



SESSION 4 of 4

# Saul and Jesus

**MEETING AIM**

To understand how meeting Jesus changes lives and the world.

**BIBLE PASSAGE**

Acts 7:54-8:3; 9:1-31

**BACKGROUND**

In this session we learn about Saul's conversion: a key moment in the New Testament. Use this session to explore the impact Saul's conversion had on him and the early Church, and to remember how seeing Jesus more clearly can still change us and our world today!

**5 CIRCLE TIME**

Welcome the group. If you want to loosely introduce the theme of the session you could ask the group: "Have you ever known someone who did something really unexpected that changed the way you thought of them?" You could use an example from your own life.

**10 INTRO ACTIVITY**

**You will need:** paper; a pen

Play a game of Empire with the group. The rules are as follows:

Everyone chooses a name. It can be anything – a made-up name, the name of a celebrity or the name of a Bible character. One by one they have to come and tell you their name so you can write it down without telling the others what it is. Once you have all the names, read them back to the group in a random order.

Then invite someone to start guessing who has which name. They have to ask a member of the group: "Are you [name]?" If they are right, that person has to join their 'empire' and the same person gets another turn. If they are wrong, the turn to guess passes on to the person they asked. Gradually, a few empires are built up. Once someone has an empire you can acquire the whole of their empire if you guess their name, and the names of all the people in their empire, correctly (which is easier once they have already been guessed correctly!). The game ends when someone has everybody else in their empire.

Depending on the time available you might want to play more than one round of this, or you could save it until the end after covering everything else.

Explain that there are links between the game and the theme of the session. One is about changing names, and the other is about moving from being in opposition to part of the same team.

**10 BIBLE STORY**

**You will need:** copies of Acts 9:1-19; high-lighter pens; a Bible; sunglasses; a torch

Before the session, highlight the words spoken by Saul, Jesus and Ananias in different colours in your copies of Acts 9:1-19.

Ask for three volunteers to play Saul, Jesus and Ananias. Give someone the torch to represent the blinding light (but remind that person not to actually shine the light into Saul's eyes). Give out the copies of the Bible passage and ask your volunteers to speak their lines as you read out the verses. Put the sunglasses on Saul to represent him being blind.

Use the Bible to continue reading the passage up to verse 31. Explain that later on in the book of Acts we find out that Saul starts to use his Roman name, Paul. He became one of the key figures in building the early Church and spreading the good news about Jesus, writing many letters to the first churches, which we read as books in the Bible today.

**5 CHATTING TOGETHER**

Use the following questions to unpack the meaning of the passage as a group. Invite the children to discuss, respond and respectfully disagree. If you think it might help, you could have an object that you pass around to signal who is talking so that not everybody is talking at once and you are able to ensure that everybody gets a chance to speak and be heard.

- Why do you think Saul hated the Christians so much?
- How did Saul's encounter with Jesus change him?
- How do you think the Christians would have felt about Saul joining their group?
- How do you think the Jewish community Saul was part of would have felt about him becoming a Christian?
- How do you think people might have reacted to Saul's preaching about Jesus?

**5 CREATIVE RESPONSE**

**You will need:** light bulbs (or pictures of them); luggage tags; pens

In the book of Romans, Paul writes: "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

Of course, Paul would have known a lot about being transformed by the renewing of his mind. Paul knew that meeting Jesus would change the way we think about things. Jesus changed Paul's hatred into hope, his enemies became friends and the direction he thought his life was taking changed in more ways than one! We still need to let Jesus change us by renewing our thoughts and ideas today: to love where we might once have hated, to have faith where we might have been scared and to see friends where we might have seen enemies.

Give each group member a light bulb, a luggage tag and a pen. Invite them to write the sentence from Romans 12:2 on the luggage label, then tie it to the base of the light bulb. Explain that the light bulb symbolises the moment when Jesus' light shone on Saul and everything changed for him.

**5 PRAYER**

**You will need:** light bulbs from 'Creative response'

Use these light bulbs as an aid to help you pray. Begin a time of prayer and ask each group member to hold their light bulb and invite God to renew their minds as you pray:

"Dear God, thank you that you changed Saul from an enemy into a friend. Thank you for giving him new eyes to see. Help us see with those new eyes. Change the parts of us that are full of hate to be full of love. Help the parts of us that are scared to have faith. And help us to love our enemies to the point where we may even be surprised to find you in them! Amen."

Invite the group to (carefully) take their light bulbs home and put them somewhere to act as a daily reminder to pray that God would continue to renew our minds so we can see the world through new eyes.

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