**FIRST STEPS TOGETHER:** FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

Session 4 of 4

# Saul and Jesus

### MEETING AIM

To explore the dramatic conversion of Saul and how our lives can be turned around by Jesus.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Acts 9:1-31

### BACKGROUND

This session plan is intended for use either in person or online, depending on how you’re meeting. Adapt the activities to fit your particular situation.

Saul was the most feared man in the community, “breathing out murderous threats” (v1). Determined that he was walking God’s way, his life hit a dramatic stop when he encountered Jesus for himself. This all-transforming meeting changed not only the course of Saul’s life, but the movement of the early Church.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Start your time together with some simple refreshments. Ask the children about ways in which they have ‘changed’ in their lifetime. How are they different from when they were babies? Did they notice these changes taking place? Explain that today you will be exploring a story about someone who changed dramatically, not gradually, when they met Jesus.

### PLAY – 10 mins

**You will need:** two blindfolds; simple obstacles

Set up a simple obstacle course in the room. Invite the children to take turns to wear a blindfold, while the other children take turns to give instructions to help the blindfolded child around the course. Give everyone who wants to participate the opportunity to attempt it either as a course to go through or, if you have a large group, you could set up two lanes to run this activity as a race. Make sure you risk-assess the course and don’t make anyone play if they don’t want to.

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** a storyteller to play the part of Saul and learn the script; a simple, appropriate costume

Seat the children on the floor together in front of Saul, who should tell the story as follows:

Hello, my name’s Saul! I’m nothing like I used to be. My life’s completely changed – turned around, you could say! Let me tell you all about it.

I’ve always done my best to follow God. I got quite worried when I heard about these people who were talking about Jesus. I thought they were out to cause trouble and I really didn’t think God would be happy about the things they were saying. I decided to sort it out for God and put a stop to them, just as I thought he would want. So I made sure as many of them as possible were arrested. I was doing such a great job, till something stopped me right in my tracks!

I was on my way to Damascus to seize more prisoners, travelling along the road, when suddenly there was the brightest light shining in my eyes, as though from heaven above! I fell to the ground and covered my eyes. Then I heard the strangest voice.

“Saul, Saul,” it called, “why do you persecute me?”

Then the voice told me it was Jesus himself, and that when I got to the city, he would tell me what I needed to do.

When I stood up, I couldn’t see a thing! I was completely blind. It was a good job there were other people with me who could help me find my way to the city. Mind you, they didn’t say anything the whole way there. I don’t think they could believe what had happened either!

They helped me find somewhere to stay in the city. A room where I just sat and thought and prayed and wondered. I didn’t know what was going on! Then, one day, a man called Ananias came to see me. It was a very brave thing to do. Only a week before, I would have been hunting down men like him and locking them up!

Ananias was very brave, and very loving too. He put his hands on my eyes, prayed and I could see again! Everything changed in that moment. I realised I’d not been doing what God wanted, but quite the opposite. I shouldn’t be hunting down the Jesus-followers, I should be telling other people about Jesus. So that’s exactly what I do now, and a whole new adventure that is!

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

* What excites you about this story?
* Why do you think Jesus met Saul so dramatically?
* What would you like to ask Saul?

### CREATIVE TIME – 10 mins

**You will need:** roll of poster paper; assorted magazines; newspapers and craft materials; pens; glue; scissors

Attach two large pieces of paper to two opposite facing walls and lay out the rest of the materials in the middle of the room. Explain that you want to work together to create two posters to tell the story of Saul. Write ‘Before’ and ‘After’ as the title to each poster.

Invite the children to work together to use the materials provided to complete the two posters, adding appropriate words and images cut from the newspapers and magazines, and using the pens to draw their own ideas. Encourage the children to work freely, adding the images to each side, encouraging and assisting them as needed, rather than intervening too soon.

When you are finished, gather the children in the centre to look at the two posters and talk about how the two images contrast with each other.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** three signs: Stop, U-turn, Go

Sit the children down together to pray. Hold up the appropriate sign as you pray:

Almighty God, who stopped Saul on his road to destruction, stop us when we are doing things that cause you hurt. *Hold up the Stop sign.*

King Jesus, who turned Saul’s life around, show us the things that need to change in our lives. *Hold up the U-turn sign.*

Holy Spirit, who empowered Paul to take the gospel message out into the world, give us courage to tell others about you too. *Hold up the Go sign.*

Amen.

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