



Messy Church at home

28 June 2020 - Messy Saul/Paul

Though we won't be able to meet together as a Messy Church on 28 June, how about trying Messy Church at home?

Read

Acts 9 - Saul on the road to Damascus

Try acting out the story together. Here's a script or you could just read straight from the Bible. You'll need a narrator, Saul, Jesus and Ananias (you can take the role of more than one person if you need to).

Narrator: Things weren't going well for Jesus' followers a short time after Jesus had left them and sent his Holy Spirit. They were being arrested and even killed, just for following Jesus. Many had to leave their homes in Jerusalem and run away to far-off cities like Damascus. There was one man in Jerusalem, a religious leader, who wanted to see Jesus' followers wiped off the face of the earth. His name was Saul.

Saul: I need to have these Jesus-followers killed! I've heard there are lots of them hiding out in Damascus. I know! I'll go to Damascus and arrest the lot of them!

Narrator: When Saul had almost reached Damascus, a bright light from heaven suddenly flashed around him and he fell to the ground.

Saul: Aaaargh!

Jesus: Saul! Saul! Why are you so cruel to me?

Saul: Who are you?

Jesus: I'm Jesus, the one you are so cruel to. Now get up and go into Damascus, where you will be told what to do.

Narrator: Saul got up from the ground, and when he opened his eyes...

Saul: I can't see a thing!

Narrator: He was led by the hand to Damascus, and for three days he was blind and didn't eat or drink. Meanwhile in Damascus, there was a follower of Jesus called Ananias.

Jesus: Ananias, get up and go to Judas' house on Straight Street. When you get there, you will find a man named Saul. Saul is praying, and he has seen a vision. In this vision, he saw a man named Ananias coming to him and putting his hands on him, so that he could see again.

Ananias: Lord, a lot of people have told me about the terrible things this man has done to your followers in Jerusalem. Now he's come to arrest anyone who worships you.

Jesus: Go! I have chosen this man to tell all sorts of people about me.

Narrator: Ananias left and went into the house where Saul was staying. Ananias placed his hands on him.

Ananias: Saul, the Lord Jesus has sent me. He is the same one who appeared to you along the road. He wants you to be able to see and to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Narrator: Suddenly something like fish scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptised. Then he ate and felt much better. He stayed in Damascus and told the Jewish people there about Jesus being God's rescuer, which completely confused them. They thought he wanted to kill all those who followed Jesus, not join them, or try to make others follow Jesus too!

Activities

Here are some activities to try, using bits and pieces you might have at home. If you can't find the exact same items, what things could you use instead?

Bright light

You will need:

- A sheet of paper
- A magnifying glass, hand mirror, or something else with a mirrored/shiny surface (I used the mirrored lid of a pot!)
- A sunny day (Hopefully there will be some more of these!)

See how sharply you can focus the light of the sun through your magnifying glass or using your mirror, bringing the light to a point on the sheet of paper. If you're really patient, the paper might even catch fire (so have a bucket of water nearby). Observe how bright the light gets – you might even need sunglasses to protect your eyes. If it's a dull day, you could experiment with focusing the light from a desk lamp or torch instead of the sun. (Remember never to look at the sun directly or you risk damaging your eyes.)



Think about the bright light you've been watching on the paper. Did it dazzle you? When Saul was on his journey from Jerusalem to Damascus, a sudden dazzling light appeared that only he could see, and something life-changing happened to him – so life-changing that he ended up changing his name from Saul to Paul.

Blindfold challenge

You will need:

- A scarf, or something similar to use as a blindfold
- A bit of space

Blindfold one person and see if you can lead them by the hand safely around your house or garden. You could create an obstacle course if you have space and take it in turns to lead each other.

Talk about how it feels not to be able to see. Did you feel nervous? When Saul met Jesus in a dazzling light on the road to Damascus, he was unable to see for three days. Do you think those three days of lockdown gave Saul time to think about what had just happened to him? Has lockdown given you time to think about big questions?

Saul's eye mask

You will need:

- Card
- Colouring pens/pencils
- A wooden skewer, lolly stick, or any kind of wooden stick
- Sellotape and scissors
- A small amount of baking/greaseproof paper if you have it (if not, you can use normal paper)

Cut out the template on the last page and colour it in. Or you could try drawing your own version of Saul if you like. Cut out holes for his eyes. Use the baking paper to cut out two small ovals big enough to cover the eye holes. Using



sellotape, stick the baking paper over the eye holes, so each little oval is covering a hole, with the sellotape just holding it at the top, so you create a sort of flap... a bit like an eye lid - or scales over the eyes. Stick the whole mask to your wooden stick.

Look through the mask with the eye holes covered. Then lift up the flaps and look through again. In the story, we hear that something like fish scales fell from Saul's eyes and he could see again. Saul



looked upon everything with new eyes. He was changed by Jesus. Now that lockdown is easing a little bit, are you looking at things in a different way? Are you doing things a bit differently?

Reflect

- How do you think Saul felt after that road to Damascus experience with Jesus?
- If you were Ananias, do you think you would have been brave enough to go and see Saul when you knew what he had been like before?
- Why do you think Jesus wanted a baddie like Saul working for him?
- Why do you think Saul changed his name to Paul?

The story of how Jesus chose Saul/Paul to work for him reminds us that Jesus calls all of us to work for him and spread his love. No matter who we are, or what we've done. Jesus loves us, chooses us and changes us. He gives us a new perspective on things.

It also reminds us that there are still some parts of the world where people are bullied for their faith.

Learn a new song

Don't forget to keep singing Jesus' love is very wonderful.

Try learning this song: [Open our eyes Lord](#)

Open our eyes Lord, we want to see Jesus,
To reach out and touch him, and say that we love him.
Open our ears Lord, and help us to listen,
Open our eyes Lord, we want to see Jesus.

Pray

Even if you didn't sing the song Open our eyes Lord, perhaps you could say the words as a prayer. Thank God that we are chosen and changed by him and ask him to help you spread his love. Thank God for those who spread his word and his love throughout the world even if they are persecuted for doing so.

You might also like to say The Lord's Prayer. And perhaps you'd like to finish with Messy Grace - can you remember the actions we do when we say it? Here's a reminder...

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (Hold out your hands in front of you)
And the love of God (Put your hands on your heart)
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (Hold hands)
Be with us all now and for ever. Amen (Raise hands together on the word 'Amen' and shout loudly!)

Look after yourselves and stay well and safe.

Mask template

