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Saul Becomes Paul , A Life Transformed

Scripture: Acts 9:1-31

Theme: No one is too far from God's grace

Jr High (Ages 12-14)

Free curriculum for small and rural churches

Lesson Overview

Lesson Overview: This Sunday school lesson explores how Saul's life dramatically changes after encountering Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1, 31). Through his encounter, Saul, once a persecutor of Christians, becomes the apostle Paul, whose ministry spreads the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles. The passage reveals God's power to transform even hardened hearts, showing that no one is beyond redemption, not even a zealous enemy of the faith. Students will learn that God's grace is available to everyone, regardless of their past, and that their own lives can be radically reshaped by faith, just as Saul's was. Optional reflection: children can draw a picture of Jesus helping their friends, then share one way they can help someone else this week. This extra activity supports the lesson's theme and gives teachers a simple, lowprep option for extending the discussion.

Bible Story

One bright morning in Jerusalem, Saul, once a fierce and fanatical persecutor of the followers of Jesus, was on his way to the city to arrest more Christians. His heart was filled with rage, and his eyes glowed with determination. He had heard rumors of a dangerous group called the followers of Jesus, and he believed they were spreading heresy. As he rode in his chariot, a brilliant light from heaven suddenly blinded him. It was so bright that he could hardly see his own hands. Suddenly, he heard a voice, booming from the sky like thunder: 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?'

Saul stumbled to the ground, his breath coming in short gasps. He looked up and saw a man dressed in dazzling white robes standing there. This man was Jesus Himself! Saul's eyes were still blinded by the light, but he knew this was no ordinary vision. Jesus asked, 'Do you know Me, Saul of Tarsus?' Saul replied, trembling, 'Who are You, Lord?' The voice answered, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But it is time for you to turn around and serve Me instead.' The light faded, and Saul's vision returned, but he was left speechless, his heart heavy with confusion and

fear.

Saul was taken to the city of Damascus by the men who had ridden with him. There, a group of believers, some of whom had been warned by God, met him at the city gates. One of these believers was a man named Ananias. He was a devout Jew who loved the Lord and prayed often. While Saul sat in his room, Ananias heard God's voice whisper in a dream: 'Ananias!' He turned to ask, 'Yes, Lord?' The Lord said, 'Look at Saul of Tarsus! He is coming to you, and he has been chosen to carry My name before the Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel. But first, he must learn what he must do.' Ananias was confused. Saul was a hated enemy of the church. But God told him, 'Go, for this man is my chosen instrument to proclaim My name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel.' Ananias obeyed, even though he didn't understand.

Ananias ran to Saul's house and found him sitting in a room, eating. He was stunned, no one ever ate with Saul before! But Ananias knelt before him and said, 'Lord Jesus, I have heard many things about this man who now calls on Your name. He has been seen by the one You sent to him.' Saul asked, 'Who are You, Lord?' Ananias replied, 'The one you're meant to meet! The Lord Jesus!' Then he placed his hands on Saul's head and prayed, 'Lord, open his eyes so he can see!' At once, Saul's sight returned, and he looked around in amazement. The believers who had been waiting there cheered, and Saul understood, God had truly changed him. Ananias told Saul to eat and bathe, so he could be clean before meeting with the disciples. As he obeyed, God's power filled him, and he felt ready to do what He had called him to do.

Saul joined the believers in Damascus, where they worshipped God together. At first, they were afraid of him because of what he had done to the church, but as they saw him worship and share the Good News, they knew God had forgiven him. One day, Saul went to the synagogue to preach about Jesus, and the people listened as he told them how God had saved him. Many were amazed and believed, but others were angry and wanted to kill him. Some even tried to stone him, but the believers prayed, and God protected him. Later, when Saul was taken to Jerusalem, the disciples were terrified at first, What if he turns them away? But God confirmed that Saul was truly His servant. The apostles Peter and John even went to meet Saul, and they prayed for him to be healed of his fear. As they did, Saul's heart was filled with faith, and he began to preach boldly that Jesus had risen from the dead and that all who believed in Him would receive God's forgiveness. His message spread far and wide, and soon, Saul, now called Paul, was one of the most powerful teachers of the early church.

Key Verse

Acts 9:15 , 'This man is My chosen instrument to proclaim My name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel.'

Key Verse Explanation: Acts 9:15 teaches that God uses broken, imperfect people, like Saul, to carry out His mission. For young teens today, this means that even if you feel like you've made mistakes or aren't "good enough," God can use you to share His love and spread His message. It's a reminder that His plans often surprise us, but His heart is always for everyone.

Prayer Focus

Lord, thank You for the amazing story of Saul and Paul. You showed us that no one is too far from Your grace to be transformed. Today, help us see how God changes lives, even when we feel lost. Give us wisdom as we discuss discuss, so we can recognize Your light in others. We ask You to fill our h hands with service and our hearts with love, just like Paul did. Thank You for the hope found in Acts. May we walk through life knowing we belong to Y You. Amen.

>> Missions Spotlight

In Saudi Arabia, former Muslims who follow Jesus face the death penalty. Yet many are encountering Jesus through dreams, satellite TV, and the internet. Like Saul, their lives are being completely transformed. Pray for secret believers in the Arabian Peninsula.

-> To the Cross

Saul was killing Christians when Jesus stopped him on the road to Damascus. The grace of God reached the worst of sinners. If God can save Saul, He can save anyone. The cross is powerful enough for the worst sinner , and the most religious person.