

## Bible background

Acts 9:23-31

## Aim of lesson

To think about how God and Jesus cared for Saul, and how they always care for the people who love and work for them, whatever difficulties there are.

## Preparation required

- (a) Collect materials for making a model of the wall of Damascus: a large box; a small basket; string; model people (maybe made by the children) to introduce Saul, Ananias and the Christians in Damascus; materials for drawing stones in the wall.
- (b) Collect dressing-up clothes for Saul's arrival in Jerusalem.
- (c) Cut out small windows all round the box (make sure one is big enough to get your small basket through). Make a 'main gate' on one side and a city sign - 'Damascus'.

## Suggested outline of lesson

1. If possible, play 'hide and seek', letting each child hide in turn. Then talk together about what it was like being hidden and waiting to be found. What would it be like to hide and know that you would be captured and perhaps killed if you were found?
2. Draw stones in the wall to make the box into 'Damascus'. While you are all drawing, remind the children of the story of Saul's conversion. Why and how did he come to Damascus; what happened on the way; what happened when he got there?
3. Get the children to think about how the Christians felt about Saul becoming one of them. How did the Jews feel? Discuss how the Christians could get Saul out of the city without the Jews catching him. Tell the story of what was decided and how Saul escaped from the city, using the model town, basket, string etc. and lowering 'Saul' safely to the ground through a window.
4. Explain that Saul went away into a wild place where there were no people and there Jesus talked to him and told him what he wanted him to do. Later he went to Jerusalem. How did the Christians at Jerusalem feel about him?
5. Encourage the children to dress up as members of a Christian ecclesia in Jerusalem. Choose someone to be Paul and someone to be Barnabas. Act out a short drama in which the Christians are talking about Paul and the things he used to do. One of them has travelled from Damascus, and relates what happened to Saul there, his escape and how he has not been seen for several years. There is a knock on the door - it is Paul! He tells his story and the Christians are suspicious, but Barnabas steps in to help. They all discuss the danger for Paul from the Jews in Jerusalem, and decide that he should go back to Tarsus, his home town.

## Alternative activities

1. If you feel that the box model suggested in the lesson notes will be too difficult, make a wall on a piece of thin card by sticking on paper stones or printing them on with a sponge or small box, e.g. a stock cube box. Make a small slit near the top of the wall. Cut out a basket shape and attach a piece of string. Feed the string through the slit so the basket can be moved up and down. Cut out 3 or 4 small card circles and draw faces on them. Stick one on top of the basket and the others along the top of the wall.
2. Make baskets out of play dough. Flatten a piece for the base, then make long thin sausages and coil them around to build up the sides.

## Relevance to the children's lives

Discuss the fact that sometimes when we try to do the right things people don't always like it and try to make life difficult for us. Help the children to think of ways of coping with this and also of overcoming envious feelings in themselves - talking to people we trust, asking for help, praying to God, reading the Bible, moving away from the difficult situation, behaving like Barnabas.

## Prayer

Dear LORD God, please help us to care for other people as you care for us.

## Verse

'Saul ... began to preach ... that Jesus is the Son of God.' Acts 9:20.