

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.

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.