

# SABBATH SCHOOL

## Preteen Sabbath Instruction Program — Teacher's Outline

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Level 4 • Unit 7 • Week 4

### CONVERSION OF SAUL

#### **OBJECTIVE:**

To show how one can change his/her ways (repent) and be converted. We'll use the example of the apostle Paul and his conversion to Christianity.

#### **ATTENTION GETTER:**

Say: Have you ever heard of a time machine? Of course, you have! Time travel has been a common topic in books and movies.

Pretend that you are going back in time to the first-century Church, the time just after Jesus was crucified and raised from the dead by God the Father. The apostles are the leaders of the Church in Jerusalem.

Do: Have the students discuss what Jerusalem would have been like back then. Would they have wanted to be there, and why? Discuss how the first Christians were treated.

#### **BIBLE LESSON:**

##### STEPHEN IS KILLED

You are sitting in services with your parents and friends. You are listening to a very inspiring speaker. His name is Stephen, and he is a deacon in the early Church. God has given him power to do great miracles. All of a sudden, the door flies open and some Jews and Roman citizens storm through the door. They grab Stephen and tie him up. You are all warned to not interfere or you will be killed and they drag him out the door (Acts 6:8-12).

You all follow, not to cause trouble, but to support your friend. To your disbelief, a Jewish court puts Stephen on trial. The court has asked some people to lie about Stephen. They accuse him of blaspheming the temple. Stephen replies to their false accusations (Acts 7). He summarizes the history of God's

people. He also explains to the court about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ—the Messiah—and ends by stating God doesn't dwell in temples made with hands.

The Jewish leaders become very angry with what Stephen says, and they take him to the edge of town and stone him to death. A young Jewish man named Saul agrees that Stephen should die (Acts 7:57-60; 8:1-2).

This evil is happening all over the Roman Empire. Christians are being rounded up, tortured, put in jail and put to death. Being a Christian in these early times is difficult, but they continue preaching anyway (Acts 8:3-4).

## SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED TO SAUL

It is now about three years later and a guest speaker is in town. Your family and friends go to hear him, but are shocked that the speaker is a man named Paul. You think, "I have seen this man before. He is the man that consented to the death of Stephen. But yes, he is speaking about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And he is admitting that Christians are the temple of the living God through the Holy Spirit that dwells in them (1 Corinthians 3:16). How can this man be talking to us about the right way to be a Christian?"

The man Saul had obviously changed! Not only his attitude but also his name!

Before Paul's change or conversion, he was called Saul. He was a zealous Roman citizen, born to a wealthy Jewish family. Saul, as a young person, was given the best education available at that time. He knew several languages; he studied the Greek and Roman philosophers as well as the Holy Scriptures. His Jewish teacher was the well-respected Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). Saul was also taught to think that the followers of Jesus were heretics and deserved to die. Saul was determined to help stamp out the fanatics of this new Christian religion. He probably would have been like that his whole life, but God had a different plan for Saul.

## SAUL'S CONVERSION

A miraculous change took place in the life of Saul after the death of Stephen. Saul and his helpers were sent to Damascus to round up and arrest the followers of Jesus. On the way, there was a sudden blinding flash of light that appeared in the sky. Those men must have been very frightened! Saul fell to the ground and heard a voice from heaven ask him, "Saul, Why are you persecuting Me?"

Saul asked, "Who are you?" The answer came back, "I am Jesus, whom you have been persecuting. You will go to Damascus and I will show you and tell you what to do."

Saul must have been terrified by what he heard; but he did obey the voice and went on to Damascus as planned. Only now, his companions had to lead him there because he was blind. Saul was now ready to listen to God and to really obey Him (Acts 9:1-8).

## SAUL MEETS ANANIAS

In the meantime, God appeared in a vision to a Christian in Damascus named Ananias. Ananias was told to go to Saul and anoint him so God could heal him of his blindness. Ananias didn't know that Saul had changed. Now what would you have done in this case? Ananias was afraid and you probably would have been too!

Ananias tried to explain to God that this Saul was the one who had killed many Christians. God, in this vision, told Ananias that He did know about Saul's life; but God went on to explain that He had a great job for Saul to do (Acts 9:15).

"Go your way, for he is a chosen vessel for me. He will bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. But there will be a physical price to pay. He will have to suffer through many trials for My name's sake" (Acts 9:15-16).

So Ananias obeyed God and went to Saul. That must have been very hard for him, but he did it anyway. (God may have all of us do some very difficult things, but we must obey Him anyway and be faithful.)

Saul did welcome Ananias. Saul truly was sad for all the sins that he had committed against the early Christians and God. He was now ready to obey God's instructions. Saul had repented—or turned around and gone the other way. His name was changed from Saul, meaning "ask of God," to Paul, meaning "little" (Acts 13:9). He became a very powerful minister for God; but he did have to suffer greatly. He will be a very interesting person to meet in God's Kingdom. He will have many stories to tell us about his Christian life.

## LESSON SUMMARY

We can think that Saul's sins were pretty bad. He agreed to Stephen's death and put many Christians in jail. But we have sins too. If we are unkind, put others down, are envious or covetous, respect certain people more than others, say bad things to or about other people, we are sinning. When we disobey our parents or refuse to honor them as we should, we are sinning. When we are disrespectful to teachers or police officers, we are sinning. When we commit these sins against people, we are really sinning against God. But understand that no sin is too great for God to forgive. Just as God forgave Saul, He will forgive us too. But when we do commit sins against God, we too, must truly repent and follow God with our whole heart.

Sometimes we are "blinded" or don't really understand the things we do. We must always pray for God's wisdom and direction in our lives. When we get God involved in our decisions, we won't be like Saul once was and blindly do something wrong. Putting God first will keep us down the right path!

## **LESSON APPLICATION**

Play Bible Jeopardy (like the television game show). Let the student pick a category and dollar amount. If they get the right answer, add the dollar amount to their total. The student with the most dollars wins.

### **STEPHEN IS KILLED**

\$10 - What famous Bible person agreed to Stephen's stoning and death?

\$20 - What leaders were angry with what Stephen said during his trial?

\$30 - What religious group of people were being put in jail?

### **SOMETHING HAPPENED TO SAUL**

\$10 - True or False? Saul had read the Holy Scriptures as a young man.

\$20 - What was Saul's name changed to?

\$30 - Who was Saul's main Jewish teacher?

### **SAUL'S CONVERSION**

\$10 - Who spoke to Saul from heaven?

\$20 - Why did Saul have to be led to Damascus?

\$30 - How did God get Saul's attention?

### **SAUL MEETS ANANIAS**

\$10 - Who was afraid of Saul?

\$20 - How did God appear and speak to Ananias?

\$30 - Who had to suffer for God's Kingdom?

### **LESSON SUMMARY**

\$10 - True or False? We never sin, therefore, we don't have to repent.

\$20 - True or False? It is OK to disrespect your teachers if you don't like them.

\$30 - When we sin against people, we are also sinning against whom?

### **Music:**

Sing "Blest and Happy Is the Man," p. 77 of the United Church of God hymnal.

### **MEMORY VERSE:**

Acts 2:38-39 "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

# family activity

## THE POINT:

To show how one can change his/her ways (repent) and be converted. We looked at the example of the apostle Paul and his conversion to Christianity.

## WORD SEARCH:

Find the hidden words. After finding all the hidden words, the remaining letters, in order, spell out what Saul had to do.

PAUL	ROMAN
SAUL	BLIND
STEPHEN	GENTILE
JESUS	OBEY
REPENTED	FORGIVEN
CONVERSION	RIGHT
SIN	LOVE
JEW	FOLLOWER

C H N E V I G R O F  
O R E P E N T E D E  
N H N E H P E T S E  
V S U S E J S A U L  
E F O L L O W E R I  
R O E A P D S T J T  
S B V O A R I E E N  
I E O P U E N N W E  
O Y L B L I N D T G  
N A M O R R I G H T

What did Saul have to do? \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ ! [Hint: Acts 2:38]

## FAMILY TOGETHER TIME:

Saul had to turn away from his sin. The Bible defines sin as breaking God's law. Write below a short version of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

## MEMORY VERSE:

Acts 2:38-39 "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

## TEACHER'S ANSWER SHEET

### STEPHEN IS KILLED

\$10 - What famous Bible person agreed to Stephen's stoning and death? Saul

\$20 - What leaders were angry with what Stephen said during his trial? Jewish leaders

\$30 - What religious group of people were being put in jail? Christians

### SOMETHING HAPPENED TO SAUL

\$10 - True or False? Saul had read the Holy Scriptures as a young man. True

\$20 - What was Saul's name changed to? Paul

\$30 - Who was Saul's main Jewish teacher? Gamaliel

### SAUL'S CONVERSION

\$10 - Who spoke to Saul from heaven? Jesus

\$20 - Why did Saul have to be led to Damascus? He was blind

\$30 - How did God get Saul's attention? Sent a blinding light

### SAUL MEETS ANANIAS

\$10 - Who was afraid of Saul? Ananias

\$20 - How did God appear and speak to Ananias? In a vision

\$30 - Who had to suffer for God's Kingdom? Saul or Paul

### LESSON SUMMARY

\$10 - True or False? We never sin, therefore we don't have to repent. False

\$20 - True or False? It is OK to disrespect your teachers if you don't like them. False

\$30 - When we sin against people, we are also sinning against whom? God

Answer to the question on the family activity sheet:

What did Saul have to do? **H E H A D T O R E P E N T !**