



NEW Beginnings



Writer: Carolyn Crowell
Editor: Gabrielle Lewis
Design: Kaeli Hearn

Lesson 1



Lesson 1:
New Beginnings with God



Bible Connection (NLT):
Acts 8:1; Acts 9:1-21 & 26;
2 Corinthians 5:17; Hebrews 11:6;
Matthew 7:7; Lamentations 3:25 (NLT
and NKJV); Genesis 28:10-19



Bottom Line: Each one of us can
experience a new beginning in our
relationship with God.

SUPPLIES

Creation Station

- Craft Supplies
- Recycling Materials
- Fasteners of all types (tape, glue, pipe cleaners, string)
- Scissors
- Felts, pens, pencils
- Blank paper

Attention Grabber

- Pics of Baby Mop invention in Lesson 1's folder

Game

- A grapefruit or cantaloupe sized nylon, air filled ball from the dollar store.

Small Group

- One jar for each preteen.
- A handful of smooth stones for each preteen that can be written on.
- Large sticky labels for jar.
- Permanent markers.
- Stickers
- Glue Sticks
- Pencil Crayons

INTRO ACTIVITY: CREATION STATION

Each week, allow preteens time at their arrival to create and invent something new until 10-15 minutes into your ministry time. Create a space for random craft supplies, re-cycling, and fasteners to put things together (tape, pipe cleaners, glue sticks, string, paper fasteners). Take photos of their inventions, invite explanations, and celebrate their creativity and new way of thinking. Change up a few of the supplies available each week. Consider having posters or print-outs with a photo and date of different inventions through history scattered in the area or posted up.

OPENING

Come on over preteens, and take your seats!

It's time to introduce you to our new series called, "New Beginnings."

The word, new, means something that didn't exist before, or something that may have already existed but is discovered for the first time.

A beginning is the point or space in time that something starts.

So in this series, there will be plenty of opportunity to discover things for the first time and start something new.

Each week, you'll have a chance to visit the Creation Station that you already got a taste of today.

As we talk about new beginnings each week, and things that may not have existed before, you'll have a chance to create new things at this fun and fantastic station.

I'll hope you show us what you work on and share your creative ideas.

We'll also enjoy a reinvented game, some creative story-telling, and small group time.

So since you are all here and ready to go, we're going dig right in.

ATTENTION GRABBER: WORLD'S CRAZIEST INVENTIONS

Each week, I'm going to show you a crazy invention that is out there.

Some of these are laugh-out-loud funny.

Are you ready for this one?

Show pics of Baby Mop in Lesson 1's folder.

So what do you think?

Would you use this one?

Allow time for responses.

Some of the best inventions in the world have been made because people saw a need for a fresh start or a new beginning.

God loves new beginnings!

All through the Bible He continues to create new things--new covenants, new life, and new creation.

We love new beginnings as well don't we?

Think about it.

New school supplies, new year's, new clothes, new toys, new video games, and new McFlurry flavors.

What is the last new thing you enjoyed and why did you like it so much?

Allow for responses.

There is something about newness that is appealing.

It recharges us inside and creates excitement.

Scientists have even researched why people like new things so much.

I think it has to do with the fact that we are made in God's image.

That means we reflect our Creator.

If God loves new things then it makes sense that we would as well.

Each week in this series we are going to look at four new beginnings that are available to each of us because of God.

TEACH

All through the Bible there are dramatic stories about new beginnings.

Today, I'd like to look at one of my favorites with you.

I want you to use your imagination with me for a moment.

Imagine you live in a country where you are not allowed to blink.

No one else blinks at all--especially the rulers.

If you are caught blinking, you could be thrown into prison or worse.

There are people who are on the lookout for people who blink.

One of those people is named George.

George is especially watchful for people who are blinking.

He has people watching, and if he sees anyone at all blinking, he gives the orders to throw people into prison.

You know George is the one you have to watch out for and you don't ever want him to catch you blinking.

You hide whenever you see him coming.

One day, you hear the most amazing news!

George has decided not to hunt down people who blink.

In fact, he has become a blinker himself.

He is now telling others not to hurt people who blink.

This is a person you have been afraid of for so long and is now someone you can trust.

What do you think you would do?

Would you trust him?

Allow for responses.

It would be very hard to trust someone who couldn't be trusted in the past.

This very thing happened in the book of Acts with a man named Saul who later became known to us as Paul.

We know him by two names because Paul had both a Hebrew name (Saul) and a Roman name (Paul).

This is much like people today who immigrate to America.

They might have a name from the country they were born and an American name.

Now Paul was famous in the New Testament book of Acts for preaching the good news about Jesus.

He did mission trips, started churches, and he taught people how to be followers of Jesus.

But things did not start out this way for him.

In the beginning of the book of Acts, Paul was known for persecuting followers of Jesus.

He would watch for people who followed Jesus, he would throw them into prison, and he would even see them killed.

In **Acts chapter 7**, a follower of Jesus named Stephen was stoned to death and Paul was there.

Look at this verse with me:

“Saul was one of the witnesses, and he agreed completely with the killing of Stephen.”

Wow! How in the world did Saul become the famous New Testament follower of Jesus that we read about?

Well let's take a look at his story.

I'm going to pick some of you to read one verse at a time from the screen as we go.

Now this is a crazy good story so I hope you'll really listen to it as we read.

Read **Acts 9:1-21**.

Paul experienced a brand new beginning with God.

Paul knew who God was and even worshipped Him.

He was after all a Jew just like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and others before him.

The issue was he did not believe Jesus was who He said He was.

He thought followers of Jesus were trying to mess things up for the Jews.

Because of what happened on the road to Damascus, Paul gained a completely new understanding of who God was and who Jesus was.

Paul's new beginning was incredibly dramatic.

Further along in [Acts 9:26](#) it says,

“When Saul arrived in Jerusalem, he tried to meet with the believers, but they were all afraid of him. They did not believe he had truly become a believer!”

It's okay though, his friend Barnabas talked to them and convinced them that Paul's life had truly changed.

We're going to have a little fun reviewing this dramatic new beginning after we play a game. Are you guys ready to play an old favorite reinvented?

GAME: RED ROVER REINVENTION

Today we're going to play a reinvention of Red Rover.

We'll get you into two teams, holding hands, facing each other with a good size gap between the teams.

Here's how it works.

We'll do a coin toss and the team that wins will get control of this small plastic ball.

Someone on your team will let go of hands for a moment to throw the ball through (not over) the other team.

It has to get through below the head.

If you are successful, then someone from their team has to come and join your team and you will get another throw.

If you are unsuccessful, then nothing happens but the ball goes to the opposite team for their play.

The opposing team can block a ball from getting through by moving side to side, using their joined hands, or feet, knees, or head to block.

Once a team is down to their last player, they are out.

Note: If your group is too large for the playing area then consider doing two games simultaneously or creating four teams arranged in a square.

Have preteens go from the game directly to their small groups and work on the following.

SMALL GROUP

Have a Bible nearby to reference [Acts 9:1-21](#) if needed.

Small group leader say: We heard earlier that Paul had a dramatic new beginning.

Because of this, I think we should take some time to put on our dramatic hats.
What do you think?

We are going to prepare a 1 minute clip of Paul's new beginning.

Here's the catch--we can't use any words or sound.

We will be like mimes.

We can have someone be Paul, another be Ananias, some be the men with Paul, another be God, and others can be props or other parts that your imagination thinks would have place in the story.

We have 7 minutes to put it together before we go back to large group and show our version of the story.

Let's make it happen!

Assign characters and then take no more than 7 minutes for preparation.

TEACH: APPLICATION

Bring small groups back together to present.

Great job, everyone, showing us your version of Paul's new beginning.

Paul knew who God was, but he gained a completely new understanding of Him.

He gained a relationship with God.

The way Paul lived before, as someone who persecuted Christians, was no longer. He was a new man!

Paul explained this in **2 Corinthians 5:17**:

"This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!"

Paul experienced this first hand.

A new life had begun for him.

The cool thing is every one of us has the opportunity to experience a new beginning in our relationship with God.

These new beginnings happen when we seek God.

Seeking Him means we search for Him, we desire Him, and we go after Him.

In **Hebrews 11:6** it says:

"And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to Him must believe that God exists and that He rewards those who sincerely seek him."

Did you see that?

As we go after God we are to believe that He will reward those who seek Him with eagerness.

It's like when you go to the tree on Christmas morning, eager and believing that there will be good things under that tree for you.

We are to seek God the same way, eager and believing that He has good things for us.

That is the first part of experiencing a new beginning--seeking.

The second part is asking.

Jesus says in **Matthew 7:7** to, "Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you."

That is an amazing promise!

The third and final part is waiting for God to show you what He is doing, to listen to what He wants to tell you.

This happens because of the time we spend with Him, reading our Bibles, talking to Him and listening to His voice.

We depend on Him to answer us.

In fact, Lamentations uses that word in some translations instead of wait.

Read 3:25 in NLT and NKJV.

"The Lord is good to those who depend on Him, to those who search for Him." Or, "The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him."

So we seek, we ask, and we wait.

We eagerly expect God to do new things in us.

These are the ways we can experience a new beginning in our relationship with God.

We've heard Paul's story.

What about you?

Have any of you experienced a new beginning between you and God you'd like to share?

Allow for 2-3 preteens to share.

Thank you for sharing.

If you didn't get to share or you are still thinking of something, you'll have another opportunity to share later in your small group

Now it's time for us to do something with what we've learned.

God offers each of us a new beginning.

I'm going to give you four examples and I want you to identify which of these four examples you are most like.

Here is the first example:

You have heard about God but you are not really sure how this whole relationship with Him actually works. You'd like to experience that but you have a lot of questions. You are not sure if you should make the first move or if you should wait until you know more.

The second example:

You have a relationship with God. You asked Him to come into your heart by prayer but you've drifted away. It could be that you've just been distracted or maybe there is sin that you are struggling with.

The third example:

You have a relationship with God but you are not sure how He feels about you. You have doubts, you wonder if He's there, you wonder why He doesn't answer your prayers in the way you'd like, and you've never heard His voice

The fourth example:

You have a relationship with God. You trust Him and know He is with you. You love to tell others about Him. You are just curious if you can have a new beginning too. Is there something more?

Everyone in this room will be in a different place in their relationship with God.

Maybe you don't have a relationship with Him yet, or your relationship may be like one of our examples, or like an example we didn't think of.

That's okay.

Everyone, no matter what, can experience a new beginning in their relationship with God.

No one's relationship with God will be exactly the same as someone else's.

I'd like to pray with you today.

I believe this very moment can be a start of something new for each person in this room.

This can be a very big moment as you go into this New Year.

I'm going to ask you to bow your heads and close your eyes so you are not distracted by what others are doing around you.

The first thing we are going to do is seek God.

We are going to let Him know we are here and ready to listen to His voice and that we want the new beginnings He has to offer us.

Go ahead and do that now in your own words.

You can say it out loud or in your head.

Now, by raising your hand and putting it back down, how many of you are ready for a new beginning in your relationship with God?

Allow a moment for preteens to respond.

Awesome!

I'm going to break it down a little as we pray.

This is the ask part.

So first of all, is there anyone here who does not have a relationship with God that would like to begin one?

Romans 10:9 says, "If we confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in our hearts that God has raised Him from the dead we will be saved."

We will be saved from our sins and given a new beginning with a clean heart that is washed of all the wrong things we have done.

We are promised that God will live in our hearts and be our forever friend and heavenly Father.

We will be adopted into God's family.

We are also promised an eternity in heaven with Jesus.

Is there anyone here that would like to pray that prayer for the very first time today?

If that's you, go ahead and raise your hand and put it back down.

Then we're going to pray and I'd like you and any leaders in this room to repeat after me as we pray.

Pray with preteens who respond this way by having them repeat the following after you.

Dear God, I am saying that Jesus Christ is Lord. I believe that You sent Je-sus to be my Savior, and that He died on the cross to take the punishment for my sins. I believe that Jesus rose from the dead and is coming back someday. Please forgive me of all of my sins, and come into my life and change me. I want a new beginning with You. Please guide me in my life and help me to follow you for the rest of my life. Thank you for saving me and promising me an eternity with You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

The second part of this prayer is for those who have a relationship with God but you know it's time for a new beginning between Him and you.

Maybe you've drifted away or gotten distracted, or you have been struggling with doubts and disappointments, or maybe you have been doing well but you know there is something more.

If that's you, would you let us pray with you today, that something inside would change this very moment and that God would do a new thing?

If that's you, can you raise your hand and put it back down and we'll pray.

Pray for the next group of preteens.

Now for the last part-- waiting.

What is God wanting to say to you?

What new beginning is He doing in you?

Let's take 30 seconds in quiet and just listen.

How many of you, by a show of hands, believe God is showing something to you?

If none respond, encourage them to wait a little longer and then ask again for a response.

Great job preteens!

This is so exciting!

This is a dramatic moment!

God has done something new in each one of you, and I can't wait for each of you to see the results!

From here, our part is to believe that He has answered our prayer, and to look for the evidence, just like the believers looked to see the evidence that Paul had changed.

If you didn't get enough time to wait and hear what God wanted to say to you, make sure you take some time to do that this week.

Sometimes the new beginnings we experience are fast like Paul's, and sometimes they are more gradual.

God heard you today and as you continue to seek Him and ask Him, He will answer.

If you prayed today to have a relationship with God for the very first time, make sure you tell me or your small group leader because we want to make sure you have everything you need to celebrate this new beginning!

The bottom line is each one of us can experience a new beginning in our relationship with God.

Let's go ahead and pray before you head to your small groups to thank God for what He has done here today. Close in prayer.

SMALL GROUP: ALTARS

In the Old Testament, when something of significance happened between people and God, they would build an altar to remember.

I'm going to read to you **Genesis 28:10-19** and I'd like for you to listen for a moment.

Jacob built an altar after an encounter with God as a reminder that God met Him there.

In this passage it's called, "a memorial pillar".

It was something to help Jacob remember.

I have all kinds of altars that help me to remember significant moments where my relationship with God had a new beginning.

I remember these times by taking a photo of where that new beginning happened, and I have a whole file now of these moments.

Insert your own personal moment for preteens to hear your testimony. Here is my example:

One of these moments happened when I was at a cabin near a lake.

I was out on the deck and looking at the mountains.

I had done some exploring in those mountains earlier that day.

I looked away to see how my little campfire was doing and when I turned back, the mountains were gone.

They were covered completely by clouds.

You see, I was not very good at trusting God to take care of me completely.

It was at that lake that I heard God speak to me.

Our family was considering a very big move to another province.

I wanted to have all the answers and know exactly what to expect.

God spoke to me there and told me that just like I couldn't see the mountains, I wouldn't be able to see what was ahead, but that He would take good care of me and show me exactly what I needed to know at the right time.

That was a new beginning for me in my relationship with God.

That was two years ago.

Since that time, He has taken such good care of me.

He has shown me exactly what I needed to know at the right time.

That photo of that lake with the clouds in front of the mountains is in a frame in my living room.

I remember whenever I see it that I can trust God to take care of me.

I am so happy that even though I have known Jesus for a long time, I can still experience a new beginning in my relationship with Him.

Does anyone else have a new beginning story they'd like to share that happened between them and God?

Allow for others to share.

Today, we are each going to build an altar of sorts.

You can use this at home in the future for when you experience a new beginning in your relationship with God, or you can create something different that is meaningful to you.

Here's the one we will make today.

Preteens will decorate a jar and use the rocks to write a new beginning on one side with the permanent marker and date on the reverse. They can write on one rock, or more than one, but encourage them to put a few extras in their jar so they can add to them.

I hope you will add to this over time.

A new beginning with God can happen anytime.

It comes from us asking Him to do a new thing in our lives.

When we take time with Him, reading the Bible, talking to Him, and listening to Him, it gives great opportunities for these new beginnings to take place.

These rocks are to remind you of the new beginnings between you and God, so be sure to take them out and look at them from time to time.

Remember, **each of us can experience a new beginning in our relationship with God.**

Close in prayer.