Mercy changes a life

Saint Paul: From Enemy to Apostle

Ages approximately 7-11 | Video 13:34 | Lesson 45-50 minutes

Central truth

Jesus calls Saul away from harming the Church. Through grace, baptism and the help of others, Paul begins a new life of sharing the Gospel.

Learning goals

Children will retell Saul's encounter with Jesus; name Ananias and another helper; connect faith with loving actions; and choose a safe way to welcome, encourage or make amends.

Prepare

Gather a Bible, pencils or crayons and the chosen student pages. Preview the film: it includes Stephen's death, persecution, prison and shipwreck, presented without graphic detail. Children may pause, ask questions or respond privately.

One complete lesson

Welcome (5 min): Ask how a person can change a wrong choice.
Watch (14 min): Notice who helps Paul and how Paul helps others.
Talk (10 min): Choose three questions from page 2.
Respond (12-16 min): Choose drawing, writing or oral retelling.
Share and pray (4 min): Invite voluntary responses and a concrete act of care.

Story map

Scenes 1-2: Saul opposes Jesus' followers; Stephen prays for forgiveness.
Scenes 3-5: Jesus calls Saul; Ananias welcomes him; friends help him escape.
Scenes 6-8: Paul is sent out, points people to God, prays in prison and speaks in Athens.
Scenes 9-10: Friends, work and letters support his mission; he witnesses while a prisoner.
Scenes 11-13: Courage in the storm, teaching in Rome and faithfulness to Jesus.

Accuracy and care

Saul and Paul are names for the same man; Acts 13:9 does not describe a name change at conversion. Do not blame Jewish people as a group: Jesus, his first followers and Paul were Jewish. Distinguish particular actions from an entire people. Acts ends with Paul teaching in Rome; the film identifies his later martyrdom as Christian tradition.

Talk, respond and pray

Choose questions; listen for a story detail and a loving response.

1. What changes on the road to Damascus?
Saul encounters the risen Jesus and learns that hurting Jesus' followers is hurting Jesus. His new direction begins with God's grace.

2. Why is Ananias brave?
He is afraid because of Saul's actions, but obeys Jesus and welcomes Saul as a brother. Mercy does not mean pretending harm was good.

3. Who helps Paul keep going?
Accept Ananias, Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, Luke, Priscilla and Aquila, or the friends with the basket. The Church serves together.

4. Why do Paul and Barnabas refuse to be worshiped?
They are human. The healing is God's work; they want people to worship the living God.

5. How does Paul act in prison and in the storm?
He prays, sings, encourages others and trusts God. Faith does not mean that Christians never feel afraid or suffer.

6. How can love become an action?
Welcome someone, speak kindly, seek help, make amends or encourage a person. God's grace calls us to keep growing.

Response and answer notes

Draw & Tell: accept accurate scenes and an explanation; artistic skill is not assessed. Read & Write page 1 sequence: **3, 1, 4, 2**. Page 2: kindness, humility and encouragement are appropriate; cruelty, self-worship and giving up on others are not. Personal responses may be spoken, dictated or kept private.

Teach with care

Forgiveness never means hiding abuse, returning to danger or obeying a harmful request. Children should tell a trusted adult when someone hurts or frightens them. Do not ask for public confessions. Explain baptism and forgiveness as gifts of grace that lead us into life with Christ and his Church.

Pray: Jesus, thank you for calling Paul. Help us listen to you, receive your mercy and show your love. Saint Paul, pray for us. Amen.

Jesus calls Saul - Acts 9:1-31

Paul and Silas - Acts 16:25-34

Courage in the storm - Acts 27:21-44

Love in action - 1 Corinthians 13

Story page and free downloads | Retellings and activities use the reviewed film and Scripture references.