



June 2021



Hello and welcome to Messy Church at home. As before, the programme will be in two parts. The material below, you can follow at your own pace and then join us for a Zoom 'get together' at **4pm on Sunday 27th June** to sing, chat, look at your craft work and just generally have some fun!

But first a song:

<https://youtu.be/wvfvSCBUNwQ>



Our story this month tells of a journey from Jerusalem to Damascus, and back again. It's also another sort of journey – a **Life Changing** journey,

from **Darkness** to **Light**;

from **Seeing**,

to **not Seeing**

and then **Seeing again**;

a journey from **Hatred** to **Love**.

The Road to Damascus

(Acts Chapter 9. Reading from the International Children's Bible)

In Jerusalem Saul was still trying to frighten the followers of the Lord by saying he would kill them. So he went to the high priest and asked him to write letters to the synagogues in the city of Damascus. Saul wanted the high priest to give him the authority to find people in Damascus who were followers of Christ's Way. If he found any there, men or women, he would arrest them and bring them back to Jerusalem.



So Saul went to Damascus.

As he came near the city, a bright light from heaven suddenly flashed around him. Saul fell to the ground. He heard a voice saying to him,

"Saul, Saul! Why are you doing things against me?"

Saul said, "Who are you, Lord?" The voice answered, "I am Jesus. I am the One you are trying to hurt. Get up now and go into the city. Someone there will tell you what you must do."



The men travelling with Saul stood there, but they said nothing. They heard the voice, but they saw no one. Saul got up from the ground. He opened his eyes, but he could not see. So the men with Saul took his hand and led him into Damascus. For three days Saul could not see, and he did not eat or drink.

There was a follower of Jesus in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord spoke to Ananias in a vision, "Ananias!" Ananias answered, "Here I am, Lord." The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight Street. Find the house of Judas. Ask for a man named Saul from the city of Tarsus. He is there now, praying. Saul has seen a vision. In it a man named Ananias comes to him and lays his hands on him. Then he sees again."

But Ananias answered, "Lord, many people have told me about this man and the terrible things he did to your people in Jerusalem. Now he has come here to Damascus. The leading priests have given him the power to arrest everyone who worships you."

But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! I have chosen Saul for an important work. He must tell about me to non-Jews, to kings, and to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

So Ananias went to the house of Judas. He laid his hands on Saul and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus sent me. He is the one you saw on the road on your way here. He sent me so that you can see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately, something that looked like fish scales fell from Saul's eyes. He was able to see again! Then Saul got up and was baptized. After eating some food, his strength returned.



Saul Preaches in Damascus

Saul stayed with the followers of Jesus in Damascus for a few days. Soon he began to preach about Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "Jesus is the Son of God!"

All the people who heard him were amazed. They said, "This is the man who was in Jerusalem. He was trying to destroy those who trust in this name! He came here to do the same thing. He came here to arrest the followers of Jesus and take them back to the leading priests."

But Saul became more and more powerful. His proofs that Jesus is the Christ were so strong that the Jews in Damascus could not argue with him.

Saul Escapes from Damascus

After many days, the Jews made plans to kill Saul. They were watching the city gates day and night. They wanted to kill him, but Saul learned about their plan. One night some followers of Saul helped him leave the city. They lowered him in a basket through an opening in the city wall.



Saul in Jerusalem

Then Saul went to Jerusalem. He tried to join the group of followers, but they were all afraid of him. They did not believe that he was really a follower. But Barnabas accepted Saul and took him to the apostles. Barnabas told them that Saul had seen the Lord on the road. He explained how the Lord had spoken to Saul. Then he told them how boldly Saul had preached in the name of Jesus in Damascus.

And so Saul stayed with the followers. He went everywhere in Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of Jesus.

Life Changing!

Meeting God was so life changing for Saul that he no longer chased after the believers in Jesus, but actively taught about him. Many of the books in our New Testament were written by Saul, who became known as Paul. Paul is a Latin name, meaning 'Humble' and Paul describes that in his letters saying, he no longer lives for himself, but for Christ.

The story of how Saul met God was dramatic, but equally dramatic was the way that Ananias dared to take a risk and welcome Saul, a man he was very afraid of. How could we do likewise? Could we welcome strangers, Refugees, someone who has just moved into our neighbourhood or class at school?



Have a think about what you could do to offer practical help and dare to make a new friend like Ananias did.

Activities

1. A Blindfold Challenge.

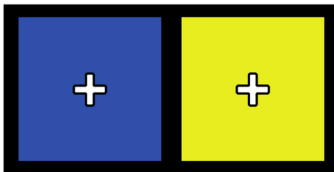
Saul couldn't see after his experience on the road and had to trust others to look after him. It must have been very humbling for someone used to being in charge.

- Gather together a number of objects from around the house (don't let the others see what they are).
- Using a scarf or outsize handkerchief, blindfold a 'player' and present them with one object at a time. Can they work out what it is?

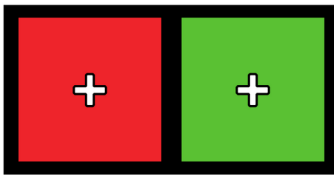


2. Going Cross-eyed.

You will need: 2 rectangular cards, each with two colours on them. (See below)
Reddish-green and Yellowish-blue are colours that our eyes cannot easily see. This experiment does not always work first time with everyone and may take some patience.



- Stare at the two colours, focusing in the middle and allowing your eyes to bring the two crosses on the colours together, so that the colours are 'forced to merge'.
- Many people say that they then see a new colour which is neither one nor the other, but something new.



For Saul, the light of Jesus shone so brightly that he was able to see new things about himself, other people and about Jesus. Christians say that they live 'by faith not by sight'. What do you think they mean by that?

3. Jesus Glasses.

You will need: Glasses template (see below) printed onto card; Red and Blue cellophane; Decorative stickers / letters; Felt tips or crayons; scissors.

- Cut out the glasses.
- Put red cellophane over the left eye space and Blue over the right one.
- Decorate with the letters of 'JESUS' and other stickers and colour them as you choose.
- Fold the sides back and wear them!

Saul began to see everything very differently after the light of Jesus shone into his life. He started to behave differently once he saw things through the lens of Jesus.



4. Find the Christians.

You will need: Sheets of A4 paper; pens and colouring pencils; something to make a barrier between two players of the game, so they cannot see each others sheets.

- Draw a 5x5 square grid on the paper.
- Label the squares A to E vertically and 1-5 horizontally.
- Before playing in twos, choose 5 squares on the grid in which to write 'C' for Christian. They can be on separate squares, or in groups of 2 or 3 or more.
- Take it in turns to try and guess where the Christians are hiding on your opponents sheet, by calling out the square reference (e.g. A4 or C3) The winner is the first to 'capture' all five.



Why do you think Saul was so angry with Christians, before he met Jesus? What do you think it was that they were saying that upset him so much?

Prayer ~

Seeing and not seeing are at the heart of today's story.

For the prayer, follow the actions for each line:

Thank you, Lord God for the gift of being able to see the beauty of your world and each other. *(point to your eyes)*

Forgive us, Lord, for failing to see so much because of our own selfishness, stubbornness and short-sightedness. *(put your hands over your eyes)*

Open our eyes, Lord Jesus, to see you at work around us in the lives of our friends, family and neighbours. *(open your eyes wide and put your hands out in front)*

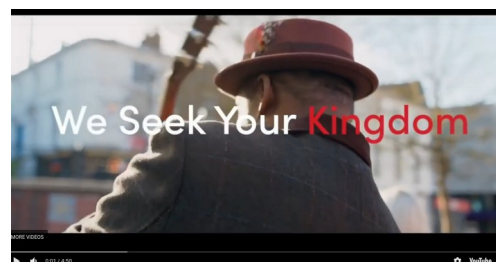
By your Holy Spirit, help us to see beyond our normal eyesight so that we see the world and each other as you do. *(shade your eyes with your hands)*

And help us to look out for you and your Kingdom wherever we go.
(put your hands up to your eyes like a pair of binoculars)

AMEN.

Let's finish with a Song:

<https://youtu.be/wDEPe3-UxCY>



"Saul, Saul
why do you
persecute me?"



Saul was _____ by a light from heaven.

_____ spoke to Saul when he fell to the ground.

Ananias was _____ of Saul, because he
had harmed many believers.

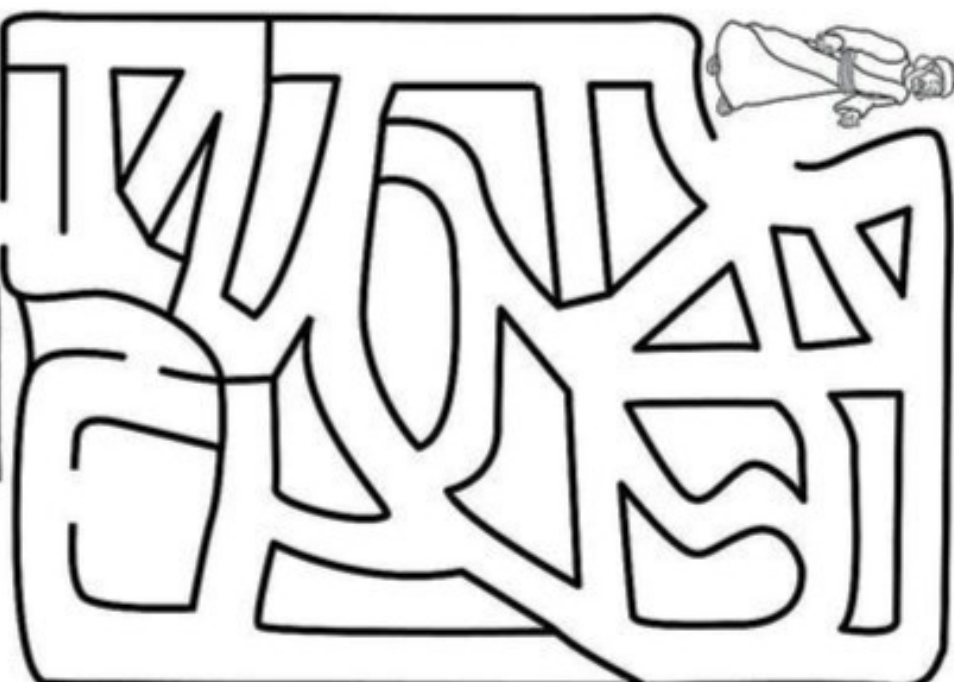
God told Ananias to go to a _____ where

Saul was staying. Ananias _____ God.

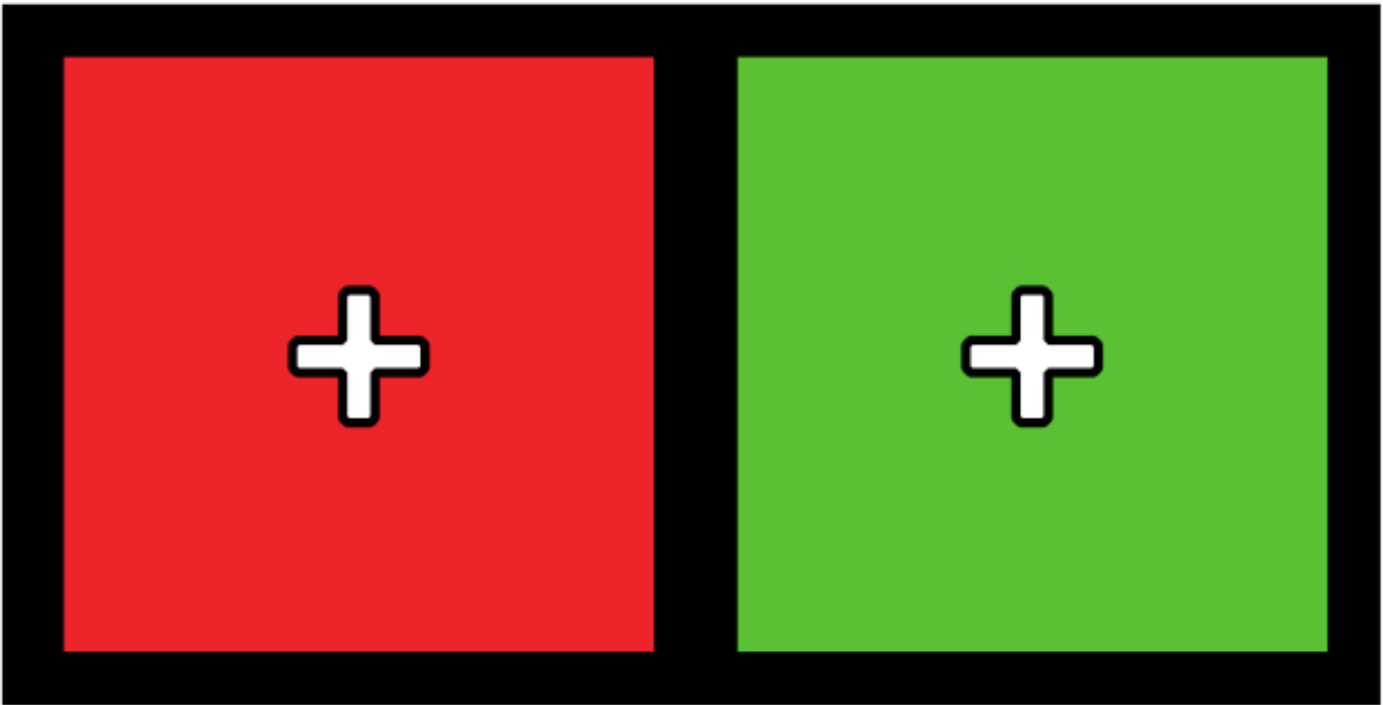
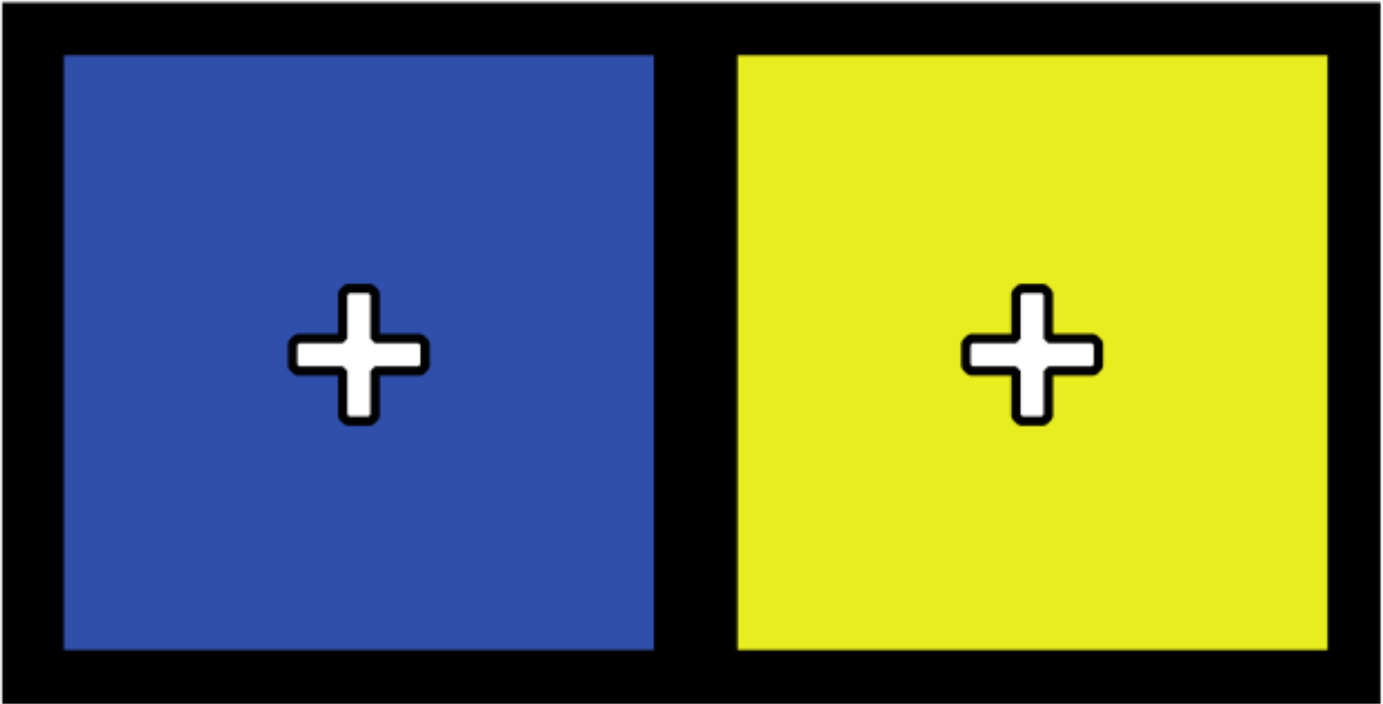
Word Bank:

house **God**
obeyed **blinded** **afraid**

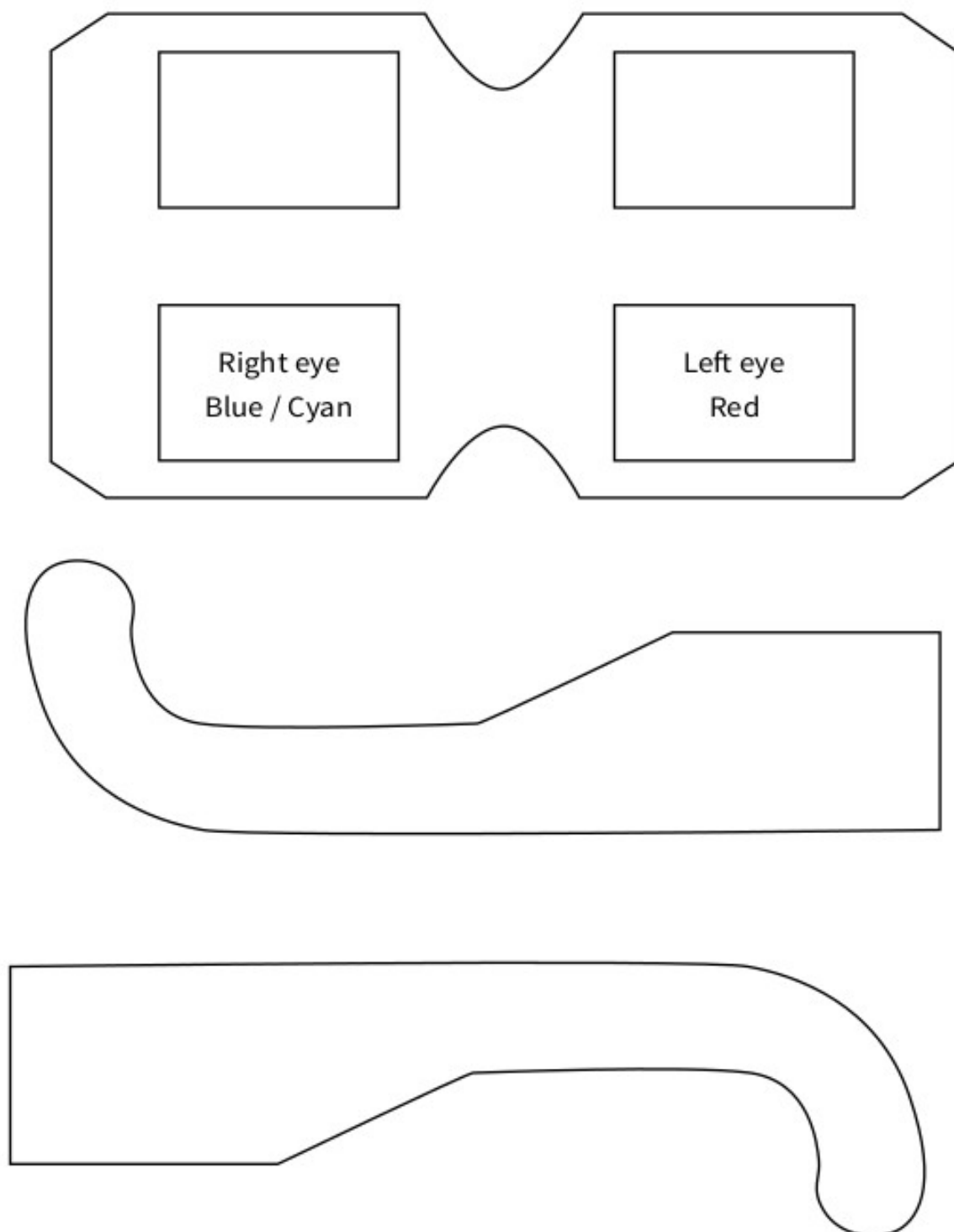
Help Ananias find the house where Saul was staying .



Going Cross-eyed.



3D Jesus glasses





THE CONVERSION OF PAUL

Help Paul on his journey to accepting Jesus.

