

# SABBATH SCHOOL

## Preteen Sabbath Instruction Program — Teacher's Outline

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Level 5 • Unit 3 • Week 2

### PAUL THE APOSTLE

#### **OBJECTIVE:**

To learn about the conversion of Saul from being a hate-filled persecutor to being the apostle Paul sent to take the gospel to the gentiles.

#### **ATTENTION GETTER:**

What does it mean in Acts 7:58 when it says, "And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul."

Do: Discuss with the students Saul's participation in the martyrdom (murder) of Stephen, (Acts 8:1, 3) and his admitting so later (Acts 22:4-5). Can God use such a person? Today we will find out.

#### **BIBLE LESSON:**

Saul, who later became Paul, was called by God right when he was actively persecuting the disciples of Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:13). But, God had plans for him. Consider Saul's background (Act 22:3). He was taught strictly and zealously (Galatians 1:14) in Jerusalem by Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). This man Gamaliel was a Pharisee "a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people" (Acts 5:34). So Saul was a strict Pharisee who knew God's (and Jewish) law well. Although we are not told outright, we can speculate that Saul persecuted those who practiced the Way, Christianity (Acts 22:4) because he saw it as a threat to Judaism. Even Christ asked Saul why he was persecuting Him (Acts 22:7).

So why would Christ choose an enemy to become a powerfully used, famous disciple? First, because Saul knew God's scriptures well. (He just didn't understand them well!) Second, because he was enthusiastic. Some people are not antagonistic, but often they just don't do anything! They just coast. Paul didn't just coast! He jumped in and did stuff, even when it was wrong. Paul needed to be given more wisdom and discretion (and later, while in Arabia, he was given more).

Do: Read Acts 22:10 and Galatians 1:14-18.

What was Paul doing in Arabia? We don't know exactly, but Paul does relate an experience in 2 Corinthians 12:1-6 that may indicate that he was taught personally by Jesus Christ. Considering the amount of material in the Bible that was written by Paul and his overall impact on true Christianity, this special training would not be excessive.

But what was he being specially trained for (Acts 9:1-19)? Here we learn, in context, that during the very height of Saul's attack upon the Church, Jesus Christ Himself made known to Ananias, a disciple in Damascus, that Saul "is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel."

Paul was a transition point between the Jews and the gentiles. Being a Pharisee, he knew the law well, but having this special, personal experience, he also realized that Christ as God occasionally works in extraordinary ways to do extraordinary things. It was very unusual for Jews to interact with gentiles. Consider Acts 11:1-18.

#### **LESSON APPLICATION:**

Make a time line of the events in Paul's life. Consider using Bible helps (such as *Ungers Bible Dictionary* and others covered in Level 5, Unit 1, Week 3), to give more information.

- 1.) Paul is born in Tarsus.
- 2.) Sometime in his youth, he moves to Jerusalem.
- 3.) He is taught by Gamaliel, raised as a Pharisee.
- 4.) Being strict, he is given authority to travel to Jewish ghettos (places where a high concentration of Jews live and have authority) and arrest Christians (considered heretical Jews).
- 5.) On the road to Damascus, he and his fellow travelers see a bright light. He is struck blind for three days and meets the Christian disciple Ananias who prays for him.
- 6.) Paul is impressed, receives his sight back, wants to be baptized, is, counsels with a person or two and then heads off to Arabia for three years where (it seems) he was taught personally by Jesus Christ.
- 7.) Paul is given the commission to go especially to the gentiles which he does for the rest of his life (Acts 26:20).

#### **MUSIC:**

Sing "Go Ye Therefore Into All the World," page 85 of the United Church of God hymnal.

#### **MEMORY VERSE:**

Acts 9:15 "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel."

# *family activity*

## **THE POINT:**

To learn about the conversion of Saul from being a hate-filled persecutor to being the apostle Paul, sent to take the gospel to the gentiles.

## **ASK ME...**

To show you my time line and explain the sequence of events in Paul's life?

Why might God have chosen someone like Saul to become a leading apostle in His work?

## **FAMILY TOGETHER TIME:**

Talk about your own conversion or the conversion of others close to you. How was it similar to Paul's? How was it different?

Read Romans 8:28. How did "all things work together for good" in the life of Paul?

## **MEMORY VERSE:**

Acts 9:15 "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel."