

'Friendship With Jesus'



This material is suitable for ages 8+.

Aim:

To help children to understand what *God's Good News* is all about and to want to listen to it.

Bible focus:

Acts 9:29b - 25.

Introduction:

You will need:

A newspaper, the visual aids with 'Good News' and 'Bad News', a Bible for each child.

Take out the newspaper you have brought with you and ask the children if they know what they can find in this. (Allow time for responses – bad news, good news, comics, sports, etc.) Ask them if everything you read in the newspaper is good. Discuss with them that there is a lot of bad news and good news in our world and a lot of it is written about in the newspaper. It's one of the ways people find out what's happening in the world. (Display the two visual aids and ask for 2 volunteers to hold them up throughout the following activity.)

Let the children tell you some news of what's happening in their lives – good and bad. (Allow some time for them to talk about this.)

(Ask the children who don't have signs that from now on they must listen carefully and tell the 2 children who have the signs when to hold them up – each time the words 'bad news' or 'good news' are mentioned. Emphasise the words so the children get the idea.)

Take out the Bible and talk about the amazing news it contains, especially the fact that God has done something about the Bad News in the world and in our lives.

Tell the children that God's people want to tell others about God's Good News, and that's why their leaders meet with them week by week.

Tell them that the Bible tells many stories of people who tell others the Good News from God. Introduce Paul as one of these people.

Bible time:

Tell something of the story of Paul after his conversion and his determination to keep on telling others about the Good News, and how this got him into trouble because people didn't like what he was saying to them. They thought it was Bad News.

Paul wanted to tell people about God's Good News and he made the most of any chance he had to do this. Even when he was in prison because people were angry about what he said or in a place where he didn't know very many people, he would tell people about God and how much He loved them.

Have the children look up Acts 9:19b - 25 with a couple of good readers to volunteer to read it to the group.

Discuss what the message or Good News was that Paul was telling these people. Ask them why they think they didn't want to listen?

Now there is lots of Bad News around. We read about it in the newspaper or see it on television or hear it on the radio. There is also Bad News in our life because sometimes we don't want to listen to God's Good News and do things His way. Like the people in the Bible didn't want to hear the Good News that Paul was trying to tell us.

But God loves us all very much and he wants to be friends with us. He didn't give up on us when we stopped listening to his Good News. God first sent Jesus to tell us that God loves us and let us know that He can take the Bad News or the things we've done wrong away. Lots of people didn't want to listen to him and later when Paul and many others believed and tried to tell them the same thing, they didn't want to hear again. They killed Jesus which could sound like Bad News but this was all part of God's plan. By dying Jesus took the blame for all the wrong things



people have ever done. God raised Jesus to life again and when we say sorry to God, He forgives us for the wrong things we've done and we can be His friends. This is Good News.

(At this point collect the signs from the children.) Being friends with God is good news. Many people believe Jesus died for them and are His friends. Some of you today may not have decided yet to be friends with God but you would like to. You can talk to God at anytime and ask Him to be your friend. Today I'm going to pray right now and you can ask Him to be your friend. I'll pray and if you would like to ask God to be your friend you can say the prayer with me silently. I'll stop in between each sentence to allow you time to pray for yourself.

Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for the good news (pause) that you want to be friends with me (pause). I'm sorry for the wrong things I've done (pause). I ask you to forgive me and be friends with me (pause). Please help me to love you and to follow you (pause). Amen.

Follow up:

Ensure you follow up any children who indicate they said this prayer with you. For this age group Scripture Union produces Bible reading notes called Hot Shots (8 - 9 years) and Snapshots (9 - 10 years) which are helpful in encouraging children to read their Bible regularly. Linking them to other sections in the corps e.g. Sunday School, SAGALA, Kids Club or Junior Soldiers, will also help with their ongoing spiritual development.

A further counselling resource that may be helpful if a child has more questions is Team Talk, again produced by Scripture Union. It is available through their Resources For Ministry department ph. 02 4321 0200. This resource includes pages for children who are recommitting their lives or for children who have asked questions about a particular issue. E.g. Why did dad leave home?



Good
News

**Bad
News**