

WEEK ONE

## SAUL TO PAUL – TRANSFORMED!

### BIG IDEA

*God transformed Saul and gave him a*

# A SOFT HEART & A NEW NAME

GOD WANTS TO TRANSFORM US TOO

### PREP

- Get 5 envelopes.
- Cut out pictures from appendix and paste one on outside of envelope and place inside the picture of what that object can become.
- Find a small jar with screw top lid and buy some whipping cream and crackers. (optional but fun).

### WHAT GOES IN THE BOX?

- A piece of paper and pencil for each person.
- A ring (any sort).
- The envelopes.



### OUT OF THE BOX

- Give each person a piece of paper and ask them to write their name on it.
- Try rearranging the letters to make a new name.
- Then try replacing the first letter of their name with a different letter and see what new name they can make that way.

### INTRODUCTION

Today we are going to hear about a man who got a new name, when God changed the first letter of his name from an S to a P. Do you know who he might be?

It is Saul who became Paul. God had seen Saul's hard heart and how strictly religious he was but God wanted to show Paul that He could transform his heart to be tender and loving – just like God's heart.

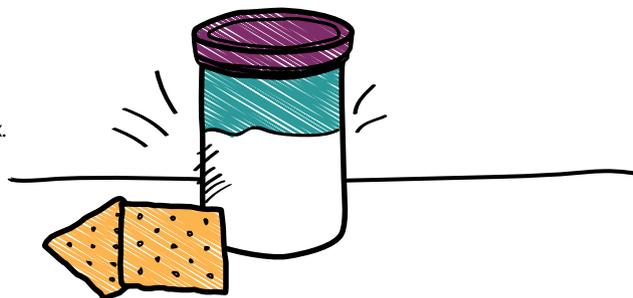
### GAME

#### Transformation game

- Take the ring and put it on.
- When you take it off you have to pretend that you have been transformed into something or someone different. (e.g. They might pretend that they are Dad or Aunt Matilda, the family dog etc.)
- Give each person a turn.

## READ

- Take the jar with screw lid, the cream and the crackers out of the Faith Box.
- Pour the cream into the jar – make sure the lid is on tight.
- As you listen to the story, have everyone take turns shaking the cream... By the end of the story, you should have butter to put on the crackers – yum! It has been transformed, just as Saul was changed to Paul.



“ Saul was an angry man who hated Christians and persecuted them. That means he did everything he could to hunt them down and treat them in cruel and mean ways; sometimes he even killed them. Paul was very religious (can you believe it?) but he actually thought he was doing God’s work!

This particular day, Saul was on his way to Damascus where he planned to arrest any Christians that were in the synagogues, the Jewish places of worship. But an amazing thing happened. As he travelled Saul was thinking about how he could hurt the Christians, when suddenly a huge bright light shone down from heaven.

Saul was blinded by the light and fell to the ground. But to his surprise a voice said, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”

Saul answered, “Who are you, Lord?”

The voice replied, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting... It is hard Saul for you to fight against me. ...Go into Damascus and you will be told what you must do.”

When Saul got up from the ground, he had to ask others to lead him by the hand into the city because he was blind. And for the next three days Saul didn’t eat or drink anything.

In a dream God told a man named Ananias that he should go to see Saul. Even though Saul had a terrible reputation for hurting people like him, Ananias still went, found Saul and laid his hands on him. What happened next was totally amazing. Immediately Saul was able to see again. Ananias told Saul that Jesus had sent him

so he could be filled with the Holy Spirit. Straight away Saul repented and was baptized to wash away his sins and show that now he was a follower of Jesus.

After meeting Jesus on the road Saul was transformed. After a few days with the believers, he went to the synagogue to tell everyone that Jesus truly was the Son of God. Saul’s name was changed to Paul, and he spent the rest of his life serving Jesus and teaching people about him. He became a missionary to people all over the world. Paul, the apostle, suffered many persecutions. Instead of being the person who hurt other Christians, he became persecuted himself for Christ’s sake, and was eventually killed for his faith.



Acts 9:1-22

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EXPLORE

Have you ever played the game “Stuck in the Mud”? (See Other Ideas for game rules). Sometimes we get stuck doing something horrid or being mean. Saul thought he was doing the right thing but he was awful and cruel – especially to people who followed Jesus.

So God spoke to Saul and made him blind... for 3 whole days! Imagine what that was like!

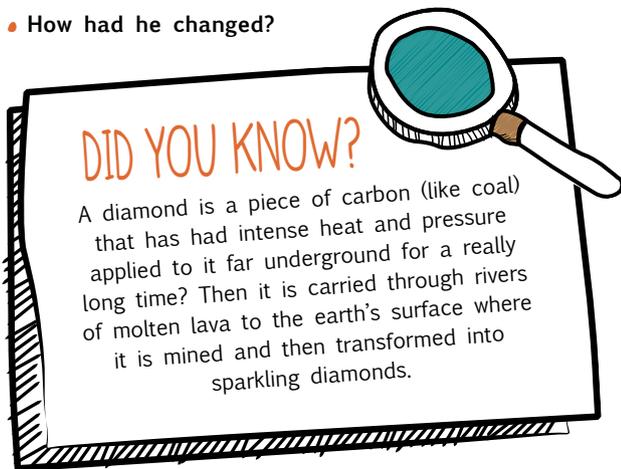
- Give each person a task to do with their eyes closed.

e.g. go and get their pillow; tie a shoelace; pour a cup of water (over the sink would be safest!); find a \$2 coin from a purse; put socks on someone else.

Being blind for that long meant Saul couldn't do much, and that gave him a lot of time to think about what God had said to him.

FAMILY TALK TIME

- What was Saul like at the beginning of this story?
- What was Paul like by the end of this story?
- How had he changed?



When God gave him his sight back, Saul had changed completely. It was like his life was suddenly facing a whole new direction. He was given a new name, Paul, to recognise this change.

OUT OF THE BOX

- Give each person one of the envelopes.

Get them to look at the pictures on the outside. *What could each of those things be transformed into?*

- Check inside the envelope and see if you were correct.

Like Saul/Paul, God wants to transform us.

We have each been chosen to do wonderful things for God. But sometimes there are things in us that need to change...

What things would you like changed in you?

- Let everyone share something here, including the adults.

Decide on one area in your life you are going to work on transforming, with God's help – it might be not getting grumpy, or sulky, or being more thankful, or more patient, or quicker to talk to God about things...

*Share what you have decided, so you can encourage one another (not 'check up' on each other!).*

- Get everyone to write their goal on their envelope and place all the envelopes somewhere special.

The disciples did not believe Saul had changed at first – sometimes when we try really hard to be different, others don't believe us and assume we haven't changed. But God's Holy Spirit gave Paul the strength to keep trusting God until everyone could see that he was a new person – and God wants to do that for us too.

“ A BIRD CAN'T LEARN TO FLY WHILE REMAINING AN EGG. WE ARE LIKE EGGS AT PRESENT... WE MUST BE HATCHED OR GO BAD. ”

- C S LEWIS (Adapted) -

## PRAY

- Think about the pictures from the envelopes. Pick the image of transformation that means the most to you.
- While everyone closes their eyes imagine you are like that object, being transformed. Think about the changes and ask God to transform you like that, particularly in the area you have chosen to work on.

## LIVE

This week, challenge everyone to look for good changes in each other and tell them when they see it – especially in the area they have targeted for change.



## OTHER IDEAS

- Play a game of Stuck in the Mud.  
  
Person A is “it” & tries to tag B-D. If they tag person B, B has to stand in ‘star jump’ position until C or D crawls thru B’s legs to free them.
- Watch the movie ‘Transformers’ – then talk about how we can be transformed too.
- Turn off all the lights and discuss how Saul went from darkness to living in the light. Light a candle and talk about the difference knowing God makes in your life.
- Look out for things in nature this week that are being transformed.

**CHECK OUT WHAT YOU NEED FOR NEXT WEEK...**



# APPENDIX

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