

INTRODUCTION

Without Christ we would be nothing. But while we were still in sin, Jesus came.

This amazing truth will be presented to the children during the memory verse time as you teach Romans 5:8. They will be encouraged to be *turned around* by the Lord Jesus Christ and start living for Him.

An amazing example of a man who was *turned around* is the Apostle Paul. This lesson will encourage the children that anyone, no matter who they are or what they have done, can be saved. At the beginning of his life, Paul was killing people who believed in Jesus. By the end of his life Paul was dying for this same Jesus. What a drastic change!

The lesson also emphasizes the importance of obedience to God. As Ananias obeyed, so can we. Encourage the children you teach that God can use anyone for His purposes. He can change anyone to be part of His family and to do His work.

Concepts covered in this lesson include:

- **God:** Merciful/Gracious—God shows me mercy (doesn't give me the punishment I deserve) and grace (gives me blessings I don't deserve).
- **Jesus:** Jesus is God.
- **Man:** By God's grace I can live my life to please the Lord.
- **Prayer:** Prayer is talking to God. I can talk to God.

Demonstrations of the lessons and songs in this series are available at: cefonline.com/freedemos/5dc

Tell the children to listen for the words *turned around*. Every time you or another teacher says that phrase, the children must stand up, turn around and sit down. This will help keep the children engaged and help them get some of the wiggles out.



LESSON

INTRODUCTION

“My name is Saul, and I am going to arrest as many people as I can who believe in this Jesus! I can’t imagine how anybody could believe that He is really the Son of God and that He actually came back to life from the dead. Those believers are causing nothing but trouble. They must be stopped!”

How frightening it must have been for the first people who believed in Jesus as Savior to find out what Saul was going to do to them. But who was Saul?

PROGRESSION OF EVENTS

Saul was a young man and a Pharisee—an important religious leader of the Jews. He was very careful to try and keep all the rules of the Scriptures. The Pharisees had made even more rules for people to follow. Saul tried to keep those too, thinking he was pleasing God. He thought he was trying to follow God’s instructions but he was adding his own rules to God’s.

Slide 1

Saul was angry at the people who were trusting in Jesus Christ as their Savior and following Him. *They are wrong!* Saul thought. He didn’t believe Jesus was the one God promised to send to save people from their sins. He thought punishing Jesus’ followers was pleasing to God. Saul went to house after house, hurting the Christians (people who believe in Jesus) by putting them in chains and in prison. He was persecuting them—hurting them because of what they believed.

Because Saul didn’t believe that Jesus was the Savior who died for sin and rose again, he was going against Jesus’ followers. By hurting Jesus’ followers, Saul was going against God Himself and that is sin.



Sin is going our own way and not God’s way. Sometimes you think you are doing a good thing but you trick yourself like Saul did. (*Read Jeremiah 17:9.*) We can trick ourselves into thinking we’re not that bad, often because we compare ourselves to others instead of God, who is perfect. God’s Word says each one of us has been born with a desire to do things our own way. Maybe you are nice to someone because you think it will make him or her feel good but you don’t really mean the nice things you say. Or you find out a boy in your class never has a snack. You think your mom won’t miss it if you take some extra cookies to him but you don’t ask your mom because she might say no. You just take them and hope she doesn’t notice. After all, you are doing a good thing to share! Wouldn’t that be alright? (*Allow response.*) Sin can be tricky. Unless you and I are forgiven of our sins we will be separated from God forever. The Bible says we all are sinners who fool ourselves into thinking we are not that bad. But you go against God every time you sin.

Believers were first called “Christians” in Acts 11:26 but the term is being used here to make it easier to teach the children.

Preschool Song

“I Believe the Bible,” vv. 1-3

Preschool Application

Use the sin application visuals in the back of the flashcard book to help preschoolers identify sin in their own lives. When talking about the punishment for sin say, “The punishment God gives you and me for sin is separation (being away) from God forever.”

Saul didn't realize that he was going against God when he persecuted Jesus' followers.

Many of Jesus' followers heard what Saul was doing and escaped to other cities.

Slide 2

One day Saul decided to go after the Christians who lived in Damascus (*duh-MASS-cuss*). (*Show on Bible Map.*) Damascus was 175 miles away. It would take at least five days to get there.

Slide 3

Saul and his men had to walk or travel by horseback or on donkeys. That didn't matter to Saul. He felt he *must* stop the Christians from growing in number! He would bring them back to Jerusalem for punishment.

Because Damascus had different leaders, Saul couldn't go there and arrest the Christians on his own. He needed letters from the most powerful religious leader in Jerusalem—the high priest. The letters would give him authority to arrest the Christians.

After receiving these letters, Saul began his journey. Let's pretend we are traveling to Damascus. How do you think he traveled? (*Allow response then act out each with children; e.g. walk, ride horses, etc.*) About noon on the last day as Saul and his men were nearing the city of Damascus, something happened.

Slide 4

A dazzling light, much brighter than the sun, appeared suddenly in the sky near Saul. He had never seen such light! Listen to what Saul did. (*Read Acts 9:4-5a.*) He fell to the ground and heard a voice say, "Why are you persecuting Me?"

When Saul asked, "Who are you?" he heard, "I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting." Jesus was alive! God wanted Saul to see that Jesus had truly risen from the dead!



God wants you to believe Jesus died and came alive again to save you from sin. Jesus, God Himself who lived on Earth as a man, is the only one who has never sinned. Because of His love for you, He was willing to come from Heaven to Earth so He could take the punishment of death for your sin. When He was nailed to the cross, blood came from Jesus' hands and feet. God's Word says, (*read Ephesians 1:7*). To redeem means "to buy back." The blood of the Lord Jesus redeemed us—paid the price we owed for our sin. After Jesus died for you and me, He was buried. On the third day He came alive again. Say this with me three times: "Jesus is alive!" (*Repeat with the children.*) After He lived another 40 days on Earth, Jesus went back to Heaven, where He is alive today. God wants you to believe Jesus is the Savior who died and came alive again.

Materials

Bible Map
(See 5-Day Club kit.)

Preschool Song

"I Believe the Bible," vv. 4-6

Materials

Word Up! Booklet
(See 5-Day Club kit.)

Have children act out Acts 9:10-19.

Jesus appeared in this amazing way so Saul would believe Jesus had died and come alive for him too. Saul realized he had been wrong! Something amazing had happened to Saul. He had spoken to Jesus!

Now Saul was convinced that Jesus is alive, as the Christians had said. He was a new person, a believer, just like those he had persecuted. Now he was willing to do exactly what Jesus wanted him to do. Before, Saul was hurting Christians. Now he had become a Christian!

Slide 5

Say with me, “**God can save anyone!**” (*Say with children.*)

Slide 6

The dazzling light disappeared. Saul slowly got up and tried to look around. But he couldn't see anything. He was blind! Close your eyes and think about what it would be like to be blind. (*Do with children.*) You may open your eyes. He had to be taken by the hand and led into the city. Saul's friends led him to the home of a man named Judas.

For three days Saul sat in Judas's house without eating or drinking. Saul prayed and waited. While he was praying, the Lord showed Saul a vision—a kind of dream. In this vision he saw that a man named Ananias (*an-uh-NYE-us*) was going to come and help him.

In another part of the city God spoke to Ananias, who was a believer in Jesus. “Get up and go to the home of Judas and ask to see a man named Saul. He is praying and has seen in a vision that you are going to heal him of his blindness.”

What? Ananias must have thought. Visit Saul? He is the one who orders Christians to be beaten and put in prison! Ananias was afraid. He said to the Lord, “I have heard about this man and the terrible things he has done to harm Christians. He has come here to arrest all those who believe in You.”

But the Lord said, “Go, for I have chosen Saul to tell others about Me.” The Lord was telling Ananias that Saul was a changed man. His life would be different from then on. Even though Saul had done some terrible things to the Christians, God had forgiven him because God is forgiving. But Ananias had a choice to make. He could obey God and go pray for Saul or he could disobey God and stay home. Which one do you think Ananias chose? Put your hands on your head if you think he obeyed God and went to pray for Saul. Put your hands on your hips if you think Ananias did not obey God. (*Allow responses.*)

Ananias obeyed God and went to the house where Saul was staying. He was willing to do what God asked him to do.



How about you? If you know Jesus as your Savior, **are you willing to follow God's directions?** His directions for you today are in the Bible. In the Bible Jesus said, (*read John 13:17*). Jesus was saying that you will have joy in your heart when you do what God asks. So when God shows you something He wants you to do, you should follow His directions right away! Can you name something in the Bible God wants His children to do? (*Allow response. Answers may include being kind to others, helping one another, obeying those in charge over you, etc.*) Some things God's Word says you should do might seem hard to you—like telling someone else about Jesus. But God promises His help to do what He wants you to do. When you read God's Word, look for things He wants you to do then ask Him to help you obey.

Slide 7

Ananias obeyed God and went to the house where Saul was staying. Ananias did not realize what great things God would do through Saul. Saul, whose name was later changed to Paul, became the greatest missionary of the early Church (the people who were the first followers of Christ) and wrote much of the New Testament. (*Show in your Bible where the New Testament starts and where it ends.*) In fact, he's the one God used to write our memory verse today!

When Ananias arrived at the house, he found Saul praying. Still blind, Saul could not see Ananias but he heard his footsteps approaching. Ananias walked over to Saul and placed his hands on him. He said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the way, has sent me to you. Receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." God showed His forgiveness and love for Saul by sending Ananias to him.



God loves you too. God loves you because He *is* love! And God made you. He made the whole world! On the count of three shout out your favorite thing God made. 1, 2, 3! (*Allow response.*) God is the Creator and He is also holy. That means He's perfectly good. He has never sinned. The Bible says, (*read Romans 5:8*). God proved His love for you by sending His perfect Son, Jesus, to die on the cross to pay for your sin. He did this even though you and everyone in the world wants to go his or her own way—lost in sin and far from Him. Because God loves you, He wants you to have a relationship with Him here on Earth and someday in Heaven. He offers you forgiveness even though you don't deserve it. **God can save anyone who trusts in Jesus.** Don't ever forget how much God loves you!

Saul's heart was full of joy, knowing that God loved him, forgave him and sent Ananias to help him.

Preschool Song
"God Makes Me Glad"

Preschool Song
"God Made the Mountains High"

CLIMAX

When Saul believed in Jesus, the Holy Spirit came to live inside him to help him know and obey God. Immediately something like scales fell from Saul's eyes and he could see! He was no longer blind. How glad he must have been to look up and see Ananias!

CONCLUSION

But more wonderful was the happiness in his heart. Saul was so happy to know that even though he had done so many wrong things, God forgave his sins. God gave Saul the great gift of forgiveness, which he did not deserve. Saul left the house and went to be baptized to show others he truly believed in Jesus as the Son of God. After his baptism, he ate for the first time in several days and became strong again.

Slide 8

Saul, now a believer, began to preach that Jesus is the Son of God! People were amazed to see and hear Saul, the one who persecuted Christians, now preaching about Jesus.

INVITATION



Do you believe Jesus is the Son of God? He is! The Bible tells us we all go against God. That includes you. But in His love, God sent His perfect Son, Jesus, to die for your sin so you can be forgiven. (*Read Romans 10:13.*) To call on Jesus means to believe Jesus is the Son of God who died and rose again for you. When you call on Jesus, believing in Him, you will be saved from the punishment for sin you deserve. You will not be punished but will have a relationship with God that will last forever! Will you believe Jesus is the Son of God who came to save you from sin's punishment? God can save you today. Please bow your head and close your eyes. If you are making the decision to call on Jesus and believe in Him as your Savior today, please show me by raising your hand. (*Pause and acknowledge responses.*) You may all open your eyes now. Those of you who raised your hand may meet me (*designate time and location*) and I can show you from the Bible more about what it means to call on Jesus.

Important Reminder

Remember, it is not the prayer that saves the child. Salvation is the work of the Holy Spirit convicting the child of his or her sinful condition and drawing him or her to trust completely in Christ and His work on the cross. The prayer is the child's expression of that belief to God. (See "Guiding a Child to the Savior" on the inside front cover.)

Preschool Invitation

When presenting the invitation to preschoolers, use John 3:15 and "believe in" terminology. Ask those who have questions to stay with you while the others move on to another activity.