



# Saul's Conversion

## Unit 9: Good News Spreads

### LAST WEEK

The sorrow of the crucifixion turns to celebration when Jesus is raised and gives this good news to Mary Magdalene (John 20:1-18). Jesus later appears to the other disciples, including Thomas (John 20:19-31).

### THIS WEEK

Saul, a persecutor of Christians, has a vision of Jesus on the road to Damascus that changes his life dramatically (Acts 9:1-19a).

### Story Summary

Saul was persecuting Christians. On his way to Damascus, a light struck Saul blind, and he heard the voice of the Lord telling him to continue to the city where he would receive new instructions. In Damascus, a man named Ananias had a vision in which the Lord told him to go to Saul, lay hands on him, and fill him with the Holy Spirit. When Ananias did this, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again.

### Practice: Service

God calls us to serve others, often in unexpected ways. As a family, think of a volunteer or service activity to do together this week that would surprise the recipient.

### The Point

God sometimes calls the most unlikely people to do the work of spreading the gospel.

### Bible Nuts & Bolts:

#### *Paul's Travels (Bible Maps)*

Saul, commonly known by his Greek name, Paul, traveled extensively throughout the lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. His three main missionary journeys took him through present-day Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, and Italy. A fourth, final journey led him to Rome, where he is thought to have been executed in 62 CE. On his journeys, Paul wrote letters to encourage the growing Christian communities he often helped start. These letters make up part of our New Testament.

### NEXT WEEK

When Paul and Silas are imprisoned for sharing the gospel, an earthquake opens their cell door and a prison guard comes to believe (Acts 16:16-34).

## Going Deeper

As you hear and study these stories each week, consider what God has to say to you and your family. What is God's message to us? Consider the following basic pattern as a way of forming family devotions:

- ✠ Light a candle to help you focus this time as "God time." Pray a simple prayer together.
- ✠ Take a moment to check in with each other; what are each person's "highs" and "lows" today?
- ✠ Read aloud from the Daily Bible Readings from below. Discuss the questions following each.
- ✠ End with a blessing, by simply tracing a cross on each other's forehead. The Lord's Prayer is a good way to end your devotion time. If you used a candle, extinguish it as a sign of the end of the devotions.

*Note: This is only a suggested pattern. It will vary with your household's context and patterns. What works best for you? First thing in the morning? Over breakfast? Bed time? Be creative and flexible with how you practice and keep your devotions!*

## Daily Bible Readings

### Sunday – Read Acts 9:1-19a

Saul, persecutor of Christians, was blinded on the road to Damascus and became a follower of Jesus.

- When was the last time something stopped you in your tracks?
- Why do you think it was important for God to change Saul's heart?

### Monday – Read Acts 9:19b-25

Saul began to preach that Jesus is the Messiah, which got him in trouble with Jewish authorities.

- Why do you think people were so surprised to hear Saul preach about Jesus?
- Have you ever stood up for something you believed was right even though some people disagreed?

### Tuesday – Read Acts 9:26-31

Disciples in Jerusalem were afraid of Saul, but one disciple showed them how Saul had changed.

- Who is someone who has taken a risk for you or defended you?
- How do you think Saul felt joining the disciples who were frightened of him?

### Wednesday – Read Acts 13:1-12

Saul and Barnabas traveled to Cyprus and performed a miracle, and Saul became known as Paul.

- Why was it important for the disciples to fast and pray over Saul, Barnabas, and the others before sending them off?

- When have you needed extra strength and help from the Holy Spirit?

### Thursday – Read Acts 15:1-21

The apostles in Jerusalem debate whether Gentiles had to become Jewish to follow Jesus.

- What does it mean to you that you are saved by God's grace and not by our own actions?
- How do you think Gentiles (non-Jewish people) may have reacted to this news?

### Friday – Read Acts 15:36-16:5

Paul and Silas met Timothy, a young disciple, and brought him on their missionary journeys.

- Why was it important for Timothy to be circumcised in order to speak to Jews about Jesus?
- Why might someone embrace different customs to engage with people of a different culture?

### Saturday – Read Acts 16:11-15

Lydia was converted after hearing Paul speak in Philippi.

- Is it significant that a woman is mentioned as a convert to Christianity? Why or why not?
- When is a time when you felt your heart opened or your mind changed after hearing someone speak?