

united kingdom

PAUL'S
CONVERSION

the Kingdom story from creation to revelation

PAUL'S CONVERSION

Based on NLT

Introduction

As the church grew, so did persecution. One of the most fervent persecutors of believers was Saul, an influential religious leader.

Acts 9:1-6

Saul was uttering threats ... and was eager to kill the ... followers of Jesus. So he travelled to a nearby city to find believers. He wanted to bring them – both men and women – back to Jerusalem in chains. As he was approaching the city on this mission, a light from heaven suddenly shone down around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul! Why are you persecuting me?”

“Who are you?” ... Saul asked.

And the voice replied, “I am Jesus, the One you are persecuting! Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

Acts 9:7-9

The men with Saul stood speechless, because they heard the sound of someone’s voice but saw no one! Saul picked himself up off the ground, but when he opened his eyes he was blind. So his companions led him by the hand to the city. He remained there blind for three days and did not eat or drink.

Acts 9:10-16

Now there was a believer in the town named Ananias. Jesus spoke to him in a vision, calling, “Ananias! ... Go over to a certain house. There is a man there named Saul. He is praying to Me right now. I have shown him a vision of a man named Ananias coming in and laying hands on him so he can see again.”

... Ananias exclaimed, “But I’ve heard many people talk about the terrible things this man has done to the believers in Jerusalem!”

But Jesus said, “Go, because Saul is my chosen instrument to take my message to my people, to kings and to the entire world.” ...

Acts 9:17-19

So Ananias went and found Saul. He laid his hands on him and said, “Brother Saul, ... Jesus, who appeared to you on the road, has sent me so that you might regain your sight and be filled with God’s Spirit.” Instantly something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he got up and was baptised – washed in water – to show that he had turned from his disobedience and had turned to God. Afterward he ate some food and regained his strength.

Acts 9:19-25

Saul stayed with the believers in the city for a few days. And immediately he began preaching about Jesus in the local places of worship, saying, “He is indeed the Son of God!”

All who heard him were amazed. “Isn’t this the same man who caused such devastation among Jesus’ followers in Jerusalem?” they asked. “And didn’t he come here to arrest them and take them in chains to the leading priests?”

Saul’s preaching became more and more powerful, and the people in the town couldn’t refute his proofs that Jesus was indeed the Promised King. After a while some of them plotted together to kill him. They were watching for him day and night at the city gate so they could murder him, but Saul was told about their plot. So during the night, some of the other believers lowered him in a large basket through an opening in the city wall.

Conclusion (with Acts 9:31)

Soon Saul went to his hometown and stayed there for some time until God called him to travel to a new place. ...

The church then had peace ... and it became stronger as the believers respected and honoured God. And with the encouragement of God’s Spirit, it also grew in numbers.

TELLING THE STORY

Why this story?

God continues to show that the most unlikely people are those whom He has chosen for His Kingdom, and He chooses them for the purpose of spreading His Good News!

God has sent His Spirit to those who follow Jesus, and He has made Jesus the true King. Just as Jesus made clear throughout His life and in His teaching, God's Kingdom is for every person in the world – not just for the people God created for Himself from Abraham's descendants (the Jewish people). However, God does not do things in the way we might expect. He chooses the unlikely, and even the hostile, to carry out His plans so that everyone knows it is God and not people doing His work. God chose Saul, a man who hated Jesus' followers, and God called him to follow Jesus. Then God gave Saul a task beyond any that anyone had borne until that time – to go to the rest of the world with the Good News so that Jesus can forgive our disobedience and bring us into God's Kingdom. But God did not choose Saul in a vacuum – He used another of His followers to help Saul! We see the cooperative work within the body of believers and the growth of the body all in one!

Key concepts to include in your story

- The church grows, but so does persecution
- One of the most influential of these persecutors is a religious leader named Saul
- Saul is on his way to another city to find and imprison believers of Jesus
- While Saul is on his way to the city, a light from heaven shines down around him and a voice says, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" The voice identifies Himself as Jesus, the one Saul is persecuting
- When Saul gets up, he is blind
- His companions (who didn't see the light, but heard the voice) take him to a house in the city, where Saul stays
- In the meantime, Jesus comes in a vision to Ananias, a believer in the city, and tells him to go to the house where Saul is and pray for him to be healed of his blindness
- Ananias protests that Saul has been threatening to imprison believers
- Jesus explains that Saul is His chosen instrument to bring the Good News about Jesus to the entire world, including their kings
- Ananias goes to the house where Saul is and prays for him to be healed and to receive God's Spirit
- Saul's blindness is healed and he is baptised
- Saul stays in the city and begins sharing the Good News about Jesus being the Promised King
- People are surprised, and eventually the religious leaders decide to kill Saul
- Saul's friends, other believers, help him escape by lowering him over the wall in a basket
- Saul eventually goes to his hometown

Notes about how the story was crafted

Believers and **followers** have been used interchangeably in this story to indicate Jesus' followers.

We have left out the name of the city of Damascus in order to make it easier to retell this story. We have included Ananias' name, but if it is too difficult for your audience to remember, you may leave it out.

We have retained Saul's name. However, in the New Testament Saul and Paul are the same person. Saul went by the name of Paul, a more Grecian form of his name, when he was in the Greek-speaking world. God did not change his name, and we have no evidence that Saul chose to go by Paul in order to show his new life. If you would like to use the name Paul in this story in order to make it easier for your audience to recognise him in the next two stories, you may.

Biblical scholars agree that the **Lord** who came to Ananias in a vision was Jesus Himself, so we have said that in this story in order to simplify it for our audience and in order to avoid religious terminology like **Lord**.

Saul is my chosen instrument to take my message to the Gentiles and to kings, as well as to the people of Israel has been replaced by ***Saul is my chosen instrument to take my message to my people, to kings, and to the entire world. ...*** In this story set we have identified the Israelites/Jews by the phrase ***God's people*** in order to avoid unwanted connotations from modern-day political understandings of these terms. We have avoided using the term **Gentile** in these stories because many in our audience do not understand this term. In this case, God was calling Saul to tell the Good News about the Kingdom to the rest of the (known) world, so we have made that explicit in this story.

Holy Spirit has been replaced by ***God's Spirit***.

The meaning of **baptism** has been unpacked to reflect the definition given to it in previous stories. It may be helpful to include this brief description every time you mention **baptism** in your stories so that your audience will understand clearly what it is.

Synagogues has been replaced by ***local places of worship***.

Messiah has been replaced by ***Promised King*** in order to consistently emphasise the Kingdom theme of these stories and to give meaning to an otherwise currently meaningless word (Messiah).

We have not included the story of Saul going to Jerusalem and initially being rejected by the church leaders there. We have ended this story with a foreshadowing of things to come – Paul's future travels to other parts of the world and the continued growth of the church with the help of God's Spirit.

DISCUSSION POINTS

Retelling the story

- As your group practices retelling this story, help them see the different scenes in this story.
 - Set the scene: As the church grows, so does persecution. Saul is one of the main persecutors.
 - Saul on his way to the city: A bright light shines down from heaven and Jesus speaks to Saul.
 - Saul gets up, but he is blind. His companions lead him into the city to a house. Saul fasts there for three days.
 - Jesus comes to Ananias, a believer in the city. Jesus asks Ananias to go speak to Saul. Ananias protests that Saul is a persecutor. Jesus says that Saul is His chosen instrument to share the Good News with the world.
 - Ananias goes to Saul's house and prays for him. Saul's blindness is healed, and he is baptised.
 - Saul begins speaking in the town about God's Kingdom, but some become concerned and decide to kill him.
 - Saul is saved by his friends lowering him from the city walls in a basket at night.
 - Saul goes to his hometown until further notice ...

Questions for discussion

You don't have to ask all of these questions in your discussion times. These questions are discussion starters, but you will find that often, once people feel comfortable, they talk about many of these things naturally. However, these questions are helpful to keep a conversation going where needed, and they provide a logical sequence of working through the story. Even if you don't ask all the questions in a group, try to ask people what this story means for them personally. You'll find that as you continue to interact with God's Word at a deep level, God's Spirit will reveal things for your life in a wonderful way!

- What do you like about this story?
- What bothered you about this story?
- What does this story show you about God?
- What does this story show you about people?
- What does this story mean for your life? How will you live your life differently having learned this story?
- How will you remember this story? (*Tell it!*)
- Is there anyone you would like to tell this story to? Or anyone you would like to practice with? E.g. Your children, your best friend, your wife, your husband, a mum at the school gate, your work colleague, your neighbour. (It's true that the best way to learn a story is to tell it. So why don't you give it a go and chat to each other next week about how you found it?)
- How does this story contribute to our understanding of the Gospel? How is this story part of the Gospel?

Questions people may have

This section can never be exhaustive. Remember that during your group discussion times, you want to focus on the above questions rather than get sidetracked by deeply academic issues. Part of the joy of experiencing and studying God's Word in this way is allowing God's Spirit to teach us and reveal His truth to us through the narrative of the individual stories, and ultimately through the narrative of the larger story line. However, we understand that sometimes people feel they need some deeper answers. Sometimes, the storyline has to speak for itself, and we have to trust it to do so. However, if your group needs some deeper answers in order to go on, here are some basics that you can discuss. If you have unresolved questions, please come and ask, and we'll help you find the answers.

- What do we mean that Saul was a religious leader? I thought he hated the Christians?
 - *Saul was a Jewish religious leader, and most of them did not believe that Jesus was the Promised King. It was the Jewish religious leaders that had conspired with Judas and eventually had Jesus turned over to the government to be executed. A year or so later, when Saul came on the scene, many Jewish religious leaders still did not believe that Jesus was the Promised King and still continued persecuting the new believers (Christians). Acts 7-8 recounts the story of Stephen's martyrdom, and Saul was one of the religious leaders who was in agreement with his killing.*
- What happened to Saul's companions? And why didn't they hear Jesus speaking on the road like Saul did?
 - *Unfortunately, we do not know what happened to Saul's companions after Saul became a follower of Jesus and was baptised. The Bible is not clear on who the men were – they could have been a small contingent from the temple police in Jerusalem sent to help him or simply men traveling in his caravan with him. The Acts 9 account of Saul's experience says that the men heard the voice but could not understand it. The Acts 22 account of the same experience says that the men did not hear the voice but just saw the light. In any case, the companions did not fully understand the situation, either because they did not hear the actual words, or if they did, had no context in which to put them and so completely misunderstood them. Obviously, the message from Jesus was specifically for Saul and meant for him alone. However, the companions' presence meant that Saul's story could be corroborated to a point. Something supernatural definitely happened on the way to Damascus, and Saul was definitely affected by it.*
- Why did it take three days before God sent someone to Saul?
 - *Commentators seem to believe that Saul prayed and fasted for three days, not because of his sudden piousness, but because of his shock and brokenness as he realised that all he had believed in and stood for was wrong. He would need those days to fully understand what had happened and what it meant for him – three days to come to a place of humility to be able to hear and finally accept from Ananias what he had discovered to be true. God has reasons for His delays that we cannot always understand.*

- Why did Ananias have to “lay hands” on Saul?
 - *In the Bible, laying on of hands was a symbolic act. It usually symbolised the bestowing or passing on of something. For example, Old Testament priests laid their hands on sacrificial animals to pass on their sin to the animal. Some laid on hands to give blessing (Mt. 19:15). Jesus touched people and healed them, both physically and spiritually (Mk. 1:31, 41; 5:41; 9:27). Sometimes the laying on of hands was done to bestow God’s Spirit (Acts 8:17), although the Spirit could come in other ways as well (Acts 2:4; 10:44). Sometimes the laying on of hands symbolised a commissioning into a God-given task (Numbers 27:18-23; Acts 6:6; 13:3). The act may be symbolic of God’s hand to create and restore and therefore symbolic of God’s power working through the person who does the laying on of hands.*

PAUL'S CONVERSION – for children

Based on NLT

Introduction

As the church grew, *some people became cruel to Christians and made them suffer. One of the people who was the most cruel to believers was Saul, an important religious leader.*

Acts 9:1-6

Saul was *making* threats ... and was eager to kill the ... followers of Jesus. So he *travelled to a nearby city to find believers*. He wanted to *arrest them and* bring them – both men and women – back to Jerusalem. ... As he *came near the city* ... a light from heaven suddenly shone down around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul! Why are you *being cruel to* me?” “Who are you?” ... Saul asked.

And the voice replied, “I am Jesus, the One you are *being cruel to*! Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

Acts 9:7-9

The men with Saul stood *there but said nothing*, because they heard the sound of someone’s voice but saw no one! Saul picked himself up off the ground, but when he opened his eyes he was blind. So *those with Saul* led him by the hand to *the city*. He remained there blind for three days and did not eat or drink.

Acts 9:10-16

Now there was a believer in *the town* named Ananias. Jesus spoke to him in a vision (*or dream*), calling, “Ananias! ... Go over to a certain house. *There is a man there* named Saul. He is praying to Me right now. I have shown him a vision (*or dream*) of a man named Ananias coming in and laying hands on him so he can see again.” ... Ananias *exclaimed*, “But I’ve heard many people talk about the terrible things this man has done to the believers in Jerusalem!”

But Jesus said, “Go, because Saul is *the man I’ve chosen* to take my message to *my people, to kings and to the entire world*.” ...

Acts 9:17-19

So Ananias went and found Saul. He laid his hands on him and said, “Brother Saul, ... Jesus, who appeared to you on the road, has sent me so that you might *get* your sight *back* and be filled with God’s Spirit.” Instantly something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he *was able to see again*. Then he got up and was baptised – *washed in water – to show that he had turned from his disobedience and had turned to God*. Afterward he ate some food and ... his strength *returned*.

Acts 9:19-25

Saul stayed with the believers in *the city* for a few days. And immediately he began preaching about Jesus in the *local places of worship*, saying, “He is indeed the Son of God!”

All who heard him were amazed. “Isn’t this the same man who *tried to destroy* Jesus’ followers in Jerusalem?” they asked. “And didn’t he come here to arrest them and take them in chains to the leading priests?”

Saul’s preaching became more and more powerful, and *the people in the town* couldn’t *argue against* his proofs that Jesus was indeed the *Promised King*. After a while some of *them made plans* together to kill him. They were watching for him day and night at the city gate so they could murder him, but Saul was told about their *plans*. So during the night, some of the other believers lowered him in a large basket through an opening in the city wall.

Conclusion (with Acts 9:31)

Soon Saul went to his hometown and stayed there for some time until God called him to travel to a new place. ... The church then had peace ... and it became stronger as the believers respected and honoured God. And with the encouragement of God’s Spirit, it also grew in numbers.

TELLING THE STORY – for children

Key concepts to include in your story

The story will need to be simplified at varying levels based on the age group of the children you are teaching. This means that many of the details in the story will need to be summarized. However, you should include the following concepts in your story.

- The church grows, but so does persecution
- One of the most influential of these persecutors is a religious leader named Saul
- Saul is on his way to another city to find and imprison believers of Jesus
- While Saul is on his way to the city, a light from heaven shines down around him and a voice says, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” The voice identifies Himself as Jesus, the one Saul is persecuting
- When Saul gets up, he is blind
- His companions (who didn’t see the light, but heard the voice) take him to a house in the city, where Saul stays
- In the meantime, Jesus comes in a vision to Ananias, a believer in the city, and tells him to go to the house where Saul is and pray for him to be healed of his blindness
- Ananias protests that Saul has been threatening to imprison believers
- Jesus explains that Saul is His chosen instrument to bring the Good News about Jesus to the entire world, including their kings
- Ananias goes to the house where Saul is and prays for him to be healed and to receive God’s Spirit
- Saul’s blindness is healed and he is baptised
- Saul stays in the city and begins sharing the Good News about Jesus being the Promised King
- People are surprised, and eventually the religious leaders decide to kill Saul
- Saul’s friends, other believers, help him escape by lowering him over the wall in a basket
- Saul eventually goes to his hometown

Example of a simplified version of the story for children

As the church grew, some people became really mean to Christians and made them suffer. One of the people who was the cruellest to believers was Saul – an important religious leader. Saul was making threats against the followers of Jesus and wanted to kill them. So he travelled to a nearby city to find the believers, arrest them and take them back to Jerusalem. As Saul came near the city, a light from heaven suddenly shone down around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul! Why are you being so mean to me?" "Who are you?" Saul asked. And the voice replied, "I am Jesus, the One you are being so cruel to. Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." The men with Saul stood there but didn't say anything. They heard the sound of someone's voice, but they didn't see anyone. Saul picked himself up off the ground, but when he opened his eyes, he was blind. So the men with Saul led him by the hand to the city. Saul remained there blind for three days, and he didn't eat or drink anything. Now there was a believer named Ananias in the town. Jesus spoke to him in a dream, calling, "Ananias! Go to the house where the man named Saul is staying. He is praying to Me right now, and I have shown him a dream of a man named Ananias coming to him and laying hands on him so he can see again." Ananias exclaimed, "But I've heard many people talk about the terrible things this man has done to the believers in Jerusalem!" But Jesus said, "Go, because Saul is the man I've chosen to take my message to my people, to kings and to the entire world." So Ananias went and found Saul and put his hands on him. Ananias said, "Brother Saul, Jesus – who appeared to you on the road – has sent me so that you might get your sight back and be filled with God's Spirit." Instantly, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he was able to see again. Then he got up and was baptised – washed in water – to show that he had turned from disobedience and had turned to God. Afterward, Saul ate some food, and his strength returned. Saul stayed with the believers in the city for a few days. He immediately began preaching about Jesus in the local places of worship, saying, "Jesus is definitely the Son of God!" Everyone who heard him was amazed, because they knew that Saul was the man who tried to destroy Jesus' followers and had wanted to arrest them. Saul's preaching became more and more powerful, and no one could argue against his proof that Jesus was indeed the Promised King. After a while some of the people made plans to kill Saul. They were watching for him day and night at the city gate so they could murder him, but Saul was told about their plans. So during the night, some of the other believers lowered him in a large basket through an opening in the city wall. Soon Saul returned to his hometown and stayed there until God called him to travel to a new place. The church then had peace, and it became stronger as the believers respected and honoured God. And then with the encouragement of God's Spirit, the church grew in numbers.

Retelling the story

The following activities can be used to vary your storying sessions with the children and keep the action fresh and exciting. They also help the children learn the stories in different ways. You'll find as children journey through this story set with you, they become more and more capable of learning even complicated stories quickly and well. Varying activities and keeping it fun helps the children write the stories on their heart so that they can pull them out of their toolbox whenever a situation comes up where they can use them!

- **Charades** – Have participants choose one line from the story and use actions to convey that line to the rest of the group. The child that guesses correctly goes next.
- **Skit** – Assign parts to groups and have them act out the story as you or a participant narrates. This can be done as a group or in smaller teams. If done in teams, you may choose to have each team act out the whole story, or assign sections and have them perform the skits in chronological order one after the other.
- **Song** – This activity seems to work best in small groups of older and more advanced students. If you believe your group would enjoy this activity, have them write and perform a song based on a story or a portion of a story. To make this task easier, have each group choose a song melody as their foundation and change the lyrics as needed, as opposed to starting from scratch.
- **Sign Language** – This is a great way to incorporate kinaesthetic learning into storying. Work with the participants to develop "sign language" for keywords in the story. This will help them to remember the order and progression of the story. This activity may also be done as a group or in smaller teams. If done in teams, have a participant from each team narrate as the group demonstrates their motions. The more creative, the more likely they are to remember it! Sign language is a good activity if younger and more inexperienced storytellers are part of the group.
- **Perspective Shift** – This creative and critical thinking activity works best later in the story set. Assign groups of children different characters in the story. They then adjust the story they have learned to the perspective of that character. For example, they could tell the Fall story from Adam and Eve's perspectives or the Abraham story from Abraham's perspective.
- **Memory** – The storyteller starts this activity by saying the first line of the story. The story then moves around the circle as each participant tells a line. An alternate method is to go back and forth between partners as they tell the story to each other.
- **Popcorn** – The storyteller also starts this activity. As children remember, they raise their hand. When ready, the storyteller yells "pop" and the name of someone with their hand raised. That person will then jump in until more hands are raised and they shout "pop" to pass the story to another child. You will likely need to demonstrate how this works.
- **Interview** – Children are assigned different characters. A child designated as "interviewer" asks the characters questions about what happened in the story and the character answers according to his or her role. For example, the interviewer could ask Adam about what he witnessed or the actions he took in the garden when he ate the fruit, and Adam would give his answer.
- **Action words** – Before telling the story, the storyteller gives instructions associated with particular words. Children listen for those words in the story, and must do appropriate action when heard. For example, the storyteller would tell the participants to wiggle their arm like a snake anytime they hear the word "snake." There should be multiple words associated with actions in the story. This activity also works well with a younger audience.

Children's Teaching Materials

Sunday mornings will begin in the warehouse with a joint children's worship time led by a youth worship band followed by a storying session with the roving storyteller. Then groups will disperse to their usual meeting locations for the age-appropriate teaching of the story and activities that reinforce that story's message.

Sparks

10:30 Retell the story using a Storybook Bible.

Snack – rice cakes

10:45 Craft options:



~ Stick bright, shiny stickers (or paper) on a picture of Paul on the ground. The shiny stickers can represent the bright light. (The template can be found at the end of this document.)



~ Make a two-sided face/mask that the kids can use when trying to retell the story. One side shows a blind Saul, and the other side shows a happy Saul (after his sight has been restored and he becomes a follower of Jesus). God changed him from the inside. (The templates can be found at the end of this document.)

11:15 Music:

~ Use the chorus from "Follow On" by Robert Lowry

Follow! Follow! I will follow Jesus!

Anywhere, everywhere, I will follow on!

Follow! Follow! I will follow Jesus!

Everywhere He leads me I will follow on!

11:20 Play

Resources Needed:

- Storybook Bible
- Rice cakes
- Picture of Paul on the ground
- Stickers: bright & shiny
- Printed templates/pictures of Saul (blind & happy)
- Craft sticks
- Crayons or markers
- Tape or glue

- Music

Little Flames

10:30 Begin with prayer. (Don't repeat a specific prayer, but follow the general idea of the prayer below.)

~ Say "Hi" to God, tell Him we're glad He's there with us and ask Him to help us see Him, hear Him and know Him. Invite Him into everything we'll be doing today.

Keep today's focus in mind: "Jesus wants me to follow Him."

Resources Needed:

10:35 Craft options:



~ Stick bright, shiny stickers (or paper) on a picture of Paul on the ground. The shiny stickers can represent the bright light. (The template can be found at the end of this document.)



~ Make a two-sided face/mask that the kids can use when trying to retell the story. One side shows a blind Saul, and the other side shows a happy Saul (after his sight has been restored and he becomes a follower of Jesus). God changed him from the inside. (The templates can be found at the end of this document.)

- Picture of Paul on the ground
- Stickers (bright & shiny) or holographic paper

10:45 Retell the story (using the crafts made above as visuals)

~ Move around the room with the children acting out Saul's expressions: angry, speechless, blind, prayer, joy, etc.

- Crafts (from above)

10:50 "Knowledge Harvest" conversation: (use similar questions as below)

- ~ As the church began to grow, what happened to them?
- ~ Who was Saul, and how did he treat Jesus' followers?
- ~ What did Saul want to do to Jesus' followers?
- ~ What happened to Saul as he was travelling on the road to the city?
- ~ What did Jesus say to Saul?
- ~ What did the men with Saul see and hear?
- ~ What did Saul realise when he opened his eyes?
- ~ Who was Ananias?
- ~ What did Jesus say to Ananias in a vision/dream?
- ~ How did Ananias respond?
- ~ What dream/vision to Jesus give to Saul?
- ~ How was Ananias obedient?
- ~ What happened to Saul when Ananias put his hands on him?
- ~ What did Saul do after he could see again?
- ~ What did Saul begin preaching about in the local places of worship?
- ~ How did people respond to Saul's message?
- ~ When some people planned to kill Saul, how did he escape?
- ~ Where did Saul go next?
- ~ What happened to the church and Jesus' followers?

11:00 Biscuit break – Use this relatively calm opportunity for a little chat and prayer time.

- Biscuits

Discussion: "How can you show Jesus that you believe in Him and want to follow Him?"

- 11:05 Popcorn Prayer
~ Have simple prayers, popcorn style: "Thank you, Jesus, for _____!"
- 11:10 Music:
~ Use the chorus from "Follow On" by Robert Lowry
Follow! Follow! I will follow Jesus!
Anywhere, everywhere, I will follow on!
Follow! Follow! I will follow Jesus!
Everywhere He leads me I will follow on!
- 11:20 Learn the words of the week: "Jesus wants me to follow Him." Use visuals for the kids to help them learn the words.
- 11:25 Prayer: Thank God choosing us and teaching us about Jesus.
- 11:30 If there is any remaining time (or the previous activities finish early), allow the children to freely choose to do whatever they want to do. Play story-relevant music in the background. Leaders should engage with the children during this time: celebrate them, pray for them, love them.
~ Play with story-oriented toys
~ Role play
~ Play-dough creations
~ Colouring station
- Music
 - Visuals to help learn the phrase
 - Story-oriented toys
 - Play-dough
 - Colouring sheets
 - Blank paper
 - Crayons

Blaze

- 10:30 Share the rules, review last week's story and retell today's story (using props)
~ Retell the story using the following: bottle of iodine, 3 clear glass jars, water, spray starch and bleach; prepare your jars before children arrive
1. Show jar #1 (*filled with water*) – this jar represents Saul
 2. Drop some iodine in the water (*which will turn the water yellow*) as you talk about him persecuting/arresting Christians; he was a fanatic
 3. Slowly pour the yellow water into jar #2 (*which looks empty but has spray starch coating the inside*) as you talk about Saul on the road to Damascus & hearing Jesus calling out to him; *the yellow water will turn black as you pour it into the jar with starch coating*
 4. Hold up the jar of black water as you talk about Saul's blindness & Ananias being sent to him
 5. Quickly pour the black water into jar #3 (*which has a couple of tablespoons of bleach at the bottom*) as you talk about the scales falling from Saul's eyes; *the water will immediately turn clear again*
- 10:35 Activity to learn the story:
~ Split the kids into groups and have each group act out the story and then perform for the other group(s).
- 10:45 Split into small groups for the discussion questions
Discuss the questions:
~ What do you like about this story?
~ What bothered you about this story?
- Resources Needed:
- 3 clear glass jars
 - Water
 - Iodine
 - Spray starch
 - Bleach

- ~ What does this story show you about God?
- ~ What does this story show you about people?
- ~ What does this story mean for your life? How will you live your life differently having learned this story?
- ~ How will you remember this story? *Tell it!*
- ~ Who will you tell this story to?

Pray for who they want to share the story with

11:00 Game: Road to Damascus

The game pieces should be laid out on the floor like stepping stones to make a winding path (like Candyland). The first stone is "Jerusalem" and the last stone is "Damascus." Scripture cards, Question cards and Surprise cards can be found at the end of these materials. Alter the game as necessary for your group.

1. Divide the class into teams of 3 or 4 children, with a total of no more than 4 teams. The more teams you have, the longer it will take to finish the game. For Grades 3-5, give each child a Bible.
2. To play, kids move through the path as a team. When it's a team's turn, one member rolls a large die and the whole team moves the number of steps rolled.

Scripture cards:

Grades 3-5: When they land on a "scripture" stepping stone, have one member draw a scripture card. Using a timer, give the team one minute to find the passage in the Bibles they're holding. The first to find it reads it out loud. If somebody finds it before time runs out, the team moves ahead one space; if not, back one space. (If one minute seems too short for the class's general ability, make it longer.)

Grades 1-2: Have a leader hold a Bible open to Acts 9. Let one member draw a scripture card and hand it to you. Have the leader read the verse out loud, then ask the team the question on the card. Correct answer, move forward one space. Incorrect, back one space.

Question cards: When a team lands on a "question" stepping stone, one member picks a question card and hands it to you without reading it. (The answers are on the card). Ask the question, and offer the multiple choices only if the team is stumped. Correct answer: forward one space. Incorrect: back one space.

Surprise cards: The team draws a card, does what it says, then moves forward one space.

4. The object of the game is to reach the end of the path. Keep playing until all teams have finished or you run out of time. If the teams are progressing too slowly, remove some of the stones to make the path shorter. You can also remove some of the question and scripture cards, but leave in the ones referring to the last half of the story (from Ananias' vision to the end).

Game Materials

1. Make 22 "stepping stones," each large enough for several children to crowd onto.
 - Draw a firecracker or an explosion of some sort on the four "surprise" stones.
 - Label eight stepping-stones "Scripture" or draw a Bible on them.

- 22 game pieces (like stepping stones): 4 surprise stones, 8 scripture stones, 8 question stones, 1 Jerusalem stone & 1 Damascus stone
- Giant die
- Cut out scripture, question & surprise cards (from the template at the end of this document)
- Bibles

- Label eight stepping-stones with a question mark.
 - Label one stone "Jerusalem" and one stone "Damascus."
2. Make or purchase a giant die.
 3. Cut out cards below (at the bottom of this document) and paste them to index cards. Keep scripture, question and surprise cards in separate piles.

11:15 Craft: Saul's Conversion



~ Using the template of Saul's face (at the end of this document), create scales from wax paper that can fall from Saul's eyes.

1. Colour Saul's face
2. Cut 8 layers of ovals/scales for each eye from wax paper
3. Cut 1 layer of ovals for each eye from white paper
4. Cut some small slits above the eyes – just large enough for the small part of a small paper clip to fit through
5. Layer one white oval and 8 wax paper ovals on each eye (with the paper one on the bottom)
6. Attach a craft stick, a piece of string and two paperclips to the back of the face (as shown in the picture above)
7. The end of the paperclips should slide through the slit above the eye to attach the scales
8. Slowly pull the craft stick upward with your thumb, and the scales will begin to slide off one or two at a time; (pulling too fast will not get the desired effect)

- Printed templates of Saul's face & ovals (from the end of these materials)
- Wax paper
- White paper
- Paperclips
- Craft sticks
- Small pieces of string
- Tape
- Crayons/markers
- Scissors

11:30 Circle Time: praying, reflection, responses and offering ~ Activity pages (if needed) for extra time

- Offering box
- Activity pages

TNT

10:30 Share the rules, review last week's story and retell today's story (using props) ~ Retell the story using the following: bottle of iodine, 3 clear glass jars, water, spray starch and bleach; prepare your jars before children arrive

1. Show jar #1 (*filled with water*) – this jar represents Saul
2. Drop some iodine in the water (*which will turn the water yellow*) as you talk about him persecuting/arresting Christians; he was a fanatic
3. Slowly pour the yellow water into jar #2 (*which looks empty but has spray starch coating the inside*) as you talk about Saul on the road to Damascus & hearing Jesus calling out to him; *the yellow water will turn black as you pour it into the jar with starch coating*
4. Hold up the jar of black water as you talk about Saul's blindness & Ananias being sent to him

Resources Needed:

- 3 clear glass jars
- Water
- Iodine
- Spray starch
- Bleach

5. Quickly pour the black water into jar #3 (*which has a couple of tablespoons of bleach at the bottom*) as you talk about the scales falling from Saul's eyes; *the water will immediately turn clear again*

10:35 Activity to learn the story:
~ Split the kids into groups and have each group act out the story and then perform for the other group(s).

10:45 Split into small groups for the discussion questions
Discuss the questions:
~ What do you like about this story?
~ What bothered you about this story?
~ What does this story show you about God?
~ What does this story show you about people?
~ What does this story mean for your life? How will you live your life differently having learned this story?
~ How will you remember this story? *Tell it!*
~ Who will you tell this story to?

Pray for who they want to share the story with

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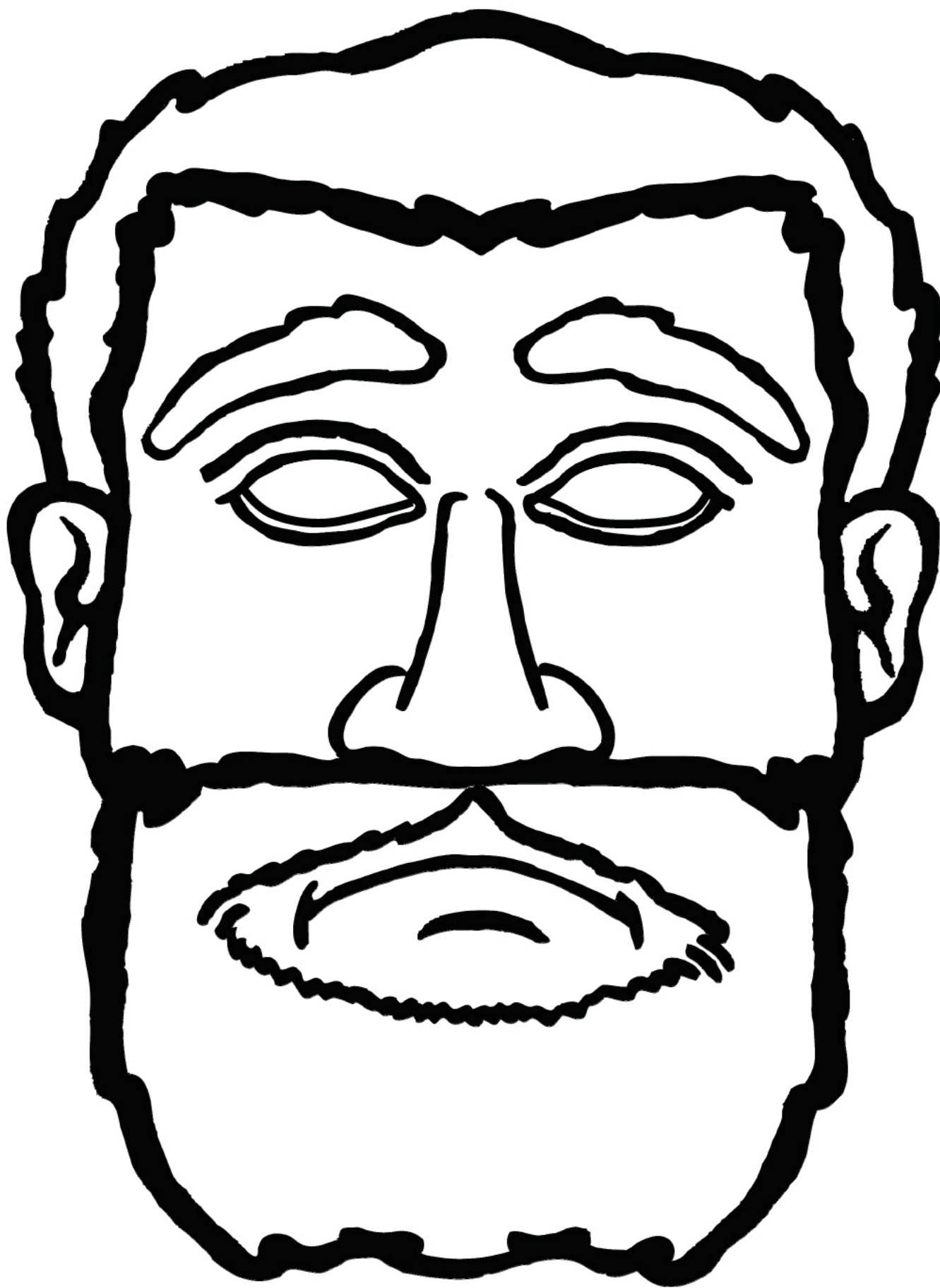
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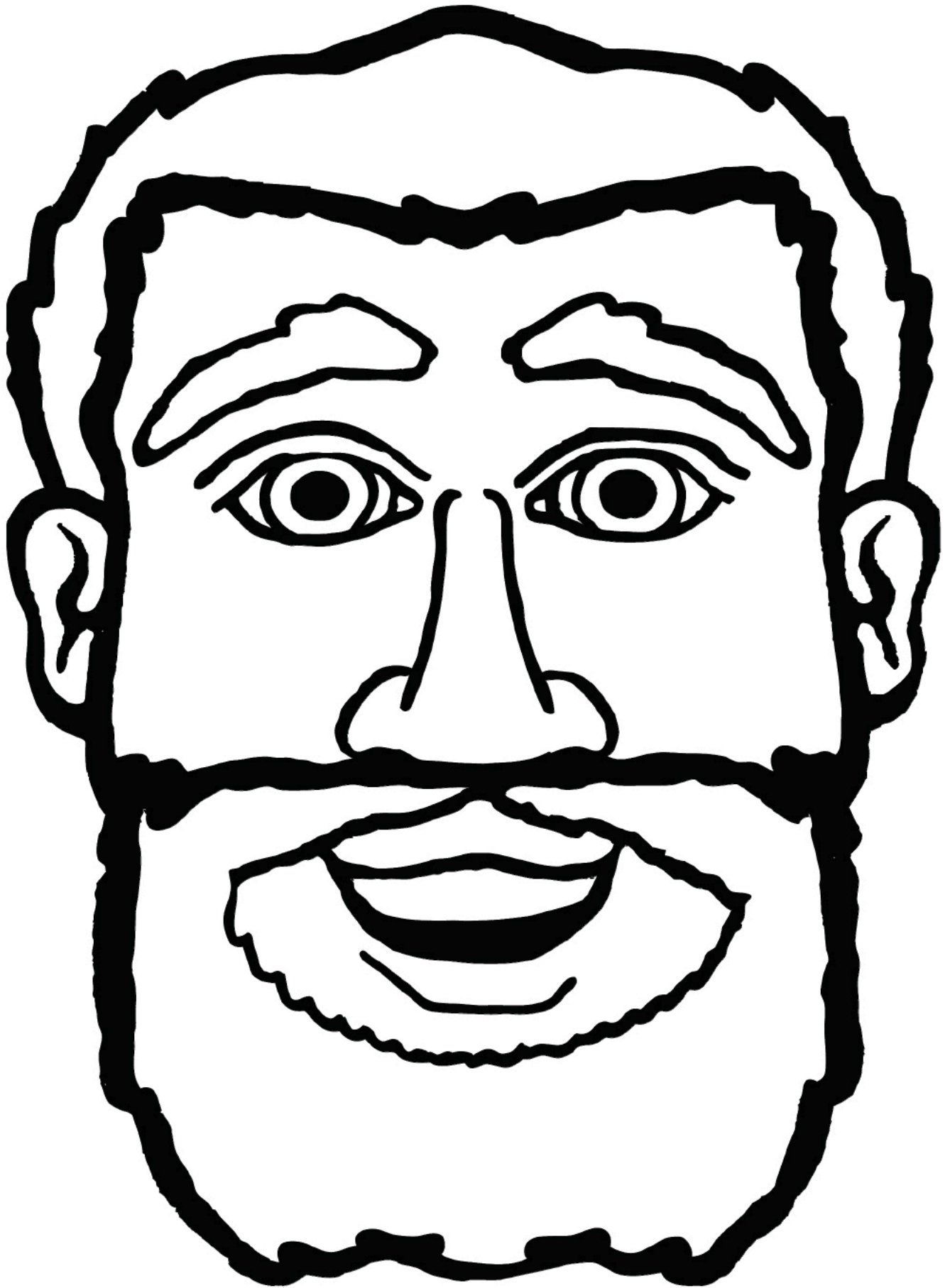
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- Activity pages



Suddenly, a bright light appeared from Heaven.
Saul fell to the ground and was blinded.





ROAD TO DAMASCUS GAME MATERIALS

Question cards

Today's story about Saul's turnabout takes place in what book of the Bible?

- A. Matthew
- B. *Acts or Acts of the Apostles*
- C. 1 Samuel

Why was Saul traveling to Damascus?

- A. To kill the Christians there.
- B. *To arrest the Christians there and bring them back to Jerusalem*
- C. To learn from the Christians there

True or False: The book of Acts is in the Old Testament

When Saul was on the road, what did he see?

- A. Jesus
- B. *A bright light*
- C. An angel

What was Saul's religion?

- A. *He was a Jew.*
- B. He was a Christian.
- C. He worshiped the Roman gods.

When the bright light flashed around Saul he fell to the ground and heard a voice. Who was speaking?

- A. Ananias
- B. His traveling companions
- C. *Jesus*

What was Saul's hometown?

- A. Jerusalem
- B. Damascus
- C. *Tarsus*

What was the first thing Jesus said to Saul?

- A. *Saul, Saul, Why are you being so cruel to me?*
- B. Saul, Saul, don't be afraid.
- C. Saul, Saul, turn around and go back to Jerusalem.

What did Saul think about Jesus' followers?

- A. *Opposed them, hated them*
- B. Wanted to be more like them
- C. Thought they were wrong but respected their beliefs

What did Saul say to Jesus?

What did Saul do to Jesus' followers?

- A. Argued with them to convince them they were wrong
- B. *Arrested them, jailed them, killed them*
- C. Helped them escape from the soldiers.

- A. What do you want me to do?
- B. I'm sorry I was so cruel to you.
- C. *Who are you?*

What did Jesus tell Saul to do?

- A. Go back to Jerusalem and let the Christians out of jail.
- B. *Go to Damascus and wait to be told what to do*
- C. Go to see Ananias

What happened to Saul's eyes after he saw the bright light?

- A. They changed from brown to blue
- B. *He opened them but could not see a thing*
- C. He opened them and everything was blurry

How did Saul get to Damascus?

- A. He rode on a donkey
- B. *He was led by the hand*
- C. He was carried by his traveling companions

What did Saul do for three days in Damascus

- A. *Fasted and prayed*
- B. Sang and worshiped Jesus
- C. Talked to Christians

Whom did Jesus send to heal Saul in Damascus?

- A. Paul
- B. *Ananias*
- C. Judas

Why was Ananias worried about doing what Jesus asked?

- a. *He was afraid of Saul because of the things Saul had done.*
- b. He was mad at Saul and didn't want to help him.
- c. He thought the other Christians wouldn't like it

What did Jesus tell Ananias about Saul?

- A. I have chosen him to be the new king of Israel.
- B. I have chosen him to be my favorite disciple.
- C. *I have chosen him to tell people about me.*

What did Ananias do?

- A. *Went to Saul, touched his eyes so he could see again.*
- B. Ran and hid.
- C. Had Saul arrested and put in jail.

What did Saul do after he could see again?

- a. He went out to arrest Christians.
- b. He went out to apologize to Christians for the things he had done.
- c. *He was baptized.*

Why did Saul have two names?

- A. Jesus changed his name from Saul to Paul.
- B. Saul was his first name and Paul was his middle name.
- C. *He had a Jewish name, Saul and a Roman name, Paul*

Surprise cards

When Saul saw the bright light, he fell to the ground. Fall down!

Ananias put his hands on Saul to heal him. Put your hands on a team member.

The men traveling with Saul heard Jesus's voice but didn't see anything. Do what they did while Paul was talking to Jesus. (Stand there speechless.)

Saul was baptized. Baptize each other (Let them dip their hands in clean water and sprinkle each other.)

Someone led Saul by the hand to Damascus. Get a partner on your team. One of you close your eyes and let the other lead you to the wall and back.

After Saul was baptized, he ate for the first time in three days. Eat this. (Hand each team a cracker, a bite of bread, or some other small piece of food.)

Scripture cards

Grades 1-2:

Grades 3-5

Acts 9: 3-4
Who was speaking to Saul?

Acts 9: 1-2

Acts 9: 10

Acts 9:6
Who is speaking and who is listening?

Acts 9: 3-4

Acts 9: 11-12

Acts 9: 7
Where are they?

Acts 9: 5

Acts 9: 13-14

Acts 9: 9
Who is this talking about and where was he?

Acts 9: 6

Acts 9: 15-16

Acts 9: 13-14
Who is Ananias talking about?

Acts 9: 7

Acts 9: 17

Acts 9: 15
Who is the Lord talking about?

Acts 9: 8-9

Acts 9: 18-19

