

Intermediate Level, Block 10, Week 6
Saul's Conversion—Confirmed through Ananias

Point to Emphasize: We can be those who consider one another more excellent than ourselves.

Reading Reference: Acts 9:1-19, notes 6¹, 8¹, 11¹; *Life-study of Acts*, msg. 25

Memory Verse: ...But in lowliness of mind considering one another more excellent than yourselves. (Philippians 2:3b)

Story Sample

We have been talking about how the good news about Jesus was spreading. Many were believing this good news. And they found out that they needed each other. They needed to gather together and to help one another. Let me tell you about Saul and Ananias from the book of Acts.

Now, before Saul heard the good news about Jesus, he was one who was famous for treating the disciples very cruelly. As a Jew, he had been raised to know the Jewish law and to follow it. He was intelligent and very capable. He thought he was doing what was right for God by persecuting Jesus' disciples.

One day, as he was traveling to Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him, and he fell to the ground. It was here that he heard the good news. The men who were with him had to take him to the city, because he could not see. For three days he wasn't able to see. What would he do?

In that city, there was a certain disciple named Ananias. He wasn't well known. In fact, this is the only time he was mentioned in the Bible. God sent him to Saul, and Ananias did as God told him, even though he was afraid, because he had heard of what Saul had been doing to the disciples in Jerusalem. When Ananias entered into the house where Saul was, he laid his hands on Saul and said, "The Lord has sent me...so that you may receive your sight" (Acts 9:17), and Saul's sight came back! God had used this seemingly unimportant man to show Saul a very important lesson—that all followers of Jesus are necessary.

When I was a teenager, I had done something VERY disrespectful to my dad. I knew I was wrong, so I had shut myself in the bathroom and I was crying about it. I felt just terrible! While I was there, my younger sister came in to see what was wrong. I thought, "What could she do to help?" I was older and I should know more than she. Even, I was supposed to be the one who should be taking care *of her*, not the other way around. But do you know that she had a verse for me? It was a very simple verse, but it was just what I needed! I felt so much better! We really do need one another! [*Storyteller, tell your own story about help that came from another believer.*]

This was just what Saul needed that day he received his sight. He didn't only need to get his sight back and be healed. He needed to know that every follower of Jesus is important to God. Even though Saul would become known as Paul, one who was so well known in the New Testament, he still needed to receive something very important from this simple disciple. After this, Saul began to join himself with the other disciples.

Let's all consider this during the week. Maybe you think you might be better or smarter or stronger than someone else, maybe someone younger than you. We all do this sometimes. Let's look at our friends in a new way and see that we all need each other and can help each other.

Intermediate Level, Block 10, Week 7
Peter—Being Sent to Others Different from Himself

Point to Emphasize: We can easily be with many different kinds of people.

Reference Reading: Acts 10—11

Memory Verse: ...In truth I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons. (Acts 10:34b)

Story Sample

There are many good stories about Peter in the New Testament. The one for today took place at a time when many were spreading the good news about Jesus, but still mainly among the Jews. Peter had now traveled to Joppa. In this region there were many Jews and also many Gentiles, people who were not Jews.

Peter had been brought up as a Jew. The Jewish law did not permit them to mix with non-Jewish people. So as a Jew, Peter would never have gone to the house of a non-Jew. He would never have eaten together with non-Jews. But now, being a follower of Jesus, what would he do?

One day, there was a man in Caesarea named Cornelius who was a Roman centurion and Gentile who feared God. He had a vision with an angel speaking to him. He was told to go to Joppa and bring Peter back to speak to him. Following the instructions, Cornelius sent his men to get Peter.

At about the same time in Joppa, Peter was on a housetop praying and also had a vision. In this vision, God showed him that he should accept everyone, because God does not respect one person above another. This was altogether a new thought to Peter. It took some time for it to sink in. When the men from Cornelius came, Peter agreed to go with them.

When he got to Caesarea, Peter spoke to all who had gathered at the house of Cornelius. They were all Gentiles. He told them the good news about Jesus. After Peter's sharing, they all became followers of Jesus and were baptized. This was a very important event! From this time on, the good news was spoken to all men, both Jews, and Gentiles.

Even though we were not brought up as Jews, sometimes we are like the Jews—we don't mix with others who are different from ourselves. It is easy for us to be together with some who speak the same language our family speaks, or are from the same country our parents are from. But it is also very good when we get to know others who are different from our background.

When I was about your age, a Japanese family moved into the neighborhood up the block from us. The boy's name was Rodney Kasuda (Caw-sue-dah). He was about my age. His English was so-so, but neither his mom nor dad spoke much English. When all the neighborhood children came over to play in their front yard, Mrs. Kasuda would bring out these small sticky rice balls. She would tell us what they were called in Japanese but none of us could pronounce it. I really liked them. Some of the others did not like these rice balls because they tasted so different. Mr. Kasuda was a black belt in martial arts. I had never seen martial arts before. He would go into their front yard and show us some forms of the martial arts. It was really different from anything I'd known, but it was interesting. Because Rodney's family was so different from the other families, in the neighborhood, it seemed harder to do things with them. But we did include Rodney whenever we could. *[Storyteller, include your own story of being with others from different backgrounds.]*

It really is not so hard to be with children who are not the same as we are. And since God loves each one the same, we too should have friends from different backgrounds. We can be those who are like Peter willing to be with others who are different than ourselves, because to God, we are all the same.

Intermediate Level, Block 10, Week 8 **Barnabas and Saul Being Sent Out**

Point to Emphasize: We can be those who are entrusted with matters at school or by our parents.

Reading Reference: Acts 13:1-4, notes 2³, 3²

Memory Verse: ...He has counted me faithful, appointing me to the ministry. (1 Timothy 1:12b)

Story Sample

In the city of Antioch, there was a group of five persons. These five were from different races and backgrounds and were all very distinct: a Levite, someone who was probably of African origin, someone from Cyrene, a noble person, and lastly, a Pharisee. It is like saying that there was a Caucasian, an Asian, an African, a Hispanic, and an American Indian. They were all from different races. But what was unique was that they were not divided. They were all together in the same place for the same purpose and were used by God in a big way.

These five persons were faithful. They wanted to proclaim everything they had seen and heard about Jesus to many other cities. So they gathered together and prayed to see how God would lead them in this endeavor. As they were praying, they were led to send out two of them, Barnabas and Saul. Out of the five, two would go and three would stay. The Bible says that "the Holy Spirit said, Set apart for Me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them...and laid their hands on them, they sent them away" (Acts 13:2-3). When they laid hands on them, they were assured that Barnabas and Saul were sent out by God to carry out His great commission to spread the good news about Jesus to other cities. Whether they were the sending ones or the sent ones they were all carrying out the same commission.

Barnabas and Saul, the sent ones, were entrusted to do something, and they acted as representatives of the ones who stayed. Have you ever been entrusted with a task in which you were representing others? When I was in fifth grade, my school decided to put together a special program. For this, the teachers chose two students to represent each class. After the teachers got together, they chose the two students from each class and I was one of the children chosen. We needed to read a poem in front of everyone. I was so nervous. I remember thinking, what if I make a mistake? Well, my classmates all got together and encouraged both of us. When we were up on stage, we knew that our classmates supported us. We were representing each one of them. *[Storyteller, insert a story in which you were entrusted a task.]*

Based on this story in the book of Acts, we can see that each one of you can be the one who is entrusted to do something. Throughout your lives, you will have many opportunities in which you will be entrusted to do something. You need to be one who accepts the task and trusts that the ones who gave you the task knew you were the right person.

Intermediate Level, Block 10, Week 9

A Solution is Being Agreed Upon

Point to Emphasize: We should be willing to find a solution when there are different views.

Reference Reading: Acts 15:1-25, 30-31, note 6¹, 9¹; *Life-study of Acts*, msgs. 41, 42

Memory Verse: And finally, be all of the same mind, sympathetic, loving the brothers, tenderhearted, humble-minded. (1 Peter 3:8)

Story Sample

Have you ever disagreed with someone? I'm sure we all have. When my girls were young and we were going out to dinner, their dad would ask, "Where should we go?" One of the girls always wanted to go to McDonalds, and the other always wanted KFC. They would stubbornly argue until their dad would step in and decide what we should do, and usually it was neither McDonalds nor KFC. Often he would choose Chinese food, and then neither of the girls was happy! Later on, they realized it would have been so much better if one had been willing to give in and agree to what the other wanted. It would make dinner so much more enjoyable for everyone! *[Storyteller, use your own example.]*

In the book of Acts, as the new followers of Jesus began to meet, there were times they disagreed also. At one time, they had a disagreement about an important Jewish custom, part of the Jewish law. Remember, the good news was spreading to many different places now. There were many different types of people meeting together, and this led to disagreements.

Eventually, they decided to have a gathering where they could voice their thoughts and come to a solution. It was a unique gathering, and all had the freedom to speak. Much discussion took place. Some spoke that the Jewish law should be followed. Some were Gentiles who knew nothing of the Jewish law and only wanted to follow what they had heard about Jesus.

There needed to be a solution. It was not decided by a king, nor was there a vote given. Peter spoke about what he had learned from a vision he had seen. Barnabas and Paul *[mention that he was formerly called Saul]* shared about speaking the good news about Jesus to the Gentiles. After everyone had spoken, a solution was reached. They all agreed that the Gentiles did not need to keep this custom of the Jewish law. James, who was from Jerusalem, spoke a final word about how they should continue from that time on. In the end, there needed to be a willingness to come to an agreement. All of them had to be willing to make it work.

This is a very good principle for us to learn. When we have a disagreement, we should always be willing to talk about what we think is best, and why. Then, we can be those who are willing to come up with a solution that we all can agree on.

[Lead the children to discuss some problems they have had with others and how they willingly came up with a solution or agreement. Begin with your own example to show them a pattern.]

Intermediate Level, Block 10, Week 10

Going into Macedonia

Point to Emphasize: We can be willing to accept correction from adults and change our mind concerning what we are doing.

Reference Reading: Acts 16:6-15

Memory Verse: The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, / But a wise man listens to counsel.
(Proverbs 12:15)

Story Sample

There was a girl who was working on a science project. She had done a lot of reading to come up with the project. She had a definite and clear thought on how to go about proving her hypothesis (OR science statement). So, once her idea was approved by the teacher, she started working on her project at home. For days she tried a certain experiment, but it never came out right. Even though this experiment failed, she was sure that with a little more time and trials she could get it to turn out correctly.

One day, her dad, who was an engineer, looked at what she had done. He said, "You are never going to get this to work out. You should think about doing this another way." Oh, that made the girl angry. She knew she could get it to work. She had put so much into it already. There was no way she was going to change now. Of course, the girl kept her anger inside. She did not say anything to her dad. After her dad left her room, she just stopped working. She was done with trying to do anything that day. Later, she thought about what he had said. She knew he only wanted to help. She also knew that her dad was really good at science, so maybe she needed to rethink her plan.

With this in mind, she set about doing her science project in a new way. It was going much better this time, but she still could not make it work as she wanted. Again, her dad stopped by to see how it was going. This time he mentioned a science fact that she had completely forgotten about! OH, she was not happy that he was redirecting her project again! But, this time, she decided to act on his word and made another change to her project. Her experiment began to fall into place, and everything began working out as it should. Her project came in 1st place at school. *[Discuss with the children what might have happened if she had not been willing to accept her dad's correction and advice.]*

This kind of correction and redirection happens all the time. This had happened one time when Paul and some companions were traveling from city to city proclaiming the good news about Jesus to the people. After leaving one city, they had the thought to go a certain direction to another city. But as they headed in that direction, the Holy Spirit told them not to go there. *[If the children ask about the Holy Spirit, just say that it is another name for God.]* They then thought to go in another direction to a different city. Again, the Spirit told them not to go there either. So, they traveled down to the city of Troas, not knowing exactly what to do next. That night a Macedonian man appeared to Paul in a vision. The Macedonian man was standing and calling out saying, "Come over into Macedonia and help us" (Acts 16:9). When Paul shared this with his companions, they all knew which direction they needed to go. They immediately set out for the region of Macedonia, knowing that God had called them to announce the good news of Jesus to the people there.

What happened in the region of Macedonia was a marvelous thing! This meant that the good news about Jesus would be shared with the people in Europe, not just those around the Mediterranean Sea. It is really a good thing that Paul was willing to be corrected and redirected.

As we are growing up, we can all learn to accept our parent's and teacher's correction, advice, and redirecting to have a change in mind about what we are doing. We will find that it is not that hard to do, and that it is for the best outcome. *[Storyteller- end the time with your story of being corrected or redirected and how it was for your benefit.]*