we will take a picture and track the changes in the flower.

Options:

- kidzone.ws/science/carnations.htm
- littlepassports.com/blog/craft-diy/carnation-science-experiment
- mschicago.org/experiment/hands-on-science/color-changing-carnations

Mission Brief Summary:

1. Retell Saul's story (Jesus' love transformed Saul's identity).
2. Explain the flower analogy.
3. Invite them into a transformational relationship with Jesus.

Mission Brief Leader Suggested Script:

(Feel free to adapt to your context.)

Come on in!

Who remembers what Special Agent Tre pulled out of his secret lockbox? *(Pause for answers)*
Right! A Bible and a flower.

What color was the flower? *(Pause for answers)*
Right again! That white flower is a clue to an important message for us in today's mission briefing.

(Remove this script from a manila envelope with "MISSION BRIEF #1" written in large letters on the outside and begin reading.)

The story begins with a man named Saul traveling to a city called Damascus. On his way to Damascus, Saul was blinded by a very bright light.

Why was Saul going to Damascus? *(Pause for answers)*
Right! He was going to arrest all the Christians and take them back to Jerusalem as prisoners.

The men traveling with Saul heard a loud voice speaking to him, but they didn't see anyone talking. Whose voice did they hear speaking to Saul? *(Pause for answers)*
Jesus!

Jesus told Saul to enter the city, but Saul needed the others to help him get there. Why did Saul need help walking to Damascus? *(Pause for answers)*
Because he was blinded by the bright light and couldn't see where he was going.

Why is walking risky when you can't see where you're going? *(Pause for answers)*
Right! Because you can hurt yourself if you trip or bump into something.

(Follow the script or open the Bible and use the Handbook to continue the story of Saul starting at Acts 9:9.)

After Saul made it to Damascus, Jesus gave Special Agent Ananias an important mission that would require great courage. Jesus told Ananias, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight" (Acts 9:11-12).

Why would Agent Ananias need great courage to complete the mission? *(Pause for answers)*
Because he was one of the Christians that Saul was coming to Damascus to arrest!

Ananias was scared and he said to Jesus, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name" (Acts 9:13-14).

Ananias didn't know that Saul already had an amazing encounter with Jesus on his way to Damascus. So Ananias thought Saul was still a very dangerous threat, not only to him but to all of God's special agents in Damascus. Ananias didn't know that Jesus was preparing Saul for a very special mission: to travel to many different places, telling everyone that Jesus was the Son of God who could forgive sins and transform everyone who believed into a precious child of God!

Jesus didn't argue with Ananias. He simply said, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name..." (Acts 9:15).

So, Ananias did what all good agents do: He obeyed Jesus! Even though Ananias was afraid, he knew that Jesus loved him and would never abandon him, no matter what. So Ananias went to the house on Straight Street, placed his hands on Saul and 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." Immediately...he could see again. He got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength (Acts 9:17-19).

So, what does that story have to do with this? *(Hold the flower up)* We're going to use this white flower to show what happens when we choose to follow Jesus and accept Him as our Savior! *(Place the flower in the vase with colored water)*

During the week, we will see this flower transform! That's why it's such a great clue. It reminds us that God wants to transform all of us into His special agents.

We can become God's special agents if we confess our sins and believe that:

- God loves us and sent his Son, Jesus, to save the world.
- Jesus died on the cross so our sins could be forgiven.
- Jesus rose from the dead and He is alive today.

Believing these things and receiving Jesus as our Savior will transform us! We will be "born again" and adopted into God's family! As precious sons and daughters of God, we receive a new identity!

When God transforms us, it changes everything! We feel His love on the inside, and that changes what we want do on the outside. We can stop saying and doing bad things because we are transformed into children of God. We actually want to please God, and we finally have the power to do just that! As God's special agents, we pay close attention to our choices and our actions, like what we watch, what we read, what we listen to, and even what we think about!

The Bible is God's Word. That makes it the ultimate Special Agent Handbook! Some parts of it were even written by Saul after he became Special Agent Paul. Here's what Paul said in a letter he wrote to the special agents in Rome: "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." And the verse goes on to say, "Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will" (Romans 12:2a).

Transformation is our mission. To help us accomplish the mission, let's memorize this verse over the next few days. Let's start by repeating the verse. *(Repeat the verse with motions; play the Operation Transformation theme song and sing along.)*

This flower represents our lives being transformed by the renewing of our minds. The flower must connect to water to live. The flower's transformation begins when the flower is placed in the red water instead of the normal, everyday water. For our life to be transformed, we must connect to God. The problem is that our sin separates us from God, and only God can restore that connection. We cannot transform ourselves. The good news is that God provided a way for us to connect with Him and be transformed through his Son, Jesus. That is why it is so important for us to receive Jesus as our Savior. 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.

When we do this, we connect to God in a powerful way, and He transforms us. God helps us live a life that pleases Him and share His love with others. God's Word is important to our transformation. When we memorize God's Word, we take God's transforming power with us wherever we go. Then, whenever we need help, God can speak truth to us through His powerful, transforming Word.

If any of you want to be transformed into God's special agent, like Paul, just tell me or one of your leaders and we will pray with you about receiving Jesus as your Savior. OK? OK! Let's all say today's special agent passcode: **Jesus' love transforms my identity!** Tomorrow we will see what happened to our flower overnight!

Transformation Station



EVIDENCE VAULT:
JOHN 1:12

Play the theme song or memory verse song as children enter the room. Open your time with the top secret hand signal.

Supplies:

- Recording of the day's **memory verse song**
- A wrapped **gift with a name tag**
- **Memory verse chart**
- Optional **prizes or mission money**
- **Supplies for memory verse game** from the resource section of nazarene.org/vbs

Evidence Vault Leader Suggested Script:

Who remembers today's secret passcode? *(Pause for answers)*

Jesus' love transforms my identity!

Our verse today helps us better understand the passcode. Our verse is:

John 1:12

"Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name,
he gave the right to become children of God."

What does this verse mean?

When you receive a present with your name on it for Christmas or your birthday, what do you do with it?
(Open it; pause for answers)

Right! You accept the gift, open it, and thank the person who gave it to you. That is what this verse is talking about!

The Bible says God is love. God loves all people so much He sent His son, Jesus, to earth to live with us and show us how to love like God loves. Jesus is God's greatest gift to the world. Through believing in Jesus, He gives us the right to become children of God! Jesus is an incredible gift from God to you and to me! He is a gift of love with our names on it! God's love is powerful!

What would happen if someone gave you a present but you didn't know about it or didn't believe it was yours and so you never opened it? Would you be able to really enjoy it if you never accepted it or opened it?

That's what this verse is saying! If I accept God's love for me and believe in Jesus as my Savior, God's powerful love transforms me and I become a precious child of God. I am no longer just (your name) ! Jesus' love has transformed my identity into (your name) , a precious child of God!

If you wonder how to accept the gift of Jesus, talk to me or your leader and we will pray with you.

This is good news! That is why today's memory verse is so important to learn. What's our passcode? *(Pause for answers)*

Jesus' love transforms my identity!

We want to be able to share this good news with others by learning our memory verse.

(Be prepared to say the verse with a rhythm or sing it with the motions. Have fun. Teach the verse a few words at a time modeling the motions slowly. Include the reference. Talk about how the motions reflect the words in the verse. After you have said it a couple of times, speed it up. Play and sing along with the memory verse song for the day.)

Let's say today's memory verse. Repeat after me:

**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

One more time:

**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

Here's an exciting thought: the verses you memorize this week will be with you the rest of your life! Memorize this verse and you will always be able to tell someone else that they, too, can become a precious child of God.

Closing:

Outline the plan your church has made to reward children that memorize Scripture this week. A downloadable memory verse chart is provided for you to write the children's names and keep track of who has memorized which verses. Allow them time each day to repeat them to you.

Go over the memory verse several times.

If they are ready, have children come to you individually to say their verse. Mark it on the memory verse chart. If you are giving prizes or secret mission money for saying today's portion of the verse, hand them out now.

If time allows, play a memory verse game from the memory verse games resource.

Transformation Station



CRAFT LAB:
IDENTITY BADGE

Play the theme song and the memory verse song as children arrive. Ask the children to repeat the memory verse or the passcode for the day.

Supplies:

- **Name tag** (found in the resource section of nazarene.org/vbs)
- **Paper**
- **Stamp pad**
- **Magnifying glass**
- **Crayons, markers, or colored pencils**

Directions:

Have each child use a stamp pad to put their thumbprint on one piece of paper so that the paper contains the thumbprints of every child. Use the magnifying glass to see the thumbprints clearly. Discuss how each thumbprint is completely different.

Craft Lab Leader Suggested Script:

When you checked in, they gave you a nametag. Today we are going to transform our nametags into identity badges.

God made each of us unique. No two persons have the same thumbprints. That is why police departments and security agencies use fingerprints to identify people. Add your thumbprint to your special agent identification badge. Your thumbprint belongs only to you.

Turn the identification badge over. Draw a picture of yourself. Try to make it look as much like you as possible.

Remember today's skit? Tre used his thumbprint to open the top secret lockbox, but Buddy's thumbprint did NOT open the box. Why do you think he couldn't open the box? *(Pause for answers)*
Because he did not have access! The box would only open if it recognized Tre's identity by his thumbprint.

When you are born, the hospital may record your handprints and footprints to officially identify you. You have the same thumbprint all of your life. If you become a Christian and receive new life in Jesus, does that change your thumbprint? *(Pause for answers)*
NO!

Do you look different on the outside? *(Pause for answers)*
NO!

When you accept Jesus as your Savior and God's love transforms you, what changes—the inside or the outside? *(Pause for answers)*
Right! He changes us on the inside.

Because God transforms your heart, you want to please God in your daily life and *that* changes what we do on the outside.

We have a Helper and a Friend to guide us. Just like Tre's thumbprint gave him access to open the lockbox, becoming a Christian gives us access to the greatest treasure in the universe: God Himself! We can ask Him questions and He hears us. He gives us a clean heart. He gives us wisdom when we ask Him. He is with us when we are hurting and helps us overcome the lies of Deceptor, who tempts us to disobey. God protects us by warning us when we are in danger. Giving our lives to Jesus gives us access to all kinds of amazing things!

Closing:

If time allows, share your testimony. How did God change your life? Did He take away resentments and give you a heart of compassion? Did He wash away your guilty conscience and give you joy and freedom from shame? Let the Lord lead the discussion at the age level of the kids in the room. Allow them to ask questions if they wish. If there is additional time, allow children to share what they learned today.

Transformation Station



RECHARGE STATION: ROAD TO DAMASCUS

Play the theme song and the memory verse song as children arrive. Ask the children to repeat the memory verse or passcode for the day.

Supplies:

- Graham crackers
- Yellow icing
- Crystal sprinkles
- Pretzel sticks
- Plastic spoons
- Napkins

Directions:

Give each child one full graham cracker along with a spoonful of icing that has already been colored yellow. Have the children spread the icing on the cracker and use the sprinkles on top of the "road." Use the pretzel sticks to outline the road. Discuss God's transformation of Saul in **Acts 9:1-19**.

Recharge Station Leader Suggested Script:

Today we're going to make a road or pathway with our snacks. We want to remember that Paul started down the road believing the wrong things before he met Jesus that day and his life was transformed. We want to think about our own life while we are decorating our snack.

The most important thing in the whole world is that we experience God's transforming love and have a relationship with Him through Jesus.

Isn't it incredible that God stopped Saul on the road that day so Saul could hear Jesus' voice and know God's powerful, transforming love? Does God always use a bright light to show Himself to people? *(Pause for answers)*

NO!

What other ways does God use to show Himself to people? *(Pause for answers)*

Through nature, He shows He is Creator. Through the Bible He reveals Who He is. Through His people and His Church, He shows His love. He talks to us in our hearts, and we just know that He is real.

How does God show us His love?

The Bible says we all are heading the wrong way. We all are on the wrong path until we meet Jesus, receive His transforming love, and choose to follow Him and take His direction, like Saul. Experiencing the powerful transforming love of Jesus and following Him is sweet, just like the icing and the things we are using to decorate our snack today are transforming our snack into something good and yummy!

What if someone has met Jesus today, like Saul? Or maybe they heard the lessons here at VBS and someone wants to know more about Him? Where can they find out more about Jesus to get to know Him and his transforming love better? *(Pause for answers)*

Read the Bible, learn from other people who know Him, go to Church where they teach us about Him, pray to Him.

Always remember what you have learned today and how God's transforming love is powerful and sweet. Just like with Paul, Jesus will transform your identity into a child of God and give you a new start on a good path, if you follow Him.

Transformation Station



**AGENT TRAINING FIELD:
HOLD ON, SAUL!
(STATUES GAME)**

Equipment:

None

Set Up:

Mark a line on the ground or pavement. Mark another line a good distance away from the first. Select a child to be "It." The players stand on one line; "It" stands on the other line.

Objective:

To see which player can reach the other side first.

How to Play the Game:

The player who is "It" turns his/her back to the others and counts aloud to ten.

As "It" counts, the other players walk as fast as they can toward the other line.

At the count of ten, "It" whirls around and says, "HOLD ON, SAUL!" and all the players freeze into statues. Any player caught moving must go back to the starting line.

"It" can say "You need a new start! Let's try my way!" to anyone who gets caught moving. Then "It" can tell the players that were "caught" to move in a different way next time: "hop on one foot," "take baby steps," "crawl on your hands and knees," "next time take only one step or a sideways step," etc.

The one who is "It" can count as slowly or quickly as he/she wants. This goes on until one player crosses the line and wins the game. The new winner is now "It" and the game starts again.

Memory Verse Application:

(After you have played several times) How is this game like our story about Saul? *(Pause for answers)*
Saul was stopped on his way. Saul was told to wait. Saul was given another chance to follow Jesus. Saul began a new direction. Saul had to follow the directions.

Saul was heading in the wrong direction in his life. Saul did not know that Jesus really was God's Son and the Savior. When Jesus spoke to Saul in the bright light, he was saying, "Hold on, Saul! You are going the wrong way and you need a brand new start! Let's try my way!"

Optional Game: Blind Man's Path

Create a pathway (or several if space allows) by marking lines on the floor with tape. Place items on the path as obstacles for children to walk around as they move down the path.

Divide children in pairs and provide a blindfold to one child in each pair. Tell them that the goal is to reach the end of the path without hitting an obstacle.

Ask the child who can see to verbally guide the blindfolded child around obstacles to reach the end of the path. Have the children trade places. Then discuss these questions:

1. How did it feel to not be able to see? *(Pause for answers)*
Scary, hard.
2. What did you do to get to the end of the path? *(Pause for answers)*
Listen for instructions, walk slowly, wait until someone told me what to do.
3. How do you think Saul felt when he was blind? *(Pause for answers)*

Saul had gotten off the right path and was persecuting Christians. He needed the help of God and others to put him on the right path and receive a new identity. Let's pray and thank God for His guidance and love.

Transformation Station



INFILTRATION
SERVICE PROJECT

Work on something or give something that reflects Jesus offering us new life through the power of His transforming love.

Remember:

The importance of this activity is to teach the children the value of reaching out to others, so no matter which activity you choose, point to the fact that this gift represents new life through Jesus.

Write a note to deliver with each gift that says, "At VBS this week, we are learning that Jesus' love transforms our identity and gives us a new life. May God bless your with the power of His transforming love!" Have the children sign it.

Ideas:

- Plant flowers in little pots to give to house-bound people at your church (can be from seed, can be taking already growing flowers in flats and separating in smaller pots as gifts).
- Assemble gift baskets for the new parents in your church or for a local organization that helps single moms. Provide church members a list of items to donate for this project. Gather donated items ahead of time. Items could include diapers, wipes, baby soaps, baby washcloths, etc.
- Plant flowers or even vegetables in a garden plot or in pots. Tell the children "We are planting these now so that we can bless others with the beauty or food that grows from this new life!"

Closing Skit

Play theme song and memory verse song as children return.

Ask volunteers to share the passcode, memory verse, favorite activity, or something they learned. Or have trivia questions prepared to ask early arrivers.

Begin with the top secret hand signal.

Dialogue:

Director: What a great day we had learning that **Jesus' love transforms my identity!** Let's welcome back our worship leader to review our two songs for today.

(Worship leader sings theme song and today's memory verse song with hand motions.)

(Buddy and Tre walk on stage. Buddy clumsily trips.)

Buddy: Agent Tre, THAT WAS AWESOME! Thanks for letting me ride along. It must feel great to go around helping people all the time.

Agent Tre: Being a part of *Operation Transformation* is great, Buddy. It's not always easy, but it IS always rewarding because what we do changes lives.

Buddy: How did you know what to say to that lady you helped?

Agent Tre: In addition to my special agent shoe phone, every special agent has a built-in receiver tuned to the Boss's frequency that allows Him to speak directly to each one of us. The thing is, it's not very loud so I have to listen very carefully. That's why it helps to memorize as much of the Handbook as possible. That way, I've always got it in here *(Taps his head)*, because much of what He says comes out of here *(Holds up a Bible)*.

Buddy: Are you saying the Boss wrote the Agent Handbook? I thought you said Paul wrote it.

Agent Tre: Paul wrote part of it. God also spoke through many other writers over the years. The important thing to remember is that God inspired the words they wrote. So even though different writers wrote different parts at different times, everything in the Handbook tells about God's love for us. It's really the story of God's love for the world. Everything in it points us to God's love and prepares the way for *Operation Transformation*. That's what makes this such an exciting time to be a special agent.

Buddy: How did we get in this mess to begin with, Tre? Why do we even need *Operation Transformation*?

Agent Tre: That's a great question, Buddy. In the beginning, everything was good. God created the world and then He created us in His image, as His children. He put us in charge of a world filled with His presence, beauty, and love. We lived in loving relationship with God and each other, secure in our identity as precious children of light.

Buddy: Well, that's sure not how it is now! What happened?

Agent Tre: What happened is that Deceptor showed up!

Buddy: Do you mean the devil?

Agent Tre: He goes by a lot of names, Buddy. Satan, Lucifer, the devil, Deceptor. He's sneaky and evil, he hates God, and he hates us too! He lied to Adam and Eve. He persuaded them to disobey God and when they did, everything changed. They hid from God because they felt ashamed, and they felt ashamed because they had sinned. They traded their identity as children of light for a terrible identity as children of darkness. That's why disobedience is the root of all sin.

Buddy: I'm glad I don't sin!

Agent Tre: Are you sure, Buddy? Have you ever told a lie?

Buddy: Uh, yeah, but not very big ones.

Agent Tre: Have you ever disobeyed your parents or taken something that didn't belong to you? Have you ever said or done something mean to hurt someone else because you were mad at them?

Buddy: Well... *(Head hanging down)* ...yes. Yes. Yes and yes.

Agent Tre: *(Holding the Bible up)* The Handbook calls all of those things sin.

Buddy: Well, then I guess I have sinned after all. *(Scratching his head)*

Agent Tre: Buddy, everyone has sinned. Every. Single. Person. Even me. Even Special Agent Paul. But I have some Good News for you. Actually, it's great news! God wasn't happy about Deceptor tricking Adam and Eve into disobeying Him. So God did something incredible! He came into the world as a baby, just like us.

Buddy: Are you talking about Jesus?

Agent Tre: Exactly! Jesus became like us so we could become like Him! When Jesus grew up, Deceptor tempted Him, just like he tempts each of us. But his tricks didn't work on Jesus. Jesus resisted those temptations and won the battle over sin, and shame, and even Deceptor himself! And when He died and rose again, He was even victorious over death.

Buddy: Are you talking about Jesus dying on the cross?

Agent Tre: Yes! Jesus died on the cross for our sins, but He rose again and He's alive today. Jesus died for us so we could live for Him! If we accept His sacrifice, our sins are forgiven and we receive a new identity. We're transformed by God's love from children of darkness into children of light.

Buddy: Oh, now I get it! That's *Operation Transformation!*

Agent Tre: Right. Jesus launched *Operation Transformation* because we couldn't transform ourselves. When we pray and ask Jesus into our hearts, it's HIS power that transforms us.

Buddy: I sure could use that kind of power. Can I ask Jesus to transform my heart?

Agent Tre: Sure, Buddy! It's as easy as A-B-C!

A: Admit (tell God) that you have disobeyed God.

B: Believe God loves you and sent His son, Jesus, to make it possible for you to be forgiven. Ask for and receive God's forgiveness.

C: Claim Jesus as your Savior and best Friend and claim your new identity as a precious child of God.

Buddy: I know my ABC's, but would you help me to pray about this right now?

Agent Tre: Sure! (*Turn to the kids*) I know you have learned a lot about the power of God's transforming love today. If you would like to ask God to transform your life, you can pray your own prayer or you can pray this prayer with me and Buddy. Would you bow your heads and close your eyes while we pray?

Dear God, Thank you for sending Jesus to die on the cross for the wrong things I have done. (*Pause while Buddy repeats*)

I admit I have disobeyed you and I am sorry. Please forgive me. (*Pause while Buddy repeats*)

I want Jesus to be my Savior and best friend. (*Pause while Buddy repeats*)

Thank You for forgiving me and giving me a new identity. (*Pause while Buddy repeats*)

Transform me with Your loving power so I can obey You everyday. (*Pause while Buddy repeats*)

In Jesus' name, AMEN!

Buddy: Thanks, TRE! I can't wait to share this good news!

Agent Tre: Congratulations, Buddy! You are now an official special agent! I was going to give my report on today's mission to the Boss. Why don't you come with me and we can tell the Boss together?

Buddy: Great! Bye, kids!

Director: Thanks, Buddy and Tre! See you tomorrow! Kids, if you accepted Jesus as your Savior today, your identity is transformed! You are a precious child of God! Please share this news with your leader before you leave today.

God has given us a great first day at *Operation Transformation*, and we have even more to celebrate! While you were in your transformation stations, we counted the offering. Do you want to know who gave the most today, the girls or the boys?

The girls gave \$_____ and the boys gave \$_____. So who gave the most? (*Pause for answers*) Right! But working together, you gave \$_____ to the real winners: children all around the world who will hear about *Operation Transformation* because of your generosity. Way to go!

Everyone, please stand for our closing prayer: Thank You, God, for your transforming love for each one of us and for the generosity of these children. We pray that you will help other children know You and Your Son, Jesus! Amen.

Everyone take off your nametags and give them to your group leader. You can pick them up when you come back tomorrow. OK? And everybody remember to bring a friend, so they can hear about *Operation Transformation* too!

Closing:

Give any other announcements or direction for dismissal. Play theme song as children leave.