

A Big Change

By RLD Editorial Team

for use as
STEP 1 

Lesson 11**Focus:**

Jesus came to change sinners like me.

Lesson 11**Bible Basis:**

Matthew 9:9-13

Lesson 11**Memory Verse:**

By his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith.
—2 Thessalonians 1:11b

Students will discuss change in their lives and in the world as they explore how Jesus changes sinners.

Materials:

- Whiteboard with markers (or screenshared document)

As your students enter the classroom today, have them answer the following question on the whiteboard: “What would you change about your life if you could?” Students don’t need to feel vulnerable in this—the answers can be lighthearted (examples: I wouldn’t share a room with my sibling, or my mom wouldn’t make anything with peas in it ever again.) After everyone has written at least one answer, read through some of the answers and give anyone who wants to the opportunity to explain why they would change this if they could.

We all go through changes in our lives—everything from the weather to the latest trending video to the fact that we grew two inches in the past year. Some changes are to be expected and others come as a surprise.

➤ **In general, do you like or dislike change? Why?** (Answers will vary. Let them share freely on what and why change may be a pleasant or unpleasant thing. Use this as an opportunity to gain insight into your students’ spiritual level without mentioning spirituality at this point.)

In the past five years, many people have experienced significant changes—both inside and outside the U.S. While some of these events were expected, many of these changes were unexpected.

- **Many people’s lives were changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Some lost loved ones, others lost their jobs, and many people transitioned to working or attending school from home.**
- **The United States has had two presidential elections and two administration changes in the last five years. Election cycles often bring about new leaders and policies.**

- **There have been many natural disasters in the United States, such as the recent hurricanes in the eastern part of the country and recent fires in California. These disasters have caused many people to lose loved ones and homes.**
- **Many global wars have begun in the last few years, such as the conflicts in Ukraine, in Gaza, and in Sudan.**

These are just a few of the ways the world has changed recently. Although the world may not have changed much for some people in the last five years, many others have experienced the impacts of these changes. After all, many major events have happened!

➤ **How have your lives changed in the last five years? Have any of you experienced unexpected changes? How did those changes affect you?** (Do not force students to respond; accept all reasonable responses.)

➤ **When changes come, how do you deal with them? Are you able to take it in stride or do you have a tendency to fight change?** (Answers will vary.)

➤ **Why might we find change scary at times?** (Answers will vary but may include: we aren't sure how things are going to be after the change; we don't like losing control over certain areas of our lives; etc.)

When change comes to us, we can like it or dislike it, accept it or fight it. But what about when we need to change and just can't seem to do it? We've all got something in our lives that we want to change but don't seem to be able to. Today we're going to talk about a man who needed some big changes in his life. Let's see what happened.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

middle school



Lesson 11 / February 9, 2025

A Big Change

for use as
STEP 4 

Lesson 11

Focus:

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Bible Basis:

Matthew 9:9-13

Lesson 11

Memory Verse:

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Materials:

- Internet access
- Paper
- Pens/pencils
- Scissors
- Washi tape or some opaque, colored tape
- Optional: Whiteboard and marker (or screenshared document)

If your class is meeting online, invite students to bring supplies with them to class.

We talked about Matthew before and after Jesus. Matthew was basically a criminal in his day—he stole money, cheated, lied, and betrayed people. But then Jesus brought real change into Matthew’s life.

All sin separates us from God, Who is holy. Thankfully, Jesus came to earth to restore our relationship with God!

Let’s create an illustration of the way Jesus has made us right with God. Distribute supplies (or invite students to have them ready at home.) Make sure there are a few rolls of transparent tape and several pairs of scissors available for the students to share. We suggest that you complete this activity along with your students so that they can see an example.

At the very top of the page, write GOD in big letters. At the very bottom, write ME. You should be left with some space in the middle.

➤ **What are some common sins that you think middle schoolers commit?** (List the sins suggested by your students on the whiteboard if you choose.)

In between GOD and ME on your paper—in that middle space—write some sins that you’ve committed which separate you from God. No one will see this except you, so you can be honest. Give your teens a minute or two to write down some sins.

Obviously, there's a problem on your paper: sin stands between you and God. Cut those sins out of the middle! Leave the part of your paper that says GOD and the part that says ME, but cut out those sins in the middle. Crumple them up and put them in the trash.

Demonstrate to students that they should cut the list of sins out of the middle of the page as one piece, not mutilate the sheet. Students can discard the sins from the middle of the sheet, but the GOD and ME portions of the page should be kept. The two words will now be on separate (cut-apart) pieces of paper.

If your sins are forgiven, there's nothing that stands between you and God . . . but you're still disconnected. Now, here's the really miraculous thing about what Jesus does when we make a decision to follow Him. He doesn't just take away our sins. He also puts our lives back together! He brings real change.

Jesus put Matthew's life back together in today's Bible story. And He wants to do the same for us, too! Show your students how to use a horizontal piece and a vertical piece of tape in the shape of a cross to reattach the GOD and ME fragments from their original papers. Encourage your students to do the same. **Now, not only are you forgiven by God—you're closer to Him than ever.**

Take home your reattached paper as a reminder to thank Jesus for bringing change into your life. He brings change and forgiveness when we need it the most!

Close in prayer, thanking Jesus for restoring our fellowship with the Father.

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