

Opening Skit

Props & Characters:

- **Special agent lockbox**
- **Butterfly picture** (found in the resource section of nazarene.org/vbs). This is placed in the lockbox with an NIV Bible beforehand.
- **1-2 chairs**
- **1 large magnifying glass**
- **1 large envelope**, marked "Top Secret"
- **1 gold watch** (or the watch prop found in the resource section of nazarene.org/vbs). This will be used for the closing skit.
- **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 but now wearing a hat like Tre
- **Agent Strange**; dressed as much like Tre as possible

Note: Use any additional props available to increase interest. Encourage the characters to move often and to use the whole platform/stage.

Dialogue:

Agent Tre: Hi kids! It's great to see you again! I have something super fun to show you in the special agent lockbox!

Buddy: *(Comes tiptoeing in, looking at invisible footprints on the ground with a magnifying glass. Intent on following the footprints, Buddy runs into Tre, bonks his head, and looks up surprised, not realizing he was following Tre's path.)*

Oh, Agent Tre! It's you! Oh, man, what *IS* today's passcode? Oh yeah! *(Stands at attention)* **Jesus' power transforms my life!** I wasn't sure this special agent magnifying glass would actually work...but it really does because I was able to follow YOUR tracks. YES!

Agent Tre: It's good to see you, Buddy! I have something to show you. *(Tre goes to the lockbox and starts to scan his thumbprint.)*

Agent Strange: *(Enters holding out an envelope to Tre)* Agent Tre? I have special orders for you from the Boss.

Buddy: Another special agent? Oh, this should be good! (*Buddy plops down on the chair for a good "show." During the next dialogue, Buddy exaggeratedly looks back and forth between each speaker as if watching a tennis match.*)

Agent Tre: (*Confused*) Orders from the Boss? But He always gives me my orders Himself.

Agent Strange: (*A bit hesitant*)...Uh...Yes, I know, but this time He wanted me to deliver them to you.

Agent Tre: (*Looking the envelope over*) Well...these LOOK like the orders I get from the Boss...(*Opens the envelope, pulls out a letter, and reads it to himself while moving his lips.*) But they don't sound at all like the Boss's orders. I need to call Him to verify.

Agent Strange: (*Looks scared*) NO! YOU CAN'T...I mean...you don't NEED to do that, Agent Trinity. After all, the Agent Handbook says in Isaiah 1:19 that "you will eat the good of the land **if you obey.**" That means you should follow orders without question!

Agent Tre: Whoa! Now hang on just a minute! Jesus came to take away our sins, not our minds! I *always* follow the Boss's orders without question. What I'm questioning right now is whether these really are the Boss's orders! The Handbook also says in 1 Thessalonians 5:21 that I am to "test everything and hold fast to what is good." Before I do anything, I need to make sure these orders are the real deal, because counterfeiting the Boss' orders is exactly the kind of sneaky, lowdown, underhanded, dirty trick that Deceptor would try. So you just wait a minute while I check in with the Boss. (*Takes off his shoe to "make a call."*)

Agent Strange: (*Now very nervous*) I was told to deliver that envelope and that's exactly what I did. So I have done my job and I am *OUT* of here. (*Hurries offstage*)

Agent Tre: (*Into his shoe*) **Jesus' power transforms my life!** Boss, this is Agent Tre. A stranger just handed me an envelope and said he was delivering special orders from You. He *looked* like an agent, but I've never seen him before. No sir, he did not identify himself. Now that you mention it, he didn't give today's passcode either, and I should have asked for that right away. That's on me, sir, but that's why I'm calling. So You didn't send him? That's what I suspected, because those so-called "orders" didn't sound like anything You would ask me to do. Thank you, sir, I appreciate that! Goodbye to You, sir. (*Tre puts his shoe back on and rips up the envelope.*)

Buddy: Whoa, wait a minute! What just happened? (*Buddy stands up, interested.*)

Agent Tre: Well, Buddy, I don't know who that fellow was, but he was NOT a special agent and those were NOT orders from the Boss! I messed up by not asking him for today's passcode. That's why we need to be self-controlled and alert, because you never know when Deceptor's going to try to pull a fast one on you.

Buddy: But how did you KNOW he wasn't an agent and those weren't orders from the Boss? He sure looked like an agent. And he even quoted the Agent Handbook!

Agent Tre: That's true, Buddy, but always remember that Deceptor is a master of disguises. And he quoted from the Handbook when he tried to tempt the Boss Himself! If all it took to be a special agent was to dress like one and memorize a few lines in the Handbook, we'd all be in trouble. But it's not just what's on the outside that counts, it's what's on the inside!

Buddy: But how can we keep from being fooled?

Agent Tre: Well, for starters, there's the daily passcode. But the main thing is spending time with the Boss. The more time I spend with Him, the easier it is to tell the difference between good and evil and right and wrong. Always remember that people have quoted bits and pieces of the Agent Handbook for years to justify whatever they want to do. That's why it's important to know the WHOLE Handbook and not just a few favorite parts.

Buddy: That ability to tell the difference between good and evil and right and wrong—is that some kind of super power that only a few special agents have?

Agent Tre: Oh, no Buddy! The Boss gives that ability to all of His agents. That's why it's called *Operation Transformation!*

Remember when Agent Paul was called Saul and he was arresting all the Christians? It was only after he encountered Jesus that he realized what he was doing was wrong.

Buddy: I remember! Saul was told to go to a certain house on Straight Street, and then this guy named Ananias came and placed his hands on him, told him what God said, and suddenly he could see again.

Agent Tre: Wow, Buddy! You really were listening during yesterday's lesson! That's very impressive! When Saul met Jesus, everything changed, because that's what Jesus does! What's today's passcode?

Buddy: **Jesus' power transforms my life!**

Agent Tre: Exactly!

Buddy: What happened next? To Saul...or Paul...or whatever his name was! (*Buddy sits down, interested*)

Agent Tre: Well, he stayed with the people Jesus sent him to live with, because he knew he had a lot to learn. He knew how to *persecute* Christians, but he didn't know how to *be* one! But before long he was telling people what Jesus had done for him and openly declaring that Jesus is the Son of God! That really made his old friends mad because they still hated Jesus and they really hated anyone who said Jesus was God's Son. So they made plans to kill Saul. But the Boss warned him about their plans.

Buddy: How did he get away?

Agent Tre: His new Christian friends waited until it got dark, then they lowered him over the city wall in a big basket. That's how he escaped!

Buddy: Yes! (*Fist pumps*) Man, that was close! But I guess he had to lay low after that so he couldn't preach anymore or tell people about Jesus.

Agent Tre: No way! Saul the persecutor had become Paul the special agent, and he was on a mission from God! Once he discovered the truth about Jesus, that truth had set him free! So he wanted everyone else to know it too, so they could be transformed like him!

Buddy: He did a total 180! He went from hating Jesus and His followers to *becoming* a Jesus-follower! Talk about a radical transformation. People must have thought he was crazy.

Agent Tre: I know. It doesn't really make sense until you actually *know Jesus* yourself and then it makes perfect sense...but only afterwards. Look at this! (*"Scans" thumb print on the lockbox and takes out the butterfly picture.*)

Buddy: OK...It's a butterfly! What does that have to do with today's lesson?

Agent Tre: You'll find out in the Mission Brief! Hang on! (*Takes off his shoe and answers the "phone"*) **Jesus' power transforms my life!** Yes, sir! I'll leave right away.

Buddy: Another mission?

Agent Tre: Yes indeed! Want to come?

Buddy: Absolutely!!! (*Buddy jumps up and runs after Tre*) See you later, kids!

Director: I wonder what their mission is today! I hope they are back in time for our closing! In the meantime, we had better get to our Transformation Stations; we have a lot to learn today.

Closing:

If time allows, sing 1-2 songs focused on sanctifying power, Jesus our Lord, surrender, or trust.

End with Day 2 Song, "*John 10:27, My sheep listen to my voice,*" 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:

Buddy: Whew! That was the longest mission in the history of FOREVER! Seriously, Agent Tre, why couldn't you just pick out any old watch? That was just WAY too long to wait for you!

Agent Tre: *(Laughs)* You're funny, Buddy. Some missions take a long time. We don't go on missions because they're fun—even though they sometimes are. We go on missions to help others, because that's what agents do!

Buddy: *(Interrupts, almost acts bored)* Yeah, yeah, yeah, I know...But we didn't actually help anyone at the mall, did we? Was that really a mission, buying a watch?

Agent Tre: Of course it was a mission! Anything the Boss tells me to do is a mission. It wasn't just ANY mall and it wasn't just any watch.

Buddy: *(Plops down, exhausted, on the floor or chair and quotes, sarcastically)* Oh, I know because we looked for it for three straight hours! "A gold watch with special engraving."

Agent Tre: *(Pulls out the pocket watch)* Well, that's where your magnifying glass came in handy, Buddy! I knew it was the right one because it's engraved with the Boss's seal. *(Tre shows the watch to Buddy. Buddy gets out his magnifying glass.)* See that triangle? It represents God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—3 in 1.

Buddy: Oh, I see it! But why did the Boss send you to buy that watch?

Agent Tre: I don't know. My job is to trust Him and obey. Sometimes we never know the reason behind a mission. Sometimes He's protecting us. Like in our Bible story today. He told the disciples in Damascus to get Saul out of the city secretly. Sometimes we find out later how our mission helped someone else. And sometimes we never know why—but the Boss always has a reason.

Buddy: Ok...well then, why did you have to buy the watch with your own money? Why didn't the Boss give you the money to buy it?

Agent Tre: Well, actually, when I became an agent, I realized that everything I have comes from Him anyway and He supplies all of my needs through His glorious riches in Christ Jesus...so He actually did give me the money to buy it.

Buddy: Is it scary? Trusting Him like that?

Agent Tre: That's a great question, Buddy. The truth is it can be scary to trust completely, at least at first. But He has never broken a promise, and I know He really will take care of me because He always has. Now I don't even think about it. I just trust Him and follow what I know He tells me to do. The more I trust Him and obey, the more God shows how He is at work in my life. As I have followed Him, He has transformed what I want into more and more what He wants for me. Because He wants what is the very best for me, it is easier and easier to trust and follow Him.

Buddy: *(All of the sudden very interested)* Ooh! So I can have whatever I want just by asking Him?!

Agent Tre: *(Laughs)* I didn't say that. He always supplies my NEEDS, not all my WANTS. Just like He always answers prayer. Sometimes the answer is "yes" and at other times the answer is "no." And sometimes the answer is "wait." I can always trust that God is at work and wants the best for me.

Buddy: *(Jumps up, like a lightbulb just went off in his head)* Oh, I get it! I get it! When I realize how much God loves me and cares about me, I know I can trust Him no matter what. And when I realize I can trust Him completely, then I can follow wherever He leads me because that will always be the best choice for me. So when I choose to trust and follow Him, that's when God is at work transforming me. Have I got that right, Tre?

Agent Tre: *(Smiling huge, grabbing Buddy for a big bear hug)* I couldn't have said it better myself! Come on, Buddy! Let's get something to eat. I'm buying! See you tomorrow, kids!

Director: See you tomorrow, Tre and Buddy! What an amazing God! We have learned a lot about God's transforming power today. It is incredible to realize that God cares so much about the details of our lives that He actually will guide us as we trust and follow Him. Just like with Saul, God's power can transform our life, too. When we obey and follow God, we get a chance to see Him at work. God does some amazing things through His people and when we see God working, it changes us. Imagine if you were Saul and knew God was using His disciples to save your life by lowering you in a basket to get you secretly out of the city. Wow! That took trust! And just think how much more you would trust God once you lived through it and shared what God had done with others. God loves us so much that we can always trust that He wants what is best for us.

God has given us another great day at *Operation Transformation!* 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 unselfish generosity. Way to go!

Everyone please stand for our closing prayer: Thank You, God, for Your transforming power and 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.