

Saul Meets Jesus

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: Jesus changes lives. Saul set out to hurt Jesus' followers, met Jesus on the road, and became a brand-new man who preached Jesus.

Bible passage: Acts 9:1–22. Read it before class.

Memory verse: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." *2 Corinthians 5:17 (KJV)*

You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), paper and a pencil for each child, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.

Before class: write the memory verse on the board.

1. Opening game: What Changed? (5–10 minutes)

One child steps out of the room. While they are gone, the class changes three things: two kids switch seats, a chair is turned around, a Bible moves to a new spot. The child comes back and has one minute to find all three changes. Play two or three rounds. Ask: *Some changes are easy to spot. What would it look like if a whole person changed, inside and out?* Say: "Today we'll meet a man whose whole life changed in one day, and everyone could see it."

2. Bible story: A Light from Heaven (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Acts 9. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

Saul's plan. Look up Acts 9:1–2. Saul was against the people who followed Jesus. The Bible says he was "breathing out threatenings and slaughter" against them, which means he threatened them and wanted to hurt them. He asked the high priest for letters to the **synagogues** (meeting places where Jewish people read God's Word and prayed) in Damascus. If he found any who followed "this way," men or women, he could bring them **bound** (tied up) to Jerusalem.

The light and the voice. Look up Acts 9:3–4. As Saul came near Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven shined round about him. He fell to the earth and heard a voice: "Saul, Saul, why **persecutest** thou me?" (Why are you hurting Me?) **Look up Acts 9:5.** Saul asked, "Who art thou, Lord?" The answer: "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." The Lord also said, "it is hard for thee to kick against the **pricks**." A prick was a sharp stick a farmer used to steer an ox. An ox that kicked back at it only hurt itself. Fighting against Jesus only hurt Saul.

"What wilt thou have me to do?" Look up Acts 9:6–9. Saul, trembling and astonished, asked what the Lord wanted him to do. Jesus told him to go into the city, and he would be told. The men with him stood **speechless**, hearing a voice but seeing no man. Saul got up, but when he opened his eyes he saw no man. They led him by the hand into Damascus. He was three days without sight, and did not eat or drink.



Ananias. Look up Acts 9:10–12. In Damascus lived a disciple named Ananias. In a **vision** (something God showed him), the Lord told him to go to the street called Straight, to the house of Judas (not the Judas who betrayed Jesus), and ask for Saul of Tarsus, "for, behold, he prayeth." Ananias answered that he had heard how much evil Saul had done to God's people (9:13–14). **Look up Acts 9:15.** The Lord said, "Go thy way: for he is a **chosen vessel** unto me." That means God had chosen Saul to carry Jesus' name to the **Gentiles** (people who are not Jewish), to kings, and to Israel.

Brother Saul. Look up Acts 9:17. Ananias went and put his hands on Saul. He called him "Brother Saul," and said that the Lord, even Jesus, had sent him so Saul could receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost. **Look up Acts 9:18.** Right away something like scales fell from his eyes, he received sight **forthwith** (at once), "and arose, and was baptized." He ate and was strengthened (9:19).

A changed man. Look up Acts 9:20. Straightway (right away) Saul preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. Everyone who heard him was amazed. Wasn't this the man who came to take Jesus' followers away bound (9:21)? But Saul grew stronger and stronger, proving that Jesus is the Christ (9:22). Later, when Saul told this story himself, he said Ananias told him, "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. Jesus said Saul was persecuting *Him* (9:4–5), but Saul was hurting Jesus' followers. What does that tell you about how Jesus feels about His people?
2. Saul asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (9:6). Why is that a good question for us to ask God too?
3. Ananias knew how much evil Saul had done (9:13–14), but he went. When is it hard to obey God?
4. Ananias called Saul "brother" (9:17). How do you think that made Saul feel?
5. People could see that Saul had changed (9:20–21). How can people tell when Jesus has changed someone?

Recall questions

1. What city did Saul come from? (*Tarsus, Acts 9:11*)
2. What was the name of the street where Saul stayed? (*Straight, 9:11*)
3. What did Saul do right after he received his sight? (*He arose, and was baptized, 9:18*)



4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **in Christ** means belonging to Jesus, **a new creature** means a brand-new person, **passed away** means gone, and **behold** means look! Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Saul met Jesus, and Jesus made him a new creature. Ananias came so Saul could see and be filled with the Holy Ghost, and Saul arose and was baptized (Acts 9:17–18). Saul later said Ananias told him, 'arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord' (Acts 22:16, KJV). God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."

Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

This week: ask God each morning, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And be like Ananias: be kind to someone others stay away from.

6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Acts 9:2: What did Saul ask the high priest for? (*Letters to the synagogues at Damascus*)
2. Acts 9:3: Where did the light come from? (*From heaven*)
3. Acts 9:7: What did the men with Saul hear and see? (*They heard a voice but saw no man*)
4. Acts 9:9: How long was Saul without sight? (*Three days*)
5. Acts 9:11: In whose house was Saul staying? (*The house of Judas*)
6. Acts 9:11: What was Saul doing when the Lord sent Ananias? (*Praying*)
7. Acts 9:18: What fell from Saul's eyes? (*Something like scales*)
8. Acts 9:20: What did Saul preach in the synagogues? (*Christ, that He is the Son of God*)

Or choose the **Saul to Paul word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/saul-to-paul-word-search), crossword (vbshq.com/puzzles/saul-to-paul-crossword), maze (vbshq.com/puzzles/saul-to-paul-maze) or worksheet (vbshq.com/worksheets/saul-to-paul-worksheet).

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that Jesus changes lives, and that no one is too far away for You. Help us ask You what You want us to do, and help us be kind like Ananias. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks if God can forgive someone who hurt people: yes. Saul later wrote that he had persecuted the church of God, "But by the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Corinthians 15:9–10).

