A PUPPET PLAY IN ONE ACT

The Transformation

Based on Acts 9:26 · Written by Carrie Elderberry



SUITABLE FOR
Ages 8 and up

PERFORMANCE TIME
8–10 minutes

CAST SIZE
4 puppets

PROPS REQUIRED
None

MAIN THEME

Real transformation in Christ is hard for others to believe at first — but Paul's story, and Christian's, show that God can change even the people we're most sure will never change.

Carrie Elderberry's Gospel Puppets · gospelpuppets.org
© 2013 · Free for ministry use
Illustrations © Sweet Publishing
v.1.2 · October 2026

To print just the play on its own, print pages 5–9.

PRODUCTION OVERVIEW

Synopsis

PAT and TAYLOR are rattled to learn that Chris-the-Crusher, the bully who got expelled after hurting TAYLOR, is back at school and coming to church with their friend LEE. When “Chris” shows up going by the name CHRISTIAN and claims to have given his life to Jesus, PAT and TAYLOR refuse to believe someone so “bad” could really change — until LEE reminds them of another unlikely convert the church just studied: Paul, formerly a murderer named Saul.

Spiritual Concept

Genuine transformation in Christ is sometimes dramatic and sometimes quiet, but either way, it can take time for others to trust it's real — just as the disciples were afraid of Paul at first. This play sits with that skepticism honestly rather than resolving it too easily: Christian doesn't win Pat and Taylor over with words, only with the promise that he will show them, over time, by how his life has changed.

Age Suitability

Best for ages 8 and up — the bullying backstory and themes of fear, distrust, and forgiveness are more meaningful for kids old enough to have navigated peer conflict themselves.

Performance Time

8–10 minutes

CAST & TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Characters (in order of appearance)

PAT — A skeptic. Attends church only because parents make him, but doesn't really believe any of it. Quick to mock, slow to trust.

TAYLOR — Has some faith but as yet no personal relationship with the Lord, and is pretty timid. Was badly hurt by Chris-the-Crusher and is genuinely afraid of him returning.

LEE — A mature follower of Jesus, and Christian's new friend. Patient and steady — doesn't argue Pat and Taylor into belief, just keeps pointing them back to the evidence.

CHRISTIAN — A very recent convert and former gang leader and bully, formerly known as “Chris-the-Crusher.” Now going by the given name, Christian. Sincere but not able to instantly prove that change is real — has to earn trust over time.

Prop Options

- The play works well with an all-girl cast too. Just be careful to modify gender pronouns if you do!

PERFORMANCE NOTES FOR PUPPETEERS

New to puppets? General prep, technique, and voice tips live at gospelpuppets.org/getting-started.

Character Notes

Pat and Taylor's skepticism is not played as villainous — they have real reasons to be afraid of Chris-the-Crusher. Let their fear read as understandable, not just stubborn.

Christian doesn't get the last word or win the argument outright — the play ends with Lee suggesting he'll have to prove it over time. Resist the urge to wrap this up with an easy resolution.

Staging

Taylor calls out to Lee before Christian is visible, so Christian's entrance can land as a surprise beat.

Pat and Christian can pantomime a separate conversation off to one side if you have enough room (or exit briefly) while Lee and Taylor talk privately.

Reading the Script

CAPS = volume/intensity.

Ellipsis (…) = the author's pacing notation.

THE TRANSFORMATION

Based on Acts 9:26 · Written by Carrie Elderberry

“When he [Paul] came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple.”

Acts 9:26

(Enter PAT and TAYLOR. They are friends. They’ve just finished attending church, and have heard about the transformation of Saul to Paul.)

TAYLOR: Hi, Pat. I didn’t know you were coming to church today.

PAT: Yeah, my parents are making me come every week now. It’s so BORING! I’d rather sleep late on Sundays.

TAYLOR: Well, I liked that story we learned today, about Jesus talking to Paul, when Paul was on his way to Damascus. I wish that kind of thing still happened.

PAT: Hey, Taylor, you don’t really BELIEVE all that stuff about Paul, do you?

TAYLOR: What do you mean? Believe all WHAT about Paul?

PAT: Well, that a person could CHANGE that much.

TAYLOR: You mean how Paul went from being a KILLER to being a CHRISTIAN?

PAT: Yeah, that seems really IMPOSSIBLE to me.

TAYLOR: *(shocked that anyone would doubt the Bible)* But Pat, it’s in the BIBLE. It must be true!

PAT: I don’t know. Did it REALLY happen, or is it just a STORY?

TAYLOR: What?

PAT: You know, to make us all act nicer. I bet it’s just a kind of FABLE.

TAYLOR: I don’t know… I know my PARENTS think the Bible is all true. And so does the PASTOR! So it must be!

PAT: Well, but people don’t change that much. It would have taken a MIRACLE to change Paul.

TAYLOR: Yeah… I guess so.

PAT: Whatever. Hey, speaking of horrible people! Did you hear the NEWS?

TAYLOR: What news?

PAT: Remember that bully, CHRIS-THE-CRUSHER, that got kicked out of SCHOOL last year?

TAYLOR: How could I ever forget? CHRIS-THE-CRUSHER!! He got expelled, because of what he did to ME, remember?

PAT: *(laughing)* Oh, yeah, I forgot! That was pretty funny, heh heh!

TAYLOR: FUNNY?! It wasn't funny at all!

PAT: Oh, no, heh heh, you're right, REALLY it was TERRIBLE. You could have been SERIOUSLY hurt. Chris-the-Crusher DESERVED to get expelled, yeah.

TAYLOR: That's RIGHT. (pause to think about that) So, what ABOUT Chris?

PAT: Well, Chris-the-Crusher is BACK!

TAYLOR: *(truly horrified)* Oh, NO! You're KIDDING!

PAT: No, seriously, Lee told me that Chris-the-Crusher is back. Starting back at school on Monday.

TAYLOR: If that is true, I'm leaving for CANADA.

PAT: What, are you scared?

TAYLOR: YES. And you should be too! Rats. And things have been going so great since he got kicked out, too. His little GANG fell apart when he left.

PAT: Yeah, well now they'll have their fearless leader back again!

TAYLOR: Chris-the-Crusher is going to come after me, I know. It will be pay-back time…

PAT: But that's not ALL I heard, Taylor. I heard from Lee that Chris has CHANGED.

TAYLOR: *(very suspicious)* Gotten even BIGGER? Gotten even MEANER?

PAT: Lee just said that Chris-the-Crusher has CHANGED. I'm not sure how.

TAYLOR: OH RATS, and I was just getting used to not having to watch my BACK all the time…

(LEE enters. TAYLOR calls to LEE before CHRISTIAN is visible.)

PAT: Here's Lee now!

TAYLOR: Hey, Lee! What's this I hear about CHRIS-THE-CRUSHER coming back? Pat says that—

(Enter CHRISTIAN.)

TAYLOR: *(start to go)* Uh, oh! Hey, gotta run! Bye!

LEE: No wait, Taylor. Don't go. Hey, Pat. (They all stare for a moment) Remember this guy?

PAT AND TAYLOR: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

CHRISTIAN: *(cautiously)* Hey there, Pat. Hey, Taylor.

TAYLOR: Um, Lee, can I talk to you for a minute? ALONE?

(Try to spread apart so that TAYLOR and LEE are close together and CHRISTIAN and PAT move away, or even offstage.)

LEE: What's up?

TAYLOR: Lee, I hope you don't take this wrong, but are you out of your MIND? Are you CRAZY? What are you doing with Chris-the-Crusher, HERE AT OUR CHURCH?

LEE: Taylor, Christian is my friend, now.

TAYLOR: Friend? Don't tell me— you've joined Chris's GANG?

LEE: No, listen, Taylor. Christian isn't IN a GANG, any more.

TAYLOR: CHRISTIAN? Who's Christian? Since when is his name CHRISTIAN?

LEE: Actually it has always been his name. He just didn't want anybody to know it before, so he went by just "Chris."

TAYLOR: *(bitterly)* CHRISTIAN? That's a laugh. Hey, Lee, have you forgotten what he did to me at school last year?

LEE: No. It was terrible.

TAYLOR: And now you're bringing Chris-the-Crusher to our CHURCH? I'm not safe anywhere! I'll have to move to CANADA…

(CHRISTIAN and PAT rejoin them, Pat next to Taylor.)

PAT: *(sniggering)* Taylor— LISTEN to this! You won't BELIEVE this! Chris says he has become a CHRISTIAN! Heh heheh.

TAYLOR: *(hiding behind PAT)* You're right, I DON'T believe it.

TAYLOR: *(to CHRISTIAN)* This is just another of your mean TRICKS.

CHRISTIAN: No, it's really not, Taylor. And I'm sorry about… you know, about last year.

PAT: Talk is CHEAP.

CHRISTIAN: Yeah, I know.

TAYLOR: Why SHOULD we trust you?

CHRISTIAN: I GUESS…I'll have to… to just…show you.

TAYLOR: Yeah, HA HA. Once a bully, always a bully. You don't fool ME.

PAT: *(suspicious)* That's right, people don't change that much. Why SHOULD we believe you?

CHRISTIAN: I don't know. I used to lie all the time. But now—

PAT: Oh please! Give me a break!

CHRISTIAN: No LISTEN— after I was expelled, I went to live with some other relatives for a while. They made me go to church with them.

PAT: So? My parents make me go to church, too. Going to church doesn't CHANGE people.

LEE: Not always.

PAT: *(laughing)* It hasn't worked on ME, yet!

LEE: But—

CHRISTIAN: No, Pat's right. Just going to church doesn't change anybody.

TAYLOR: See? I was right. You're just PRETENDING to be changed.

CHRISTIAN: Wait, no, there is more to it than that. After I went to church for a while, I started to really… think… about what they were saying. And—

LEE: He got a Bible and started reading it, too.

CHRISTIAN: Yeah, and I decided to try to pray. I asked Jesus to, to help me BELIEVE in him. And He DID.

LEE: Like Paul, in the Bible. You know about that guy!

PAT: Oh-my-gosh, this is HYSTERICAL! Are you saying you PRAY now? Chris-the-Crusher?

CHRISTIAN: Actually, Pat (take a deep breath like you are trying not to get angry) I'm going by my REAL name now, which is Christian. And YES, I pray. I pray a LOT. And I've given Jesus my life. So there!

TAYLOR: So what? We've ALL done that. It's not such a big deal.

CHRISTIAN: Well it is for me! I'm DIFFERENT, I don't know HOW, but it's from Jesus.

TAYLOR: *(suspicious)* You make it sound like you know Him PERSONALLY. Ha! Chris-the-Crusher.

PAT: *(sarcastically)* Hate to disappoint you, CHRISTIAN, but Jesus died a LONG time ago. He doesn't help anybody NOW.

TAYLOR: *(getting brave with his parting shot)* And CHRISTIAN, don't expect us to be in a hurry to welcome you back, either at school OR at church. It would take a MIRACLE for YOU to change!

LEE: That's what we are trying to tell you! Like Paul—

TAYLOR: Well I'm not going to be fooled. You be careful, Lee!

PAT: Yeah. Later, Lee. Enjoy your new "gang."

(Exit PAT and TAYLOR.)

LEE: This is so WEIRD. I thought those two would be so happy for you.

CHRISTIAN: They don't believe Jesus can change a person so much. I can't really blame them.

LEE: I'm not sure they even know Jesus at all, not really.

CHRISTIAN: Well, some of the things I did have got to be hard to forgive.

LEE: Yeah.

CHRISTIAN: How can I CONVINCE them?

LEE: It's going to take time. You'll have to show them by the way you live NOW.

CHRISTIAN: *(sad)* Yeah, them and everybody else.

LEE: Hey, Christian, have you read about PAUL in the Bible? He changed a lot, after he met Jesus.

CHRISTIAN: Was he as bad as me?

LEE: No…Much worse than you. He was a murderer. And he changed from being a MURDERER to being a follower of Jesus.

CHRISTIAN: Wow.

LEE: And people didn't trust HIM at first, either.

CHRISTIAN: Seriously? I need to read about that.

LEE: It's in the book of Acts, somewhere. Come on, let's go look it up.

(PAT and TAYLOR peek out)

ALL: And that's all for today! Read about Paul! Goodbye!

THE END

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

Discussion Questions

1. Why didn't Pat and Taylor believe Christian had really changed?
2. Have you ever had a hard time believing someone could really change? What made it hard?
3. The play doesn't end with Pat and Taylor believing Christian — Lee says it will take time. Why might that be more honest than a quick happy ending?
4. How is Christian's story like Paul's story in Acts?
5. What can someone do to show that a change in their life is real, not just talk?

Related Bible Passages

Primary Text: Acts 9:26 — When Paul (Saul’s Roman name) first tried to join the disciples in Jerusalem, they were afraid of him and didn't believe he was really a follower of Jesus.

Additional Scripture:

- Acts 9:1–9, 17–20 — Saul's dramatic encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus and his transformation from persecutor to preacher. (Full account — reference only.)
- 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!” (NLT)

Song Suggestions

- “Glorious Day (Living He Loved Me)” — Casting Crowns — https://open.spotify.com/track/0co8dS1eYzTanYw3N5BEvM
- “Made New” — Lincoln Brewster — https://open.spotify.com/track/6Qim4CtPZrQJ99VVGSiO9a

Ministry Context

This play works well for a series on new life in Christ, testimony, or forgiveness — it's especially useful for youth or upper-elementary audiences who have their own experience of not trusting someone's turnaround. Consider pairing with a short testimony from someone in your church whose faith visibly changed how they live, or a reading of Acts 9 before or after the performance.