Teaching resources for understanding identity The Bible's answers to our big questions

Lesson 6

WE ARE NOT ALONE

Acts 9:1-28 • John 14:16-17

CONTENTS

LEADER'S NOTES		3
ALL TOGETHER TIME 5		
	Under 7's Lesson Plan	8
	Over 8's Lesson Plan	11
APPE	ENDIX	
	Case Study Pictures	14
	Craft Sheet	15
	Chat Time Sheet	16
	Visual Summary	18

Who Am I?

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We recommend the International Children's Bible for use with children during the lesson. Our leader's notes and Take Home Sheets use the New International Version.

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Living Out (www.livingout.org) commissioned Faith in Kids (www.faithinkids.org) to produce these resources to help children build a permanent identity based on God's word. Visit www.faithinkids.org to download these resources and look out for accompanying podcasts for both children and parents.

'All for the glory of God alone' (1 Corinthians 10:31)

WE ARE NOT ALONE

ACTS 9:1-28, JOHN 14:16-17



Thank you for using a Faith in Kids resource. We want to hear your feedback so we can keep improving our resources. Please click the link to fill out a short form or email us at info@faithinkids.org



Truth that changes me:

God's Spirit is changing God's family to become more like God's son.



Faith in Kids looks like:

Children who are confident that God's Spirit is making us more like Jesus.



WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Becoming a Christian is a change in identity and a change in direction. Following Jesus involves ongoing change, to become more like him. Change can seem discouragingly slow. God gives us his Holy Spirit to be with us and help us change. He gives us a church family so that we can encourage one another to keep going, particularly when we don't see change happening.



THE WORLD OUR CHILDREN LIVE IN

Our children are told, 'Be the change you want to see in the world', as if the answer to all their problems is within them. But what if they don't know what to change or how to change it? What if they really want to change but keep on making the same mistakes? What if they need help? Where's the encouragement to keep going when change is hard?

Like us, our children wonder if God is really with them. They hear the call to live out their identity as followers of Jesus but doubt that it is really possible. It is God's power, not our own, that enables us to become more and more like Jesus. It is together, not individually, that we live the Christian life.



LOOK AT THE PASSAGE

This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.

ACTS 9:15

New identity

Saul was an outrageous choice. Jesus didn't pick the good guy; he picked a terrorist. Saul had a very clear idea of who he was, and it absolutely *wasn't* being a Jesus-follower. But God had other plans. He chose Saul to be not only a Christian but an apostle to the Gentiles. Saul's new identity as a child of God wasn't something he came up with for himself. It was the ultimate unexpected gift.



NOTES

Pray and read the Bible passage. Read Where are we going, The world our children live in and Look at the passage to give you a better understanding of how to apply the truth.



Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah.

ACTS 9:22

New direction

Saul's identity change was baffling to those who knew him. The chapter begins with him threatening Christians with death. 20 verses later he's preaching that Jesus is the Son of God. His new identity led to a complete transformation in his thoughts, motivations and behaviour. He became God's instrument (v15) and Ananias's brother (v17). Instead of persecuting disciples, he joined the family of believers (v28). All his passion, determination and ability was *for* Jesus instead of against him. When our hearts are won by Jesus, our lives will head in a new direction; change is inevitable.

Brother Saul, the Lord - Jesus... has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit. ACTS 9:17

I will ask the Father and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever.

JOHN 14:16

Constant help

Saul's character and behaviour didn't change by his own effort alone; he was transformed from within, by the Holy Spirit, and encouraged by his new family of faith. We share this experience. We have the gift of the Spirit changing us. Our brothers and sisters in Christ are one of the key tools the Spirit uses. We can live out our identity as Christians, even when it's hard, because we know we are never alone.



WIN MY HEART

What is your story? How has God worked to change you? When you've felt like giving up or despaired at your lack of spiritual progress, who did God put in your life to help you?

The Spirit often uses gloriously ordinary, yet extraordinary, ways of working: a friend, your home group, a moment, a song, a flower, a verse, your church. Growth is often hard to see in ourselves. Just like it takes a trip to Granny's for the kids to hear, 'Haven't you grown!', sometimes we need others to tell us about the Spirit's transforming work in our lives. Why not ring someone who has known you for a while and ask them how they've seen God at work in you?

- In what ways is the Holy Spirit changing you to become more like Jesus? Maybe you're more aware of a particular sin or you can see progress in your thought life.
- Think of one way God has used other Christians to help you grow as a follower of Jesus.



5 MINUTES TO FOCUS ON YOUR GROUP

Think about your own story. How can you share some ways that God has helped and changed your heart and life? It's good for your children to see that a 'grown up' they know can also have doubts and struggles and need help to live as a Christian.

Think about how God is at work in them. Can you encourage them with ways that you have seen God help and change them in the time you've known them?

This truth is for your heart too.

What do the children in <u>your</u> group need?

Pray for them:

- · to grasp the truth
- · to live it out
- to rely on the Spirit







Flexible resource: This has been written as an all-age slot to introduce the whole church family to what the children are learning today, but it could be adapted for the children's classes.



PROPS

a long roll of wallpaper to be a path (practice kicking/pushing it so it unrolls a long way, e.g. down an aisle), PowerPoint of John 14:16-17 (ICB), PowerPoint images of the story from Acts, 2 hearts with a flame drawn on.



HELPERS NEEDED

Some children and adults to act as people on the path, including one to be Saul and one to be Ananias.

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What to Say

What to Do

Being a Christian is like being on a path.

Imagine this wallpaper roll is that path, the Christian life. Walking along this path is us living our lives for Jesus from today to glory with him forever.

Step by step. Day by day.

Jesus helped get us onto this path. We didn't get here on our own.

We go where Jesus leads. Every day, we're making decisions to follow him.

Step by step. Day by day.

But we are not alone on this path.

Put your wallpaper roll down on the ground and push it out to unroll it.

Have a child volunteer come forward. Lift them onto the path.

The child takes a few steps forwards.

Jesus gave his closest friends this amazing promise:

'I will ask the Father and he will give you another Helper. He will give you this Helper to be with you forever. The Helper is the Spirit of truth.'

This is a promise for everyone who follows Jesus. God will give us a Helper - the Spirit.

Read from the Bible.

Slide of John 14:16-17.

The day the Spirit came to the disciples, he came with the noise of wind and flames on their heads. From that day, *every* Christian is given the same Spirit.

So firstly; we are not alone.

The Spirit is with us. We are not alone.

The Spirit came to *help* Jesus' friends and to change them to be more and more like him.

The Spirit is 'God with us.'

Give the child a heart with a flame drawn on.

Everyone repeats the words and actions:

Point up and then down.

Stand next to the child on the path and hold their hand.

Everyone repeats the words and actions:

continued ----



	What to Do
Firstly; we are not alone.	Point up and then down.
And secondly; we expect Jesus to change us.	Point to your heart.
That's not all. God has put other people with us on the path to help us, love us and teach us.	Get 1 or 2 more children to join the child on the path.
What do you think these people are going to do on this path? Just stay still in a big squash? No!	
They are going to head in the right direction.	Point down the wallpaper path.
The further they go along the path, the more God changes them to be more like Jesus.	
As we keep going together, we expect to see each other change.	
It's great having other people on the path.	Encourage the group to walk along
When he falls over, she picks him up.	the wallpaper path.
And when she's fed up, someone makes her a lasagne.	Point at them as you talk.
When he doesn't know what to do, one of them shares a Bible verse. They pray together.	Mime looking into the distance along the path
When he's having a meltdown because it all feels too hard, and there's too far to go, she points out how far they've come.	Point back the way they came.
God is working in and through his people.	Everyone repeats the words and
1) We are not alone	actions:
2) We expect Jesus to change us	Point up and then down.
3) We keep going together	Point to your heart.
	Point at the people either side of you. Send the children back to their seats.
If you're trusting Jesus, you're on the same path and you have the same help.	
Jesus promised that <i>everyone</i> who trusts him will be given the Spirit to be their helper.	
And this room is packed full of wonderful stories of the Spirit at work in the hearts and lives of his people - we have help. And the Spirit is at work in us together.	Everyone repeats the words and
Final time	actions:
1) We are not alone	Point up and then down.
2) We expect Jesus to change us	Point to your heart.
3) We keep going together	Point at the people either side of you.

continued \longrightarrow



	What to Do
Today, with each other, in your families or with your friends, take the time to share your story of how God has worked to change you.	
Take the time to tell someone else, 'Look how far you've come!'	
This is another example of who we are.	
This is not just what we believe, what we do or what we talk about.	
This is not what we are trying to do. This is <i>who we are</i> . This is who God says we are.	
We are changing. We are not alone.	
Let's enjoy that journey together.	
Because we are never alone - we've got God's Spirit working in God's people together.	
Our children are in week 6 of a series called, 'Who am I?'	
They will be learning about how God gives us his Spirit to change us to be more like Jesus. The Take Home Sheet will help you see what's been taught and help you to talk about it at home.	
Pray.	
Sing.	Song suggestions: • Create in me a clean, clean heart - Rend Collective. • We are the church - Awesome cutlery.



















UNDER 7'S LESSON PLAN



GET GOING

Change Direction

You'll need a large enough space for the children to travel from one side of the room to the other and change direction. Place the signs on opposite walls.

Call out the direction you want the children to travel e.g. 'My way'. When you shout a different destination they need to change direction. Develop the game by asking the children to walk, crawl, hop, skip, slide on their belly, run etc.

Link: Today we're thinking about how Christians change when they live Jesus' way not their own way. God helps us to keep going in the right direction.



TEACHING TIME

Place the strips of paper on the floor. Write 'My way' on one of the strips with an arrow pointing along its length. Write 'Jesus' way' on the other strip with an arrow pointing in the opposite direction.

Old Path

Explain that people who don't follow Jesus are living their own way, not Jesus' way. Saul, the man in today's story, was living his way.

Ask a child to act as Saul - have them stand on the 'My Way' path. Read Acts 9:1-2. As you read, ask 'Saul' and some children to act out:

- Saul finding Christians (standing on the 'Jesus' way' strip), arresting them and taking them away to Jerusalem.
- · Saul telling them to stop being a Christian or he would hurt them.

Talking pairs: What did Saul do that showed he was living his way? What sort of things do people do to show they're living their way?

New Path

Read Acts 9:3-6, 15, 28. As you read, ask 'Saul' to act out:

- · Hearing Jesus speak to him (v3-6).
- Being put on a new path to live 'Jesus' way' (v15).
- Telling people about Jesus and starting new churches (v28).

continued ----



NOTES

Flexible resource: look at both lesson plans, pick what works for your group.

Use this activity to introduce today's theme.

You will need: 2 signs - 'Jesus' way' and 'My way', Blu Tack/tape.

Use a suitable Bible translation we use the International Children's Bible (found online at www.biblegateway.com).

You will need: a roll of brown paper, cut into 2 strips and a marker pen.

For pictures of this story look at www. freebibleimages.com. Or search YouTube for 'Saddleback Kids Paul Acts' for a video.



Explain that when a person becomes a Christian, Jesus puts them on a new path - they move from living their way to his way. Jesus gives them his Spirit to help them become more like him. Normally, we can't see or hear the Spirit, but he changes the way we think, feel and make decisions, usually slowly over time. For Saul, the Spirit changed his thinking and decisions very quickly!



Optional: You could play a quick game where the children walk in the 'My way' direction. When you give them a cut out of a flame, they change direction and walk 'Jesus' way'.

Talking pairs: How did the Spirit change Saul? What did he do differently? What things do people do when the Spirit is changing them to live Jesus' way?

Never Alone

Often, Jesus helps his people by giving them other Christians.

Read Acts 9:17. As you read, ask 'Saul' and some children to act out:

- Ananias and Saul praying and talking about Jesus on the 'Jesus' way' path.
- Helping Saul to keep going when people tried to kill him for speaking about Jesus.

Talking pairs: Who are the Christians who help you to live for Jesus? What do they do to help you?

Finish by explaining that everyone, even us, starts out like Saul, living our own way. Get the children to stand on the 'My way' path. When we started to follow Jesus, he put us on a new path. Get the children to move to the 'Jesus' way' path.

Jesus gives us his Spirit to change us and to help us live his way, together. Get the children to cheer each other on/link arms and walk along the 'Jesus' way' path.

God promises to help us as we follow him. He will never leave us on our own.



Which Way?

Put the sweets in a big pile on one side of the room, children stand on the opposite side. They must collect as many sweets as they can in a minute (or any time you choose). They can only collect one sweet at a time.

Before they start, explain that there are 2 ways to play the game - 'my way' or 'Jesus' way'. Talk about how they'd play it 'my way' e.g. they'd only collect sweets for themselves. Then talk about how they'd play it 'Jesus' way' e.g. they'd work together to collect sweets and then share them as a group.

Agree on which way you will all play the game. Set a timer. Go!

Link: We can trust God to help us change and to become more like Jesus. We're not on our own as Christians, we have the Spirit and each other to help us live Jesus' way.

A chance to rest the children's minds before Heart and Hands. Get moving and have fun with this game.

You will need: a big bag of sweets.





1. Ju

Craft time - Make a cuff bracelet

Prepare in advance: cut out the rectangles from the craft sheet. Cut the toilet paper tubes open (diagram - cut 1) and then cut them in half (diagram - cut 2) to make 2 cuffs that can be worn on the wrist.

Give each child a 'We are not alone' rectangle and a toilet paper cuff. They decorate the rectangle and then glue it to the cuff. Make the Truth that changes me personal to the children. Encourage them to wear their cuff bracelet to remind them that they are never alone when they have the Holy Spirit. God also gives us other Christians to help us to keep living Jesus' way. Help them to write the names of a few people who help them on their cuff.

Make a craft and have a chat. Give the children time to reflect on today's big truth, so it can impact their hearts.

You will need: printouts of the craft sheet page (1 per 6 children), glue, scissors, crayons/coloured pens, stickers and toilet paper tubes (1 per 2 children).

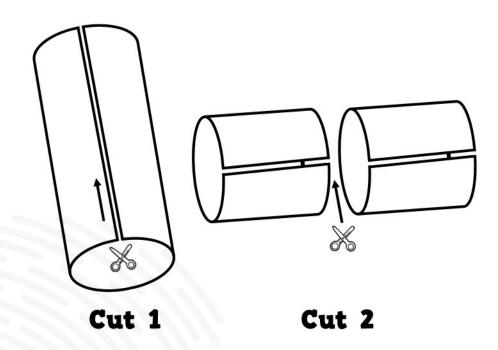
Think time

Big Question: Who is always with you to help you to become more like Jesus? The Holy Spirit.

A follow up question: Which people help you to keep following Jesus?

Prayer

Say together: Dear God, thank you for giving us the Holy Spirit to be with us forever. Thank you for giving us one another to help us keep trusting you. Amen.





















OVER 8's LESSON PLAN



GET GOING

I Have A Helper

Pair up the children. One is blindfolded and the other is the guide. The blindfolded child must draw a simple object e.g. a house. The guide helps them by giving instructions and repositioning the pencil.

Options for a different challenge - make paper aeroplanes or do a short obstacle course.

Link: It made a big difference to have a helper as you did the challenge. You were not on your own. As Christians, we have help and we're not alone. We have the Holy Spirit and his people to help us.



TEACHING TIME

We Have Help

Explain that before Jesus was taken to the cross, he gave his worried disciples this promise...

Read John 14:16: 'I will ask the Father and he will give you another Helper. He will give you this Helper to be with you forever. The Helper is the Spirit of truth.'

Let the children underline, circle or write answers on/around the verse as you ask these questions:

- · What repeated word stands out?
- · Who is the helper?
- · What does the helper do?

This promise is for everyone who follows Jesus.

Help to Change Direction

Every person who starts to follow Jesus is changed by him. Christians keep on changing because they have the Holy Spirit who helps them.

Use the paper paths as you read the verses and answer the questions:

- Acts 9:1-2: How did Saul live? (Write answers on 'My way' path.)
- Acts 9:3-6: Who speaks to Saul? What happens? How does his life change?
 (Write answers on 'Jesus' way' path.)

Saul (also known as Paul - Acts 13:9) couldn't change direction on his own. He needed to meet Jesus and have his eyes opened. Jesus put him on a new path.



NOTES

Flexible resource: look at both lesson plans, pick what works for your group.

Use this activity to introduce today's theme.

You will need:

blindfolds, sheets of paper and pencils.

Use a suitable
Bible translation we use the International
Children's Bible
(found online at
www.biblegateway.com).

You will need: John

14:16 written or printed out on a large sheet of paper, 2 long strips of paper as paths - write 'My way' on one and 'Jesus' way' on the other, Bibles and pens.



Help That Never Leaves

God helped Saul a lot as he started following Jesus. Read Acts 9:10-19 and write the different kinds of help on the 'Jesus' way' path.

- v11 A home for him to stay in.
- v17 A friend to pray for him.
- v17 The Holy Spirit.
- v19 Food to eat.

We all need help to keep following Jesus. God helps us in many different ways.

Often the way God helps is by giving us other Christians to show us how to live for lesus

Share Your Story

It's hard to understand how the Spirit changes us. Root this session in real life by sharing an age appropriate story of a time you experienced the Spirit's work. Help the children to recognise that the Spirit's work continues today in tangible ways. Can you encourage the children with changes you've seen in them? Can they encourage one another with stories of God at work in their lives?

God promises to be with us, by his Spirit, to help us as we follow him together. He will never leave us on our own.



Gradual Change

Ask the children to line up. Ask the first child in the line to adopt a position and freeze. Ask the last child in line to adopt a totally different position and freeze. The children in between have to freeze in positions that show the gradual change from one end to the other. Take a photo to capture the moment. If you have time, swap the children at the ends and play again.

Link: There was a big difference between the first and last positions. It took lots of small changes to get from one to the other. That's how the Spirit changes us - small but real changes day by day. The difference between when we start trusting Jesus and when we meet him in heaven will be massive!



Did you spot it?

- · What did Jesus promise us?
- · What changed in Saul's life after meeting Jesus?
- · How is God helping us? (E.g. his Spirit, his people.)

continued ----



A chance to rest the children's minds before Heart and Hands. Get moving and have fun with this game.



Work it out

- How would you explain how the Spirit helps us to a friend who doesn't know Jesus?
- If you're a Christian, what's an example in your life of how the Spirit is helping you to be more like Jesus? Did you ask him to help you with this?

Live it out

Look at case study picture A: Imagine this is a boy in your class at school. He feels like a failure because he keeps getting it wrong and messing up.

- Describe his feelings what does his body feel like (tummy, shoulders, hands, chest)?
- Do you think he believes he can change? How could you encourage him?
- Jesus didn't give us the Spirit to make us better at maths, art, football or gaming. The Spirit helps to make us more like Jesus. What might that look like in this situation?
- What could he tell himself in this moment when he feels like he can't carry on?

Or look at case study picture B: Imagine this is a girl you know. She feels like a hero because she's a winner.

- How do you think she is feeling? How would you be feeling? (Don't stop at 'happy'! Some feelings are very godly, and some are very selfish; can you help the children to think about those?)
- · Do you think she feels like she's going in the right direction today? Why?
- What might she need the Spirit's help with? What could the Spirit help her to remember?

Extra Stretch

- What do you know about how the Spirit helps Christians? Have you seen that in your life and/or other people's? Are you convinced that he is helping Christians today?
- What would you say to a Christian who is struggling to keep going and thinks they might as well give up?
- Do you think Saul struggled with guilt and shame about his past? Look at 1
 Timothy 1:15-16 to see what he says about himself. How did he have the guts
 to be so different to how he was before? What can we say when we don't see
 change happening in ways we would like?

Prayer

Ask these questions to prompt personal responses:

 How has God helped you recently? What changes do you see that you can thank God for?

· What help do you need? What do you want to ask God to help you with?

Consider starting a group prayer diary so you can reflect on how God helps, makes changes in individuals and answers prayers.



A chance to reflect and chat about how the truth, through the Spirit's work, changes our thoughts (head), feelings (heart) and actions (hands).

Use the Chat Time sheet

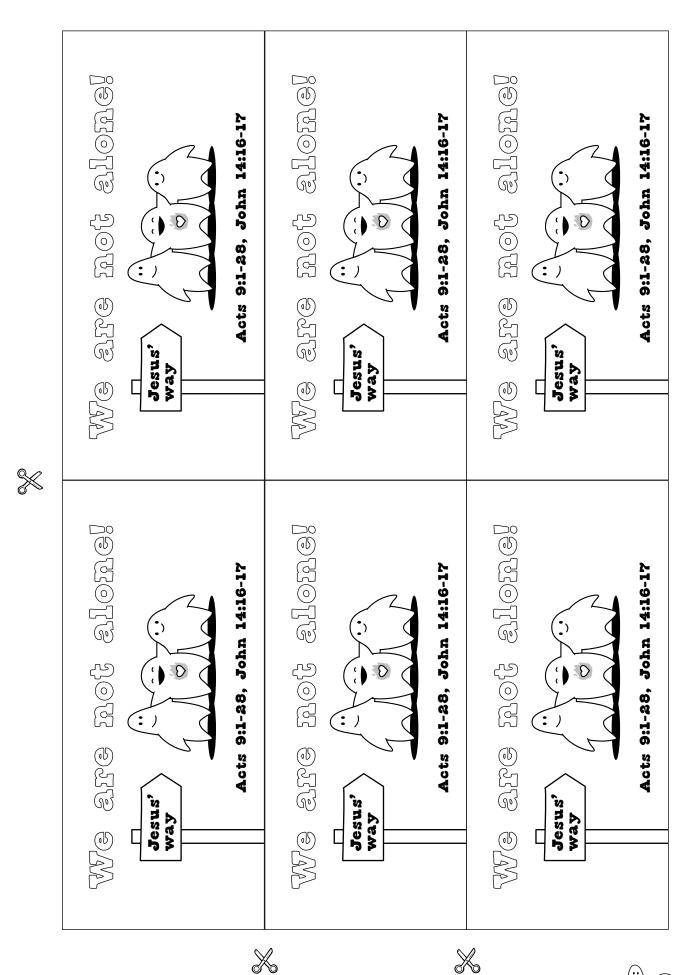
you could enlarge it and
work on it together. Hand out
sticky notes so children can
still respond personally.

These questions are designed to stretch the resource up to teenage years. Depending on the level of discussion in your group, you may want to consider using them.











HEART & HANDS CHAT TIME

faith@kids

WHO AM I?

We are not alone

Look at these verses together and find the answers

ACTS 9:1-28, JOHN 14:16-17



DID YOU SPOT IT?

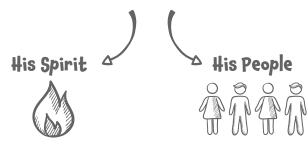
What did Jesus promise us?

What changed in Saul's life after meeting Jesus?

My way

Jesus' way

How is God helping us?

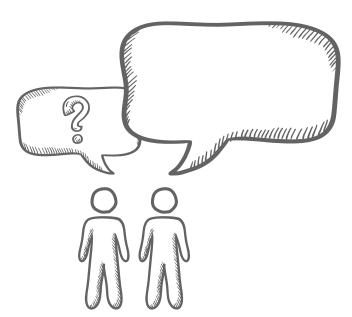




WORK IT OUT

Give everyone a chance to answer...

How would you explain the Spirit's help to a friend who doesn't know Jesus?



If you're a Christian, what's an example in your life of how the Spirit is helping you to be more like Jesus?

Holy Spirit Me Jesus

Did you ask him to help you with this?





HEART & HANDS CHAT TIME

faith@kids



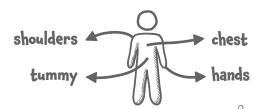
Give everyone a chance to speak...



Describe how this boy feels...



How does this feel in his body?



The Spirit helps to make us more like Jesus. What might that look like in the boy's situation?

What could he tell himself in this moment when he feels like he can't carry on?





How could you encourage him?



How do you think this girl is feeling?





Do you think she feels like she's going in the right direction today?





Why?

What might she need the Spirit's help with?

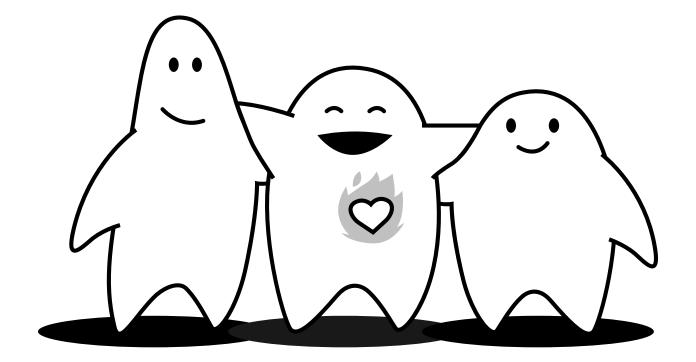
Remember!

What could the Spirit help her to remember?













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