

## Paul's Travels

### Week 1 : The Conversion of Saul

**Theme :** Prepare your heart. God sees our potential and has plans to use us.

**On arrival:** Give out prayer specs for children to decorate. If you want to use them in successive weeks, you may need to get the children to write their names on the back and collect them in after the opening prayer.

**4Directional Prayer :** Introduce the prayer specs and explain that each week we will add a different action to our prayer. This week, we focus on God.

Dear God, you are king of us all (*Hold glasses to eyes with one hand. Point upwards with other hand and then bow.* )

### **Games:**

**Getting to know you:** At the beginning of a new school year, concentrate on games that will encourage the group to learn new names etc. For this game, stand in a circle. Leader throws a ball to another child saying their name. That child must remember who threw the ball to them AND the person they throw the ball to. In this game each child will ALWAYS receive the ball from the same person and they will ALWAYS throw the ball to the same person. When this is going quite well, introduce more balls. Noisy but lots of fun!

**In a circle,** each child picks an adjective starting with the same initial as their first name, e.g. Naughty Nikkii and adds a simple action like tapping head. Next child has to introduce themselves, add an action and remember the name and action of the person before.

**Blindfold:** Play any favourite blindfold game like blind man's buff, squeak piggy squeak etc.

**Introduction:** Prepare a pair of glasses with Vaseline / petroleum jelly over the lens to make it difficult to see. (*Top tip – don't use your driving specs !* ) Have a clean pair ready or something to easily remove the grease. Ask a child to try and read something. It ought to be difficult. Provide a clean lens to look through. It is now easy to read. Today we start learning about a man who hated the followers of Jesus but who started to see life through "different eyes" after meeting the risen Jesus.

**Story:** Story and story prop are in the resources. The story is told by Saul himself as he recounts his conversion on the road to Damascus. Acts 9 : 1-19.

**Memory verse :** *God says, "I do not judge as people judge. They look at the outward appearance but I look at the heart."* 1 Samuel 16: 7b. Write the verse onto sheets of paper using white wax crayon. Children will need to use coloured wax crayon to uncover the secret verse.

**Application :** Saul was guilty of many sins including the killing of Christians, but God forgave him of even such a great sin. God knew Saul better than he knew himself, just as God knows us inside out. God will forgive our sins if we turn from them and do good instead. God had a special job for Saul to do. He saw great potential in Saul that could be used for good. God sees great potential in all His children – including you and me. Prepare your heart. God may have some great work for you to do when you grow up. Be ready for it.

**Song:** How about trying something new ! Check out, "*Transformers*", *Track 6, Spring Harvest Kids Praise Party (5), Celebrate God.*

**Resources:** There is a fun sheet, story and story prop, 4D prayer glasses template in the resources.

**The Conversion of Saul ( Acts 9 : 1-19 )**

I love letters, don't you ?

I write a lot of them. And sometimes I get them too. I was recently given a special letter from the Chief Priests in Jerusalem. Here it is. ( *Open letter and read it out* )

*See resources*

Well that's me, I'm Saul – a tent maker by trade and a devoted Jew, My family were devoted Jews. I went to a Jewish school and had a famous Jewish teacher. I prayed at the beautiful Jewish temple in Jerusalem. Then I heard some other Jews saying they followed a man called Jesus. They claimed he had risen from the dead and that he was God's chosen one – the Messiah. This seemed all wrong to me and it made me very angry. Completely against Jewish teaching so I decided to help get rid of these Jesus followers. I hunted them down and threw them into prison.

When the chief priests in Jerusalem sent me off to Damascus to hunt down these Jesus followers I was glad. Off I went, with a bunch of armed men. But on the road to Damascus, something happened that changed everything. All of a sudden, I saw a light that burned so brightly that my eyes were blinded. And then I heard a voice calling my name,

“Saul, Saul, why are you hurting me ?”

I had no idea who was calling me but the voice continued calling my name.

“Who are you ?” I cried and the voice replied,

“I am Jesus whom you persecute. Saul, go on to Damascus and there you will find someone who will tell you what to do next.”

The light disappeared and I fell to my knees – I was completely blind! My helpers lead me to Damascus. There, I spent three days in a house in Straight Street, with nothing to eat or drink. I prayed to God. In my prayers, I saw a vision of a man touching my eyes so I could see again. Then, sure enough, I was visited by a follower of Jesus called Ananias. The man from my vision!

Ananias was trembling as he came through the door. He had heard the terrible things I had done to followers of Jesus. But God had told him that he had chosen me to tell others about Jesus ! Huh ! Surely not, God knew I hated those Christ followers, those Christians! No way would I EVER be a believer myself . Would I ? Ananias touched my eyes, just like my vision and I could see again. Ananias explained that Jesus really had risen from the dead and that I had spoken to him on the road. My eyes were truly opened ! I knew that I no longer wanted to hunt down and arrest the followers of Jesus. Instead, I had to tell others that Jesus is alive!

*To the Jewish Leaders in Damascus,*

*This letter gives Saul of Tarsus the right to arrest anyone in Damascus who is saying that Jesus of Galilee rose from the dead. This goes against Jewish teaching and must be stopped. Saul will bring back to Jerusalem all people he finds teaching about Jesus and they will be judged by our highest court. All those arrested may be put to death like Stephen, the disciple that Saul was pleased to see stoned to death in Jerusalem.*

*Signed*

*The Chief Priests,  
Jerusalem*

**Week 1, 4Directional Prayer Specs !**

Photocopy onto card. Cut out the rectangle. Use a hole punch to create two small holes on the lenses which the children can peep through. Once the whole prayer has been learnt over the weeks, the Prayer Specs can be used as a book mark.

