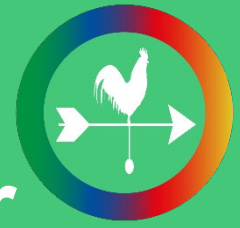




# Faith Adventures for Children Together



*Committed to URC Children Together:  
enabling everyone to grow more like Jesus  
together in the home, church and beyond.*

For guidance on the purpose of the resource and how to use it as a launch pad for your engagement with children and families, please use this link:  
<https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FACT-how-to-sheet.pdf>

## Acts 9: 1-20

Theme: Change can be challenging and uncomfortable

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### Introduction: What would be helpful to know in my planning?

The book of Acts was written by Luke (the disciple) around 60 AD. It tells the stories of the first Christians and the growth of the Christian Church after Jesus’ ascension, from the coming of the Holy Spirit onwards. Christianity was a fast growing church and the Romans were trying to get it under control. Saul, who was a Pharisee, was arresting and persecuting Christians. He is on his way to Damascus to arrest Christians when God stops him, confronts him and his life is about to change.

We will use his story to consider how change is not always easy and can sometimes be very difficult. We often focus on Paul becoming a follower of Jesus through his “Damascus Road” experience but overlook the fact that he was blinded for three days, vulnerable and totally reliant on others. Some change is sudden, like on the Damascus Road whilst other change takes a while and happens over many weeks, or months. Be aware of the changes that might be happening in the lives of your group e.g. puberty, change of school/class etc, bereavement. It’s a good opportunity to remind the group that God is with us through all change whilst we also consider who else we have to help us and how to rely on that help as we build our resilience.



# Together

How do I help my group to come together and get started with the theme?

## Gathering prayer

### Jesus, our friend

(use alternate index fingers to point and tap the middle of opposite palms)

### Be with us today

(two hands, palms up in front of you, move up and down twice)

### As we share together,

(two hands, palms up in front of you, move one forward and one back and alternate twice)

### Pray together,

(hands together, palm against palm, as though praying)

### Play together,

(hands to each side, palms up, make two small circles outwards)

### And get to know you better,

(point up with one hand)

### As children together in your family

(one hand out, palm down in front of you, move it sideways and up in three 'steps' as though to indicate children of three different heights)

### AMEN

(Two thumbs up, and bring fists slowly together to meet in front of you)

OR

**Thank you, God, for bringing us together today.**

**Help us to grow closer to you in all we do.**

**Help us to speak and to listen, to learn and to grow together,**

**Adventuring together with you wherever we may go.**

**Amen**

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## In-person game

In life, difficult circumstances come along, but we can usually deal with them one at a time. It's when they build up that we have to draw on our resilience to cope with them and sometimes they can threaten to overwhelm us.

Split the group into teams and run a relay race. However for each round of the race, an extra challenge is added. Maybe something to wear, something to carry, a glass which has more water added to it each time etc. Perhaps the items could be piled up by the team so that they have to decide which order to add the different challenges in. What happens if you play the game again, but one team is allowed to ask people for help for some of the rounds.

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## Online game

Play a memory game where each person takes it in turns to add something to the list and each new player has to remember everything the previous players have said e.g. I went to market and I bought a ..... or I went on a journey and I visited.....



## Experience

For this story we recommend using the International Children's Bible

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+9%3A+1-20&version=ICB>

### Where can I find the story online?

Under fives - from the Beginners Bible <https://youtu.be/9eRXq-cKmr0>

Over fives - animation from Lifekids <https://youtu.be/oi95cv0tk9Q>

### Songs to support the story

Under fives - I have decided to follow by Kidsworship (church of Malaysia) <https://youtu.be/t4VleZnM1Ng>

Over fives - Be strong and courageous – Doug Horley <https://youtu.be/tiLSIIDcAVU>

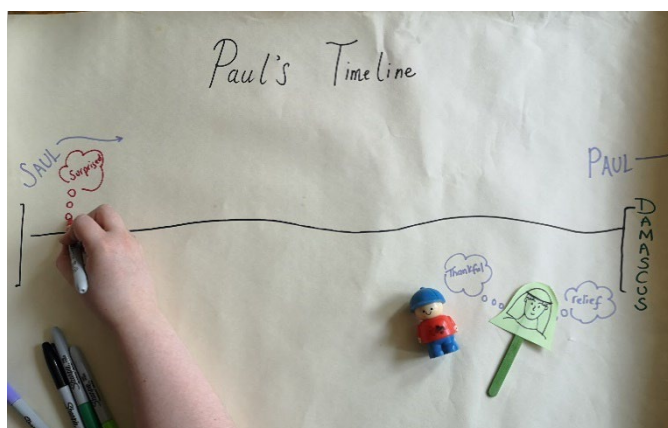
## Explore

Ideas and activities to explore this week's Bible passage together

### Paul's journey timeline

Using large paper and pens, draw out a timeline for Paul and his conversion journey. Include the start and end points on the journey, as well as important people who help and support him along the way. You could use small world figures, counters or drawings on lollipop sticks to represent people who joined the journey with him. You could think about:

- Physical Journey – What do you think would have been easy and what would have been difficult?
- Emotions – How do you think he would have felt at different points on the journey?
- People – Who helped him?



You can explore the passage as one large group or in smaller groups. Older groups may be able to annotate the timeline in more detail.

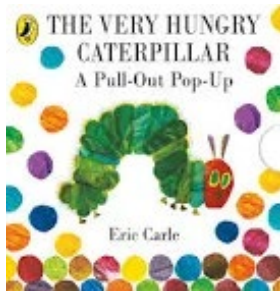
#### Why not try Hot Seating?

If you have time, you could use the information from the timeline to ask Paul questions. Place an empty seat in the centre of a circle. Members of the group can volunteer to be Paul, sit on the chair and be asked questions about their journey. The rest of the group can take it in turns to ask a question. Whoever sits on the central chair can be Paul so more than one person can have a turn. Remember to use the information you have discussed and not contradict answers others have given.



## Modern parables

Jesus used stories to help people understand the things of God, even though they weren't necessarily overtly Christian stories. Lots of children's books can be used in a similar way as a conversation starter on the week's theme. Examples are shared here but you may think of others too.



'The Very Hungry caterpillar' by Eric Carle

Story told by animated films – <https://youtu.be/75NQK-Sm1YY>

### Talking together: How might we talk about the story together?

- Some people get to know God gradually as they grow, some people change quickly like Paul. How are these changes the same and how are they different?
- Like Ananias and his community supporting Paul, who is around to support us as we go through changes that are challenging and uncomfortable? Is it always the people we expect?
- Why do you think God changed Paul's name? What do we associate with names sometimes?

### Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- I wonder, if there was one thing you could change, what would it be?
- I wonder if there are any changes you're not happy about? What help might you need?
- Saul changed his name to Paul. I wonder if you like your name and what you would like to be called instead if you don't?

### What's in the box (for under fives)

Use the special box or bag and sing "What's in the box/bag? What's in the box/bag? Let's see, let's see, what's in the box/bag" (to the tune of The Farmer's in the Dell). You could tap the top of the box twice after the word 'box'. Pull out the things one by one and then let the children play with them, talking about the theme or the story in simple terms.

This week's box could include:

- Letters you can rearrange, or letters for specific children's names – have some simple letters that can be rearranged into something new – CAT-ACT; DOG-GOD. Talk about changes – changed his name from Paul to Saul or see if children can recognise their own names written down
- A mirror – talk about how you can make your face look different
- A face that changes from angry to happy – maybe two sides of a paper plate or wooden spoon – angry Saul became Paul when he knew Jesus, frightened Ananias became friendly Ananias when he listened to Jesus
- Lights – Paul saw a bright light, turn the light on and off, talk about how light helps us and make us see things better
- Change dolls, or a variety of dolls which can have their clothes changed – talk about how we can change, and how we can be changed
- Doctor's kit – Paul was blinded, he needed someone to help him, talk about people who help us
- A set of play people to act out the story or random shapes/bits you can move around to make pictures from the story as you tell it (e.g. stones, felt, twigs etc)



# Express

Praying together: how can you involve the children actively in prayer?

## Blending Prayers

Find somewhere quiet and comfortable to sit.

Take two different colours of playdoh and make a small ball of each colour. Take the playdough in your hands and slowly start to blend the two balls together. Think about the changes that you are facing and imagine that they are one of the balls and the other ball is God.

As you blend the two colours together, talk to God about your worries and fears. Know that God is with you in everything you do, including in the silence. As the two colours become one, remember that God is close to you and, just as the colours surround each other, God is protecting you.



## Spoken prayer

For Saul, some of the changes that happened to him were not easy and he had to trust in God.

A spoken prayer with Makaton signs using the words of Psalm 18:2

**Dear God,**

**Thank you that you are always with us.**

**Please help us in all the changes that are happening in our lives.**

**We thank You for being our friend, our rock, our place of safety.**

**Help us to trust in you, our shield and our protector. Amen**



## Responding together

Here are some suggested crafts and activities, and there is a colouring sheet at the end of this resource. You could also use small play toys and/or have a basket of resources available so children can choose their own way to respond. <https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FACT-how-to-sheet.pdf>

With an online group, plan whether to deliver any resources in advance or how you will encourage them to use what they've got to hand in their response.

However you do it, it is good for the adults to engage in the response too, and all chat together.



## Junk modelling transformers

### **You will need:**

Some materials for junk modelling  
Glue, tape and pens or paints  
Any other items which would help

### **What you do:**

Encourage the children to create a model which can be transformed into something new. For younger children keep it simple, like a kitchen roll core, being a palm tree and transforming into an Octopus.

This is an example – we made a factory which transforms to a robot.



## Lego Six Bricks Challenge

There are 915 million ways of combining six 4x2 Lego bricks.

### **You will need:**

A timer  
A sheet to mark off the results  
Six different coloured Lego or Duplo bricks with 2x4 studs

### **What you do:**

Give each child a set of six bricks, and a score sheet.

Set them the challenge to find how many different ways they can put the bricks together in ten minutes.

This is best done by splitting the children into pairs, one to build and one to mark off how many ways they can combine the bricks.

I wonder how many you will get to?

## Everyday with Jesus – Walking the Way

What could we do this week to carry on what we've learned? Maybe members of the group could come up with a suggestion. If not, get them to choose from these two challenges:

- Can you think of one small thing you'd like to change about how you treat other people, how you talk to God, how you care for yourself or for God's creation? Make a small step towards making a difference this week.
- Is there something that you would have thrown away this week that you can mend or repurpose?

We hope you enjoyed exploring **change** with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing [lorrainewebb@urc.org.uk](mailto:lorrainewebb@urc.org.uk)

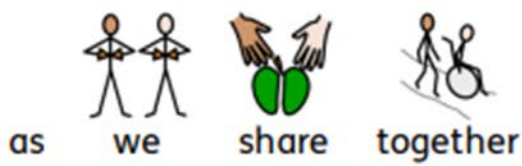
Why not have a look at next month's resource on **Creationtide**



Jesus our friend,



be with us today



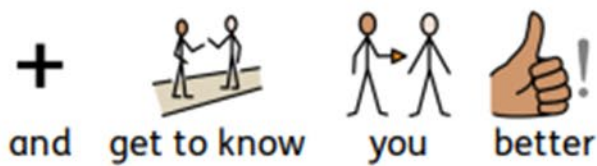
as we share together



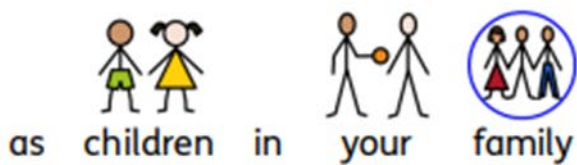
pray together



play together



and get to know you better



as children in your family



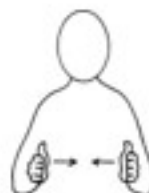
Amen



Right middle finger touches centre of other palm, repeat with left hand



Alternate hands back and forth



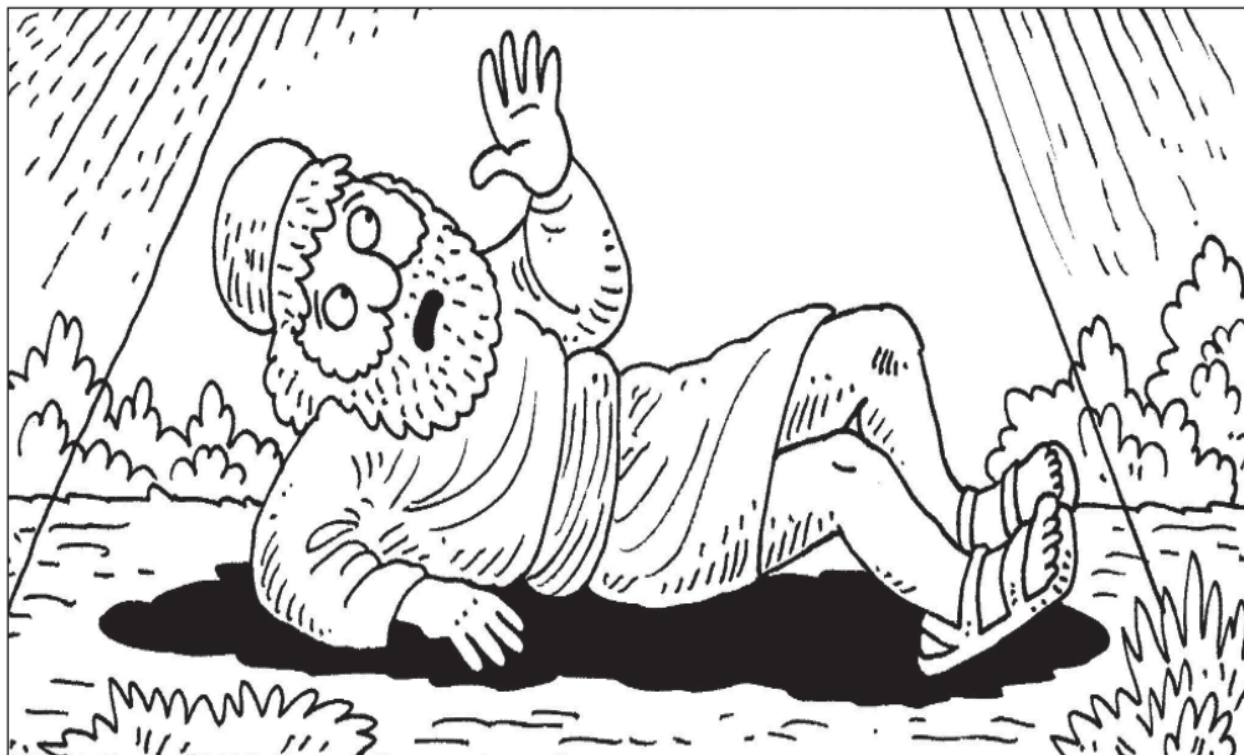


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