

From Enemy to Friend

Paul meets Jesus
Acts 9:1-19

Character Trait: Righteousness

(Estimated Lesson Time: 90 minutes)

Objectives:

- Children will recall that Saul was an enemy of Jesus and His followers before he met Jesus on the road to Damascus.
- Children will identify examples of righteous living.
- Children will discuss how righteous living is evidence of a personal relationship with Jesus.

Supplies:

- *From Enemy to Friend* loaded onto a tablet or phone in the *Bible App for Kids*
- Construction paper *(one piece for each child)*
- Coloring supplies
- Glue *(optional)*
- Sand *(optional)*
- Glue

Welcome Activity:

(5 minutes)

Welcome the children.

SAY: Raise your hand if you have ever cut your hair. Raise your hand if you have ever changed your clothes. Raise your hand if you have ever worn a hat or a pair of shoes. *(Tell the children to put their hands down.)*

All of these are examples of how we can change ourselves from the outside. In today's lesson, we will learn about how Jesus changed a man named Saul from the inside.

Review:

(5 minutes)

Guide the children in a brief review of the previous lesson by asking the following:

- **What did Peter give the lame man instead of money?** *(Peter healed him in the name of Jesus.)*
- **What did the man do after going into the temple courts with Peter and John?** *(He jumped around and praised God!)*
- **How did people react to seeing the lame man healed and praising God?** *(They were amazed. Many of them decided to follow Jesus.)*

Today's Bible Story:

(10-15 minutes)

Show *From Enemy to Friend* from the *Bible App for Kids* or share the story aloud:

- Saul was a religious man; a Pharisee.
- He thought that anyone who believed in Jesus was spreading a lie and should be put in prison, and even put to death.
- Saul was going to Damascus to arrest Jesus' followers.
- Suddenly, a bright light surrounded him.
- He fell down.

- A voice said, “Saul, why are you so cruel to Me?”
- “Who are You, Lord?” Saul asked.
- The voice replied, “I am Jesus, the one you want to harm. Go to Damascus. There you will learn what you must do.”
- Saul got up, but he was blind.
- His friends led him to a house in Damascus.
- Saul waited there for three days.
- He had nothing to eat or drink.
- Meanwhile, Jesus appeared in a vision to Ananias, one of His followers in Damascus.
- Jesus told him to go visit Saul and pray for him so he could see again.
- “But Saul wants to arrest Your followers,” Ananias said, trembling.
- “I know,” said Jesus, “but I want to use Saul to tell people all over the world about Me.”
- Ananias went to pray for Saul.
- “Jesus sent me,” he said, “so that you may see and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”
- Saul could see again!
- Then he was baptized.
- Jesus changed Saul from a man who hurt his followers to a church leader who told everyone about Jesus!
- So he changed his name, as well, to Paul.



Discussion:

(15 minutes)

Encourage the children to think more about the story by asking the following:

- **How did Saul (Paul) feel about Jesus’ followers before he met Jesus?** *(Saul thought they were spreading a lie, should be put in prison, and even killed.)*
- **What happened to Saul (Paul) after Jesus spoke to him?** *(He became blind.)*
- **Who did Jesus ask to go pray for Saul?** *(Ananias)*
- **How did Ananias feel about this?** *(Ananias was scared. He trembled because he knew that Saul wanted to arrest all of Jesus’ followers.)*
- **Did Ananias obey Jesus?** *(Yes, Ananias went to Saul and prayed for him.)*
- **How did Saul change after Ananias prayed for him?** *(Saul regained his sight, was baptized, began telling others about Jesus, and changed his name to Paul.)*

SAY: Paul did not change on his own. Jesus changed Paul’s heart. Likewise, we cannot change on our own. Only Jesus can truly change us from the inside out.



God’s Bigger Story:

(5 minutes)

SAY: Ananias trembled when Jesus told him to go pray for Saul. He knew that Saul wanted to arrest Jesus’ followers. But Ananias still obeyed God, and Jesus changed Saul from a man who arrested and even killed Christians to a man who helped spread the good news about Jesus.

Memory Verse:

(10 minutes)

But the Lord *(point both hands up)* **said, "Go** *(extend arm, pointing forward)*,
for Saul *(touch top of head)* **is my chosen instrument**
to take my message *(cup hands around your mouth)*
to the Gentiles *(open one hand palm up)* **and to kings** *(open the other hand palm up)*,
as well as to the people *(with palms up lace fingers together and wiggle them)* **of Israel."**

Acts 9:15 (NLT)

Activity:

(15 minutes)

Select one child to be the "seeker." The seeker counts to 10 slowly as the remaining children hide. Then, the seeker calls out, "Ready or not, here I come!" and tries to find the children who are hiding. The last child found gets to be the seeker in the next round. Play as time permits.

SAY: During the game, you hid from each other, but none of us can hide from God. Not even Saul's hate could hide him from God's plan for his life!

Response Activity:

(10 minutes)

Provide each child with a piece of construction paper and coloring supplies. Demonstrate how to draw a path or road from one side of the paper to the other. Then, tell them to draw four, small pictures along the path to retell the story: 1) Angry Saul going to Damascus, 2) Saul down on the ground, surrounded by bright light, 3) Ananias praying for Saul, and 4) Paul teaching others about Jesus.

SAY: Jesus healed Paul's eyes immediately after Ananias prayed for him and changed his heart in that moment, too. Paul went from someone who persecuted Christians to someone who followed Jesus. Likewise, we are immediately forgiven for our sins the moment we choose to trust in Jesus, but He makes us more like Him through a process. Our entire lives are journeys to learn more and become more like Jesus!

For younger children...
Small, story illustrations can be created, photocopied, and cut out in advance for younger children to glue down in story order. Then, the children can simply color the illustrations.

For older children...
Provide a small amount of clean sand for older children to glue along their paths. Then, tell the children to write down the memory verse along the bottom of their artwork as a reminder of God's plan for Paul's life and as a personal reminder that God has a special plan for their lives, too.

Character Trait: Righteousness

(10 minutes)

SAY: Righteousness means completely right or just. It is when someone loves and obeys perfectly. Only God is perfect, so only God is righteous. We can only be made righteous by believing in Jesus Christ and his death on the cross for our sins. Ananias was a righteous man. He obeyed Jesus and prayed for Saul instead of giving in to his fear.

Encourage the children to think more about righteousness by asking the following:

- **What does righteous behavior look like?** *(Answers will vary but should include behaviors that are pleasing to God.)*
- **Why is living a righteous life important?** *(Answers will vary but should include because it shows that our hearts are being changed to be more like Jesus.)*
- **Can we be righteous?** *(Answers will vary but should include that we can only be made righteous through Jesus. Our forgiveness from sin through His death on the cross makes us righteous in God's sight.)*

Connect with Others:

(5 minutes)

SAY: Living a righteous life shows that Jesus is working inside of us. God makes us righteous the moment we put our trust and faith in Jesus Christ. The more we learn about God's Word and listen to the Holy Spirit, the better able we are to make choices that reflect Jesus' holy and righteous ways, not ours.

Turn to someone next to you and share one example of righteous living. *(Provide a few moments for sharing. Then, call on a few volunteers to share aloud. Answers will vary but may include treating others with respect, being truthful, and loving God.)*

Closing:

(2 minutes)

SAY: Paul did not change on his own. It was Jesus who changed Paul's heart, and Jesus still changes hearts and lives today.

None of us are righteous on our own. All of us sin, but thankfully we have hope and help! Through Jesus' death on the cross, we can be forgiven. Through Jesus' teachings and the guidance of God's Holy Spirit, we can live righteous lives that can lead others to Him, too.

Prayer:

(2 minutes)

SAY:

Dear God,
Thank You for life-changing love. Please work in our hearts so that we can be transformed and live righteous lives that point others back to You.
Amen.

Notes