

Acts 9:1-19
A change of heart!**Warm Up**

Not including your conversion, have you ever had a change of heart? At one time thought or believed one thing, then suddenly changed your mind? Was it a dislike of a food, a piece of music, a person, a sport or even a change of theology? Share your experiences.

Background and context

The early church was making such an impact on the Jewish community that the religious officials were running scared. Their authority and influence was being undermined. They had already murdered Stephen, one of the seven deacons, for declaring Jesus as Lord. Now the authorities have tasked Saul, a Pharisee with pedigree, to travel the land, arresting and imprisoning believers. God had other ideas! Whilst Saul was on his way God met him in a dramatic way, changed his heart and gave him a new purpose!

Thinking it through: Main discussion/activity

READ Acts 9:1-19. What are the surprising things in the passage? What is new? What don't you really understand?



1. What does Saul's initial enthusiasm teach us about religious fervour that is not guided by truth? Do you know examples of this from either Christian history or from other faiths?
2. How does God sometimes use dramatic or unexpected events to get our attention? Do you have an example from your own life?
3. Have you ever had an experience that significantly challenged your beliefs or direction in life? Share with the group.
4. How should we respond today when we hear of believers being persecuted, given that it also means Jesus is being persecuted?
5. What can we learn from Ananias' response to God's call on him?
6. Christian history is full of ordinary people doing extra-ordinary things for God. Does this fill you with hope that God will call you, or fear that God will push you outside your comfort zone?
7. Why do you think Saul was blinded for three days? What message might it have given him?
8. What evidence is there that Saul really had become a believer? How did the experience transform him? How can this help us in discerning the spiritual journey of others who profess faith?

Discipleship and Application

9. What lessons from this passage can we apply to our own spiritual experience and journey?
10. How important are mature believers in the life of new believers? How can you play a role in supporting others?

**Try to leave 15-20 mins to talk about prayer needs of the group and to pray.**

There are many creative ways of praying together: writing prayers, using candles as a focus, reading prayers or praying for each other in pairs.