

Opening Skit

Props & Characters:

- **Special agent lockbox**, marked "Top Secret"
- **1-2 Mission Brief Day 3 sheets** found in the resource section of nazarene.org/vbs. (These are placed in the lockbox with an NIV Bible and a flashlight.)
- **NIV Bible** (Place in the lockbox.)
- **Flashlight** (Place in the lockbox.)
- **1-2 chairs**
- **Special Agent Tre** (Code Name: Trinity); dressed like a spy, with a hat and sunglasses
- **Agent-In-Training Buddy** (Code Name: Barnabas); dressed like a spy, with a hat *but not sunglasses* (see Day Four Skits)
- **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 Strange: (*"Sneaking around"*) I really thought I had him yesterday. That Trinity makes me so MAD! He's doing MY job. Yesterday I thought I could get him distracted by giving him that fake assignment...everything was just right. The envelope looked exactly like the ones my dad used to get. I thought I had Tre fooled. Why did he have to mess everything up by calling the Boss? I underestimated how hard it will be to get him out of my way. I'll just have to try harder today!

If I can trap him while he's out on a mission and hide him away, they'll have no choice but to make me a REAL agent because then they'll need me! I just need to figure out a plan...Yes! I know just what to do! (*Rubbing his hands together, Strange leaves stage with a triumphant "evil laugh"*)

(*Buddy and Agent Tre enter stage opposite Strange*)

Buddy: Hey Tre! Did the Boss ever tell you what to do with that watch He had you purchase yesterday?

Agent Tre: (*Distracted, reading something*)

Buddy: Tre? Agent Trinity?

Agent Tre: Oh, sorry Buddy...Uh, no. The Boss didn't tell me what to do with the watch. Sometimes we don't get to see the big picture. I just do what He asks me to do and await further instructions.

Buddy: You seem distracted today. What's going on?

Agent Tre: I'm reading something incredible in the Agent Handbook (*Goes back to reading*).

Buddy: O...K...would you...care to share?

Agent Tre: Oh! Sure, Buddy. It's the official account of Paul's wrongful imprisonment.

Buddy: Wrongful imprisonment? What's that?

Agent Tre: It's when someone is falsely accused and thrown in jail when they didn't do anything wrong. It's all right here in Acts 16:16-40. It happened after Paul had received his new identity and God's power had transformed him. He was even following God. This is one of the stories that shows how God Himself was with Paul. He was Paul's help and friend when Paul was in trouble.

Buddy: God was Paul's help and friend. I like that...but what does that have to do with prison?

Agent Tre: Paul was following God, doing good, and helping people. He went to a city called Philippi with his friend Silas. The city leaders didn't worship God. They wanted Paul and Silas to stop doing miracles and getting people all excited about Jesus. So they had them beaten and jailed in the deepest, darkest part of the prison.

Buddy: Just for helping people and telling them about Jesus? That's not fair!

Agent Tre: You're right; it's not! But the enemy doesn't fight fair. When people hear about the good news of Jesus and accept His love, their lives are transformed. Those who are slaves to sin are set free. But slave owners never want their slaves set free! So Paul and Silas found themselves beaten up and jailed. But they knew they had been doing God's will. They began thinking about God's great love and started thanking Him for sending Jesus. That's when they were filled with joy despite their suffering and started singing praise songs to God!

Buddy: WHAT? They had just been beaten and jailed for obeying God! Why would they praise God when He allowed them to get beat up just for doing what He told them to do?

Agent Tre: Bad things happen to ALL people, Buddy. But when bad things happen to US, we have the advantage of knowing God is right there with us. He never leaves us. His power is at work in us helping us to do what He has asked us to do.

Buddy: I never thought of it like that before. I guess good and bad things happen to everyone. But that's still nothing to celebrate and sing about.

Agent Tre: They weren't singing because bad things happened to them. They were singing because God was right there with them. And it wasn't long before God showed His power to everyone in that jail. There was a massive earthquake, everyone's chains fell off, and all the cell doors flew open!

Buddy: Woah! I bet they got out of there as fast as they could.

Agent Tre: That's exactly what the head jailer thought. And even though it wasn't his fault, he thought his life was over because he knew the city leaders would blame him for the prisoners' escape! But Paul yelled, "Hey! It's OK! We're still here!" That's when the jailer realized there was something very different about Paul and Silas! He realized he needed help from *their* God, so he asked them, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" and they replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved..."

Buddy: That's it? "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved!" It's really that simple?

Agent Tre: Absolutely!

Buddy: Hmm...*(Seems distracted but shakes himself out of it)* What happened next?

Agent Tre: The jailer took Paul and Silas into his home, cleaned and bandaged their wounds, and fed them a meal. Paul and Silas told him about Jesus, and that night the jailer and his entire family were saved!

Buddy: Wow! And none of that would have happened if they hadn't been thrown in jail!

Agent Tre: None of that would have happened if they hadn't been in jail *and* singing praises to God! That's a great lesson to remember, Buddy. Sometimes God sends us into difficult places because that's where the lost people are. God wants them to be saved and He works through us to make that happen—*especially* in tough situations. That's why it's SO important to complete the mission without griping or complaining, especially when we're treated unfairly because that really surprises people. It makes them wonder what's going on with us and that curiosity gives us a chance to tell them about Jesus!

Buddy: I get it! Hey, speaking of curiosity...I wonder what's in the special agent lockbox today? Do you think maybe I can open it today? After all, I have been on secret missions with you and I've learned to dress like you, so I'm a whole lot more like you than I used to be. So my thumbprint ought to work today! *(Buddy tries it. It doesn't work.)* Why isn't it working? I'm doing everything you're doing!

Agent Tre: Buddy, you're talking about things on the outside: how you dress, how you act, what you do. Remember Agent Strange? He looks and acts the part too, but *he is definitely not a special agent!* God isn't fooled by appearances or acting. God looks on the inside; He sees what's in our hearts! There's a huge difference between *knowing about* Jesus and *knowing* Jesus as your friend and savior. Until you receive Him into your heart as your Lord and Savior, you're not a special agent and your thumbprint won't work. But I'm confident you will be one day, if you just don't give up, Buddy. *(Pats Buddy on the shoulder in a kind and caring gesture.)*

(Scans thumbprint, opens lockbox.) Hey, look at this! *(Gives the paper to Buddy and holds up a flashlight.)*

Buddy: I can't read that. What is it? Please bring that flashlight over. Looks like a bunch of weird lines and boxes.

Agent Tre: It's a secret coded message and the flashlight is not helping. Since neither one of us can read it, it must be a message for these new recruits. *(Points to the children)* Their mission brief leader will have to help them figure out what it says and why they might need a flashlight.

Buddy: Tre, is that your shoe ringing?

Agent Tre: It sure is, Buddy! Do you realize what just happened? You can hear my shoe phone! That means you're learning to listen! (*Speaking into his shoe*) Yes sir! Today's passcode is **Jesus' presence transforms my choices**. Yes sir, this is Agent Trinity. (*Pause*) Thank You, sir. I appreciate the reminder. (*"Turns off" phone and returns it to his foot*)

Buddy: What's the mission?

Agent Tre: The Boss wanted to remind me that, "He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them His way."

Buddy: O...K...is that some sort of secret code too? Because that is a very strange mission!

Agent Tre: It's not a mission, Buddy, and it's not a secret code. The Boss is sending me a reminder that I'll need to remember for our next mission. He knows I've got a lot going on. Man...I think I'm gonna' need your help remembering this, Buddy.

Buddy: Sure! Maybe if we say it together...(*Walk off stage together, repeating the reminder.*) He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them His way...He guides the humble...

Director: I wonder if they're going to be all right. I thought I saw Agent Strange snooping around earlier. Did any of you see him? I thought so! I hope Buddy and Tre are going to be OK. I'll be sure to send the flashlight and the secret coded message to your mission brief station so you can figure out how to decode it to help Buddy and Tre!

Closing:

If time allows, sing 1-2 songs focused on God's sustaining presence, Jesus our friend, guide, and strength.

End with Day 3 Song, "*Psalm 25:9, He guides the humble,*" 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:

Director: What a great day we had learning that **Jesus' presence transforms my choices!** Let's welcome back our worship leader to review our two songs for today.

(Worship leader sings theme song and today's memory verse song with hand motions.)

(Agent Strange is hidden where kids can see him, but Tre and Buddy cannot. Agent Tre comes limping in, obviously in a lot of pain with a bandage on his leg or foot.)

Agent Tre: *(Limps in singing today's song)*

Buddy: *(Upset, interrupts Tre)* How can you be singing? Aren't you angry? You know who set that trap for you, don't you?

Agent Tre: Yes, I do.

Agent Strange: *(Looks shocked)*

Buddy: He meant to hurt you, and that makes me mad! Can I do anything for you? Do you need any help? *(Pulling up a chair to rest Tre's leg on)* Are you sure you're going to be all right?

Agent Tre: I'll be OK, Buddy. I know Strange is always trying to trip me up, but I also know why. His dad was a really good special agent and Strange wants to be one too. He just doesn't know how because he still doesn't understand.

Agent Strange: *(Looking shocked and surprised that Tre knows this)*

Agent Tre: Strange doesn't understand that being an agent is not about who your parents are or what you're like on the outside. It's about having a real relationship with Jesus. He's the Boss because He's our Savior. Strange wants to be an agent more than anything, but he's going about it the wrong way.

Agent Strange: *(Looks very sad)*

Buddy: Agent Tre, something is really bothering me.

Agent Tre: What's that, Buddy?

Buddy: When your leg got caught in that trap, I could tell you were hurt, and I heard you pray for the Boss to send help. I kept waiting for someone to show up, but I finally couldn't stand it any longer so I helped you myself.

Agent Tre: *(Laughing)* Oh, Buddy! Don't you see? He DID send help!

Buddy: *(Upset)* He did not! It was just us! The two of us! Nobody else! He didn't answer your prayer! He never sent anybody!

Agent Tre: Wait a minute, Buddy. When I couldn't free myself from that trap, who was there to help me? You were! Who helped me back to the car? You did! And who stopped the bleeding until we made it to the hospital? Mister B-U-Double-D-Y, that's who! When I was in serious trouble, God sent YOU, Buddy.

Buddy: *(Surprised and so pleased)* Wow! I guess I didn't think about it like that. Agent Tre, I have another confession to make. Do you remember on the first day of *Operation Transformation* how I prayed and asked God to transform my heart? I wanted to be an agent because I wanted to be like you, with your cool clothes, great gadgets, and exciting adventures. But the more I've hung around you, the more I've realized how awesome the Boss is! Now I want to be an agent because I want to know Him like you do! I want to be able to live for Him like you!

Agent Tre: I'm glad to hear that, Buddy! And I'm not at all surprised. Buddy, God has been at work transforming you ever since you prayed on that first day. You have been listening to His voice all week and learning more about Him every day. I can tell that you have been hungry to know Him better. Your desire reflects today's memory verse. **Psalm 25:9** says, "**He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them His way.**" You are learning His way and doing the next right thing. It's no longer all about you, it's all about Him. That is AWESOME, Buddy!

Buddy: But how can I be sure I'm getting it right, Tre? I'm so scared I'm going to mess up and choose the wrong things.

Agent Tre: Do you have a copy of the Agent Handbook yet?

Buddy: Well no. Is that something I have to have special training to read?

Agent Tre: No, Buddy, anyone can read it. The more you read it, the better you will know the Boss and how He wants us to live. But Buddy, listen to me. This is important. God's not looking for perfect performance. He's looking for honest, sincere hearts and minds that are fully devoted to Him. You're doing just fine, partner. As a matter of fact, if you will come with me I have a copy of the Handbook just for you! *(Puts his arm around his shoulder and they both walk off together)*

Agent Strange: *(Waits for them to walk off the stage, looks sad, and walks off the stage, too)*

Director: God has given us another great day at *Operation Transformation!* Each day we have more to celebrate! 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 \$_____! Way to go!

It is time to stand for our closing prayer: Thank You, God, for your transforming love for each one of us. Thank You for the chance to learn more about you and the chance to help other children around the world. We pray that you will help other children know Your love 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. Okay? 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.