

PAUL – A BULLY BECOMES A HERO!

BIG IDEA

Paul started off as a bully, but Jesus changed his heart and his name and he became a hero of the church!

PREP *(Kids can help!)*

Find food colouring, bottle of water and a glass

Find a white flower e.g. a chrysanthemum, carnation or even a daisy from your lawn

Find a blindfold for each person (e.g. tea towel or scarf)

Find a torch

Have your Faith Board handy, or a white board and pen

Put everything into the Faith Box before you start

INTRO

We've been talking about how God's family is made up of all sorts of people and how God welcomes everyone into his family. Jesus calls everyone to be his followers.

When people who have lived bad or greedy or cruel lives repent and ask God to change their hearts, they are also welcomed.

Who knows what repent means?

Sometimes people make really bad choices, but God can change them and give them a new beginning. We're going to hear an amazing story about one of the heroes of the early church.

POUR THE WATER FROM THE BOTTLE INTO THE GLASS. Then add a few drops of food colouring and watch how it changes. Put the flower in the coloured water and leave it in a place where everyone can see it.

We are going to watch the flower to see what happens to it



over the next few days. (Don't forget to watch it over the next few days to see if it changes!)

Sometimes things happen to us that change us a lot straight away. Other times, we are changed more slowly by God's love in our lives.

Today we are going to read about someone who Jesus changed completely and turned him around 180 degrees. He was stopped in his tracks by a huge light!

GAME

TURN OFF THE LIGHTS. *Have the children put their heads down on the table and shut their eyes. Turn on the torch and hide it (e.g. in a toy bin or cabinet, under a corner of the rug, in a chair with the light turned downwards). The one who finds the light brings it back to use during the reading.*

Now give everyone a blindfold. *Take the children blindfolded around the house. Stop and have them guess where they are. Lift the blindfolds so you can see (but keep them on) and gather together to hear the story. It's about someone who set out on a journey like you but found himself in a totally different place than he expected.*

READ

Who has the torch? We need you to shine it on everyone when we get to the part about the "dazzling light" and Paul falling to the ground.

Everyone will then "go blind" (put their blindfolds on) until the part where Paul is able to see again.



Of all the people who kept the rules, Saul was the best. "I'm good at being good!" he'd tell you.

He was very proud. And very good. But he wasn't very nice!

Saul hated anyone who loved Jesus. He travelled around looking for them. He wanted to catch them and put them in prison. He wanted everyone to forget all about Jesus. He didn't believe Jesus was the Rescuer. And he didn't believe Jesus was alive, either.

You see Saul had never met Jesus.

So one day, Jesus met Saul.

Saul was on his way to Damascus when suddenly a dazzling light flashed like lightning. It was brighter than the sun. It was too bright. Saul shielded his eyes and fell to the ground.

He heard a loud voice. It was too loud. It gave Saul a headache.

Saul! Saul! Said the loud voice, "Why are you fighting me?"

"Lord?" Saul answered, "Who are you?"

"I am Jesus," said the voice, "When you hurt my friends, you are hurting me, too."

Saul's whole body trembled.

"Go to the city," Jesus said.

"I'll tell you what to do."

When Saul opened his eyes, he couldn't see. His helpers had to hold his hand and lead him like a little child. Saul was blind for three whole days – and yet it was as if he was seeing for the very first time.

Meanwhile, there was a man called Ananias who loved Jesus. Jesus came to him in a dream: "Go to Saul and pray for him, and I will make him see again."

Ananias knew all about Saul and how he hated Jesus' followers. "Lord, he has come to hurt us!"

But Jesus told Ananias, "Saul is the one I've chosen to tell the whole world who I am."

continued over...

So Ananias went to Saul. “Brother Saul,” Ananias said “It was Jesus you met on the road.” And Ananias prayed for Saul.

Suddenly Saul could see again, but he saw everything differently. He wasn’t mean anymore. He even changed his name from Saul to Paul, which means “small” and “humble” – the very opposite of proud.

And do you know what Ananias’s name means? “The Lord is full of Grace.” (Grace is just another word for gift – which is funny, because that’s just what Paul’s message was all about from then on.) “It’s not about keeping rules!”

Paul told people. “You don’t have to be good at being good for God to love you. You just have to believe what Jesus has done and follow him. Because it’s not about trying, it’s about trusting. It’s not about rules, it’s about Grace: God’s free gift – that cost him everything.”

What happened to Paul? He met Jesus. 

*Acts 9:1-19; The Jesus Storybook Bible,
Sally Lloyd-Jones Zonderkids*

EXPLORE

TAKE THE FAITH BOARD and write “Saul hated the Christians and tried to kill them”.

QUESTIONS

What do you think Jesus thought about Saul being like that?

What happened that changed Saul? (You can have the child shine the torch.)

It was a whole new beginning for Saul – it even meant his name was changed.

Rub out the words on the faith board and write new words – Paul loved Jesus and worked hard to build up the early church.

Sometimes we make mistakes in life. And like Paul, God lets us start over too! We get a whole new beginning to show our love for Jesus.

QUESTIONS

Who thinks it would be cool if God talked to you like that, with a big light, one day?

You may not see a big light like Paul did, but God talks to all of us and calls us to do something special in our lives.

You may already have a dream that God has put in your heart to serve him. It may not be preaching like Paul, but it will be just as important. It might be finding a cure for disease or helping people in a refugee camp.

Paul’s trip to Damascus was quite a dramatic way to meet Jesus! And the drama didn’t stop there. Paul seemed to go from one adventure to another! He was an evangelist – that means that he loved to tell others about Jesus. He travelled great distances sharing the good news.

Can you share with your family anything you know that Paul did, or something that happened to him after he decided to follow Jesus?

(Parents may need to help children with some clues e.g. put in prison, decided not to escape when an earthquake opened the prison, he was shipwrecked, preached in the market place, wrote letters, travelled lots, raised Eutychus from the dead etc.)

As Paul travelled around, he had a job as a tent maker.

This meant he could spread the good news about Jesus without needing money from the people he stayed with. Sometimes we do jobs we love to do and sometimes just because Jesus wants us to.

Paul knew he couldn't be everywhere all the time, so he also wrote loads of letters! Have a look at the author of the books of the New Testament, and count how many were Paul's letters. (13: Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon)

PRAY

Let everyone take a turn writing on the faith board something they have done that they are not proud of (they do not need to show it to anyone). When they have finished they say out loud "Jesus I am sorry, please give me a new beginning" then rub off their words with a paper towel or cloth. Then they can pass the faith board on to the next person.

LIVE

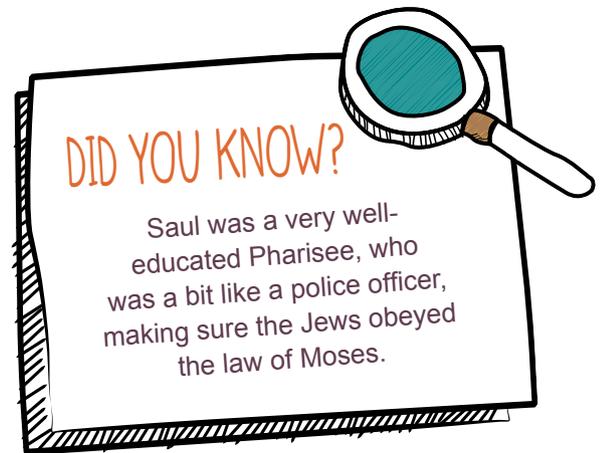
Take time now to do what Paul did. Think about who you could share the good news of Jesus with and write them a letter. Pray for them. And also pray that they will come to know and love Jesus.

FAITH BOARD



OTHER IDEAS

- 1** **Make cracker tents.** Paul's ministry was telling others about Jesus, but his job was making tents! Kids can make their own tent on a paper plate with 2 water crackers and 2 pretzel sticks. Spread icing or peanut butter on one edge of a water cracker and lean against the other to form a tent. The pretzel sticks act as tent poles to hold it up!
- 2** Get out an atlas or the maps in the back of your Bible and look at where Paul travelled to in his journeys.
- 3** At mealtimes this week take turns at telling your favourite stories of Paul's life.



BUY FOR NEXT SESSION

- Split peas or dried beans
- Red paper