

A Good Friend - On the Road to Damascus

Passage: Acts 9

Theme: Christians believe that God wants us to be good friends even when it's hard.

Resources: Memory stick with song words and music; CD with music on; Laptop (check cable); Projector (check 2 cables); Extension lead; Schools team t-shirts (3 spare); Spare scripts.
2 robes, sponge ball

Person 1: Person 1, Ananias, Prayer

Person 2: Person 2, Saul, Questions

Person 3: Person 3, Jesus, Talk

Introduction:

Person 1: Hello everyone, we are so pleased to be back with you again! We are _____ (insert church/organisation name), I am _____, and this is _____ (introduce rest of the team).

[Person 2 enters holding a sponge ball]

Person 2: Do you want to play catch?

[Throw it between them a couple of times. Person 3 enters.]

Person 3: Can I join in?

Person 2: But you're rubbish at catching...

[Person 1 throws the ball to 3 who drops it, picks it up and throws it to 2.]

Person 2: [To 1] He/She is rubbish. [Throwing to Person 1] If you let [her/him] play, I'm not going to let you come to my birthday party...

[1 throws to 3 who again drops it]

[Person 2 storms off. 1 and 3 pass the ball between them then freeze]

Person 1: We're talking today about friendship. Think quietly for a moment about who your best friends are. [Pause]

Our Bible story today is about friendship too. It is just after Jesus died and some people are saying that Jesus has risen from the dead! More people are becoming Christians, but not everyone likes the Christians. A man called Saul [Gesture to him] is trying to hurt them in Damascus - the city where Ananias lives. God asks Ananias to do something really hard to be a friend to Saul.

Story/Drama:

[Enter Saul stage left looking angry. Walks slowly across the stage]

Saul: I am going to put them in prison when I get to Damascus. I hate those Christians.

[Saul stops suddenly stage right. He covers his eyes as if looking into the sun and falls to his knees. Jesus speaks from offstage.]

Jesus: Why are you causing trouble for my people?

Saul: Errrr. Who are you, Lord?

Jesus: I am Jesus. When you hurt my friends, you are hurting me too. Go to the city. I'll tell you what to do.

[Saul gets up slowly and looks around, then looks at his hands, looks around again, looks horrified]

Saul: Help! I can't see! Help! Somebody help me...

[Saul lifts his arm as if someone is leading him towards centre stage, then freeze.

Ananias enters, stage left. Again, Jesus speaks offstage]

Jesus: Ananias!

Ananias: Yes, Lord.

Jesus: Go and find a man called Saul from Tarsus. He has seen a vision of a man named Ananias who will make him see again.

[Ananias looks horrified]

Ananias: You - are - joking! I've heard all about him. He has hurt the Christians in Jerusalem and now he's coming here to arrest us!

Jesus: Go. I've got a job for Saul to do.

[Ananias walks over to Saul. Ananias lays his hand on his shoulder.]

Ananias: Brother Saul, It was Jesus who met you on the road. He has sent me to make you better, and because he wants you to know him.

[Saul looks around, amazed]

Saul: I can see!

[Ananias takes off robe]

Person 1: Saul [Gesture to him] went on to change his name to Paul. He became a Christian and wrote lots of the New Testament in the Bible.

[Pause]



Talk:

If I was to say, 'A good friend is...' How would you finish the sentence? Put your hand up to tell me: 'A good friend is...' [Ask]

In our story from the Bible today, we heard about Ananias and Saul. Ananias lives in Damascus and is a follower of Jesus - he's a Christian. He knows that Saul is coming to try and catch Christians like him. But Jesus tells Ananias to go and meet Saul, who has been blinded by a bright light. Ananias is terrified. He really doesn't want to go. It's too risky. [Pause] But he goes to meet Saul. Ananias lays his hands on Saul and Saul can see again. Ananias is a good friend to Saul.

At the start of our assembly, _____ (Person 1) did something risky. _____ (Person 2) had said if he played catch with me, then he/she couldn't come to his/her party. What should _____ (Person 1) do? It was hard, but he kept playing catch with me. He was a good friend to me. Christians believe that God wants us to be good friends even when it's hard.

That doesn't mean we should do dangerous or bad things if people ask us. It doesn't mean we should keep quiet when people do mean things to us.

But it might be difficult to be friends with someone who was mean to us before.

It might be hard leaving our friends to talk to someone who is on their own or to someone who is new in the school.

It might be hard to say sorry to a friend when we've made them sad or to tell a friend that they've made us sad.

Christians believe that God wants us to be good friends even when it's hard.

Christians follow Jesus and believe that Jesus did something even harder and more risky, that we remember at Easter: he died on the cross to give us a way to be God's friends again and then left us to choose whether we wanted to be his friend. So, Christians believe that God wants us to be good friends, even when it's hard.

Song: You are in the city

Questions:

I'm going to ask some questions, so you can show me how well you've been listening.

1. Who went to Saul and helped him see again? [Ananias¹]
2. Why was it risky for Ananias to go and help Saul? [Saul wanted to hurt Christians]
3. What have we learnt about what Christians believe? [Christians believe that God wants us to be good friends even when it's hard.]

¹ Be cautious here. Chances are that a child will get the name slightly wrong. Obviously, be encouraging but try to avoid saying something like, 'This is a strange name, isn't it?' There may be someone called Ananias in the assembly, but also we don't generally want to give the impression that there are 'normal' and 'strange' names.

Prayer:

To finish our assembly, I am going to say a short prayer for us all. SO if you can please close your eyes so you aren't distracted and if you want to agree with my prayer, you can say, 'Amen' at the end with me.

Dear God, thank you so much for _____ (*insert school name*). Thank you that we have learnt from this story; that Christians believe that you want us to be good friends even when it's hard. Help us to be good friends today. I pray that you would bless every child and every member of staff in this school. **Amen.**

Close:

Thank you for having us today and we will see you again soon.

