

Mission Arlington / Mission Metroplex Rainbow Express July / August 2004 Day One: Saul to Paul *Praying About Our Sins*

Opening Time

You will begin each day by knocking on doors and then playing games to help attract children to your Rainbow Express. Have all the children sit down in a large group. It would be helpful to bring a tarp for them to sit on.

When the children are together, begin your song time. Be sure to have several songs ready to sing and that everyone in the group knows the songs. Doing the puppet show in between songs can help keep the children's attention.

Memory Verse

As your song time ends, the memory verse leader will stand and help the children learn this week's memory verse. Use your own words and be energetic while you speak. If the children believe you are excited about the scripture, they will be excited as well. The children will practice the verse again in their small group time.

The large group memory verse activity for day one is "Memory Verse Teams." See the back of the packet for instructions for this activity.

Now, divide the children into small groups. Make the groups as small as possible to allow for more one-on-one time.

Small Group Time

Today's Story: Saul Becomes Paul (Acts 9:1-19)

When you tell the story use as many interactive elements as you can. You are going to be outside talking to kids with short attention spans. Keep them involved so they will hear the story! Remember that involving the children will help them pay attention. Use hand motions and sound effects. Have your children repeat things back to you. Ask questions.

DO NOT READ TO THE KIDS. TELL THEM THE STORY!

Helpers: While the story teller is teaching, sit with the children and be a good example by listening to the story. Watch for children who need special attention.

This week we are going to learn about talking to God. God loves us very much, and He likes to talk with us. Anybody can talk to God. We can talk to Him any time, no matter where we are. Talking to God is called prayer. God loves it when we pray.

We can pray about lots of different things. Today we are going to talk about a man named Saul. We are also going to learn about when Saul prayed.

A long time ago, Jesus came to Earth and died on the cross. Jesus died to help us. Jesus knows that all of us sometimes do things that God does not like. Those things are called sin. Sin is bad news, because it keeps us away from God. When Jesus died on the cross, He made a way to take away our sins. Jesus did not stay dead though. On the third day after the cross, Jesus came back to life. Jesus called together many of the people that believed in Him and gave them a big job. Jesus wanted them to tell everybody they could about Jesus and the wonderful things He did for us.

Jesus' friends worked very hard telling people about Him and what He did on the cross. That's where Saul comes into the picture. Saul was a mean, rotten person. He was a big bully. He did not like Jesus. In fact, Saul hated the people that were telling others about Jesus. Saul started to make big problems for people that followed Jesus.

When an angry crowd threw rocks at a man named Steven for talking about Jesus, Saul was right there in the middle. Saul arrested people that talked about Jesus. He threw them in jail. He had them beat up. Saul was out to get everybody that loved Jesus. He wanted *all* the people that followed Jesus to be in prison. People everywhere were afraid of Saul. He was the meanest man around.

One day Saul had a really wicked idea. He had already caused lots of trouble in his own town for people that believed in Jesus. Why not travel to another town and do the same thing? Saul rounded up a group of helpers. They decided to go to a town called Damascus. They would find the people in Damascus that believed in Jesus and arrest them.

The people in Damascus that loved Jesus became very scared. They knew it meant bad news that Saul was on the road to Damascus. However, Saul never caused any trouble for them. In fact, something so amazing happened that Saul never put another person that loved Jesus in jail again!

Saul was on the road with his other mean friends. He was almost to Damascus when a bright light from the sky started to flash around him. It was just as if a spotlight from Heaven had hit him. Saul fell down to the ground. The light was so bright that he could not see. A booming voice like thunder called to Saul.

Saul, Saul, why are you working so hard against me?"

Saul could not believe it. A voice from the sky was talking to him! "Who are you, sir?" Saul asked the voice.

"I am Jesus. The one you are trying so hard to stop. Now get up and go into the city. You will be told what to do next."

Saul could not believe what he had heard. Saul had never believed in Jesus. Saul tried to stop other people from believing in Jesus. Now, all of the sudden, Saul knew that Jesus was real. Saul had been wrong all along. Instead of fighting people that believed in Jesus, Saul now wanted to believe in Jesus himself.

Saul got up. He could not see anything. The bright light made him blind. Some of the men with Saul took his hands and lead him to the city like a little child. For days, Saul did not eat or drink anything. He spent all his time talking to God. Saul told God how sorry he was for all the sin in his life. Saul told God he was ashamed of all the bad things he had done. Saul asked for God's help.

Finally, a man named Ananias came to visit Saul. Ananias told Saul some good news. He told Saul that Jesus still loves people, even when they have done things they should not do. Because Saul had prayed to God and said that he was sorry for all that he had done, God was going to give Saul another chance. "Jesus, who you met on the road, sent me to you," Ananias said. "Jesus wants to be part of your life." Ananias told Saul that God a big plan ahead for Saul's life.

From then on, Saul followed Jesus. He was like a completely different person. In fact, he even changed his name. Saul became Paul. Paul became one of the bravest people in the world. He traveled everywhere, telling people about Jesus.

We said at the beginning today that Jesus loves us. It is easy to see that He loves us. Just look at what Jesus did for Saul. Saul had worked really hard as Jesus' enemy. Jesus made Paul into a good friend.

Paul had to learn to talk to Jesus. He had to tell Jesus he was sorry for what he had done. Jesus gives that chance to all of us. Jesus loves hearing from us. When we mess up and do something bad, the first thing we should do is talk to Jesus about it. Jesus will forgive us. He will help us.

What Jesus did on the cross was for everybody. If Jesus can forgive somebody as bad as Saul, we know He can forgive us. Any person can pray to Jesus. We can ask Jesus to be in our life and to wipe away our sins. If you would like to learn how, just talk to us. We would like to help you talk to Jesus, too.

Prayer Time

Take this time after the story to pray with the children in your small group. Tell God how awesome He is and thank Him for making us. Ask God to help your group to remember that He still loves us, even though we mess up. Thank God that He wants to be with us and that He sent Jesus. Tell God thank you that He wants to talk with us.

Craft

While still in your small groups, lead the children in making the craft for the day. The craft time is not only a way to reinforce the lesson, but it also allows time to get to know the children in your small group. During this time, ask them questions about their families, friends, and school. Invest in their lives.

Memory Verse Around the World Booklet

Supplies:

One two-sided coloring sheet per child

Scissors

Crayons

Glue or staples

Directions:

1. Have each child color their picture. (A color picture of each flag is included in this packet to help.)
2. Cut along the dotted line.
3. Fold the pages into a book. The sheet that says "God Loves the Whole World/Dios Ama a Todo el Mundo" should be the front cover.
4. Put a little bit of glue along the inner margin of each page to hold the book together.
5. While the glue dries, review the story with your children. Use questions like these to help them understand the story: Who was Saul? What things did Saul do that were bad? What happened to change Saul's life? What was Saul's new name? Why did Saul change his name?
6. Explain that when Saul became Paul, he wanted to tell everybody what Jesus had done for him. Paul traveled to many different parts of the world to tell people God loved them. Paul knew that God's message is for everybody. Tell the children that their book shows the memory verse in languages from all over the world.
7. Have fun trying to read the memory verse in all the different languages.

Memory Verse Activity

Each day the small group time will include a Memory Verse Activity. The Memory Verse time is one of the most important activities of the day. We want these children to remember God's word and why it is important to them. A list of potential activities is included in the back of this packet. Use an idea from that list each day to help the children learn the words of the verse and to explain why it applies to their lives. (Some require extra preparation, so be sure to review the list in advance.) The memory verse for this week is:

Philippians 4:6—Don't worry about anything, but pray about everything. With thankful hearts offer up your prayers and requests to God.

Filipenses 4:6—No se preocupen por nada. Más bien, oren y pídanle a Dios todo lo que necesiten, y sean agradecidos. **(Spanish)**

Closing Time

Today, you will lead an object lesson in the small groups with a cup of water to explain how Jesus cleans out our lives. Use the discussion below as a guide to talk with the children.

If you are at a site that has an ongoing Mission Arlington ministry, be sure to invite the children to participate in Bible Study and etc. Remember to keep everyone involved and do not read directly from this page.

SUPPLIES NEEDED FOR EACH SMALL GROUP: Clear container (plastic cup will work fine), water

Today we learned how Saul's life was changed when he met Jesus. Paul learned how important it was to pray and spend time with Jesus. Paul prayed and asked God to forgive him for all the bad things he had done. Paul understood that God is the only one that can forgive us of those things.

(Fill a clear cup with water.) On a hot day, nothing is better than a cold drink of water, right? That's kind of what being friends with God is like. God loves us. He wants to help us. He wants to be our friend. He wants to help us know what to do. God makes us feel good, like water on a hot day.

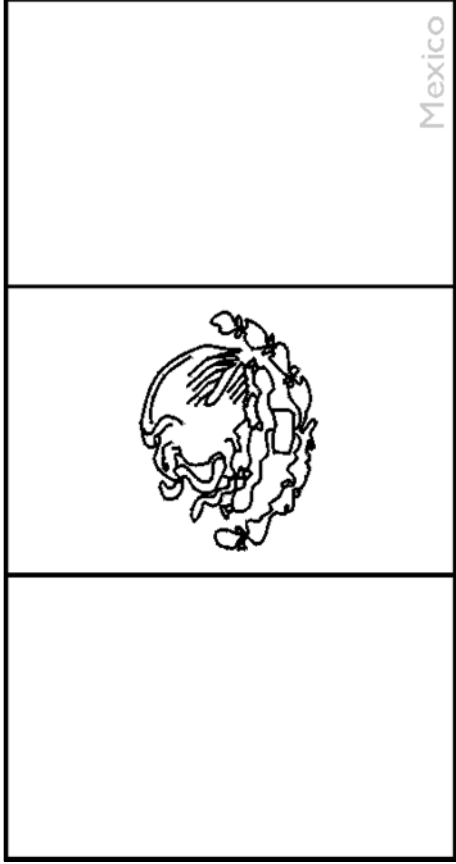
The bad news is that we all do bad things. We mess up, just like Paul. The bad things that we do get in the way of being God's friend. *(Scoop up some dirt or grass and drop it in the water.)* The Bible calls the bad things we do sin. Sin messes us up. It pushes us away from God. Just like this water is ruined, sin ruins our friendship with God.

Paul understood that he needed Jesus' help. We need Jesus' help too. Jesus can do something that nobody else can do. Jesus can forgive our sins. He can take them away. *(Pour out the dirty water.)* When Jesus died on the cross, He got in trouble for our sins. Now, He can take them away when we ask Him.

The best part of all is that Jesus does not only take away our sins. The Bible says that He also gives us a brand new life. (*Fill the cup with water again.*) Jesus becomes a part of our life. He stays with us. He teaches us. He helps us know what God wants us to do. Jesus gives us a brand new friendship with God.

Any person can have this new friendship with God. All we have to do is pray and ask for it. If you want to know how, we would love to help you.

When you are finished, pray together and be ready to play games until the end of the Rainbow Express program. After the game time, pass out snacks, clean up the area, and walk everyone home.

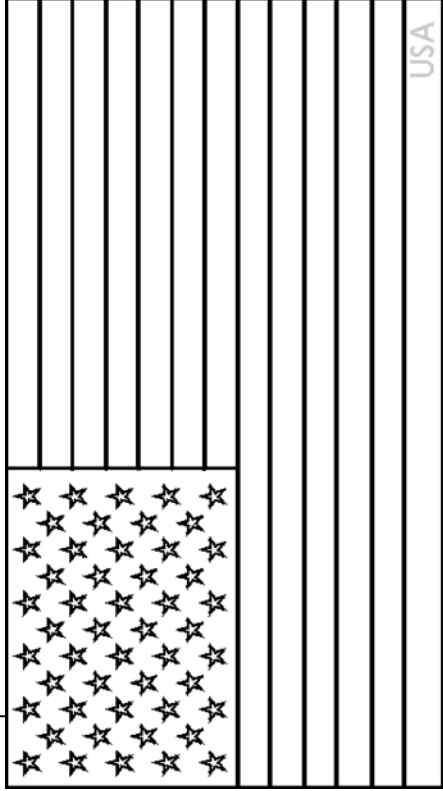


Mexico

No se preocupen por nada. Más bien, oren y pídanle a Dios todo lo que necesiten, y sean agradecidos. Filipenses 4:6 (Spanish)

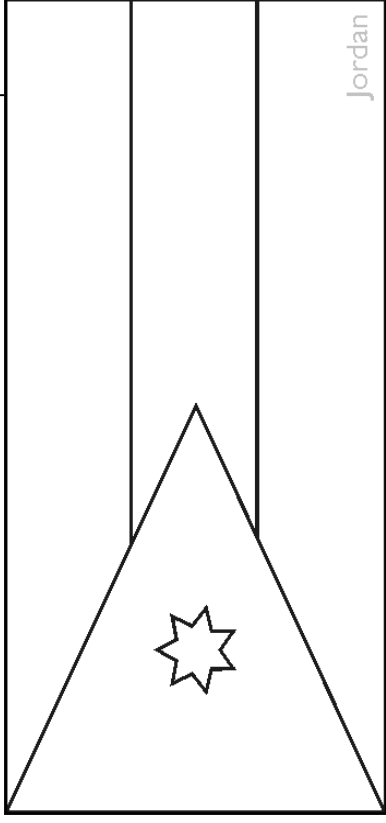
God Loves The
Whole World

Dios Ama a
Todo El Mundo



USA

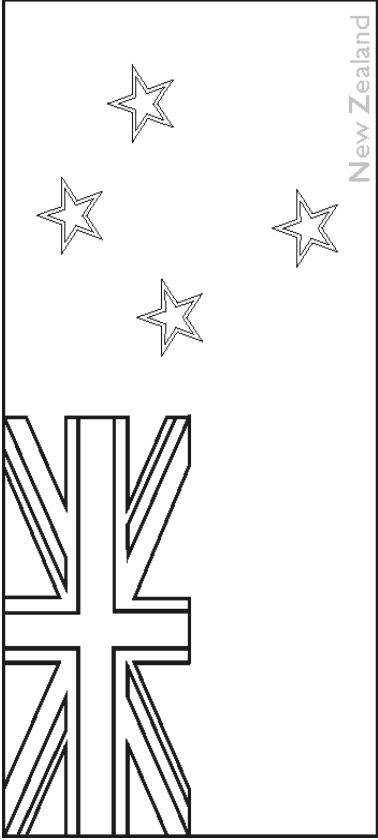
Don't worry about anything, but pray about everything. With thankful hearts offer up your prayers and requests to God. Philipians 4:6



Jordan

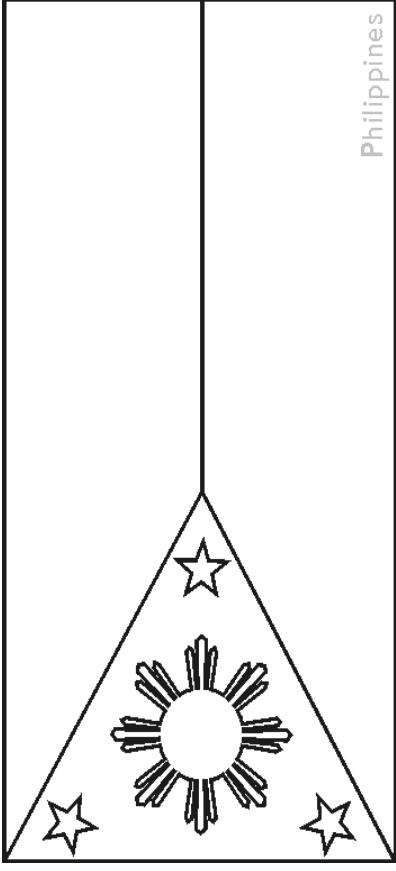
لا تقلقوا من جهة أي شيء، بل في كل أمر ليكن طلباتكم معروفة لدى الله، بالصلاة والدعاء، مع

الشكر (Arabic)



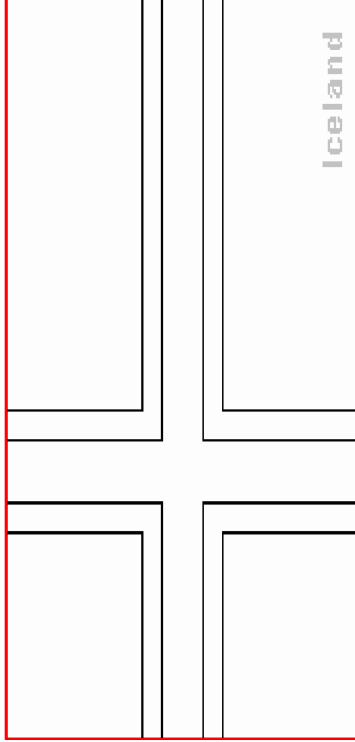
New Zealand

Kaua e manukanuka ki tetahi mea; engari i nga mea katoa whakaaturia ki te Atua nga mea e matea ai e koutou, i runga i te karakia, i te inoi, me te whakawhetai hoki. (**Maori**)



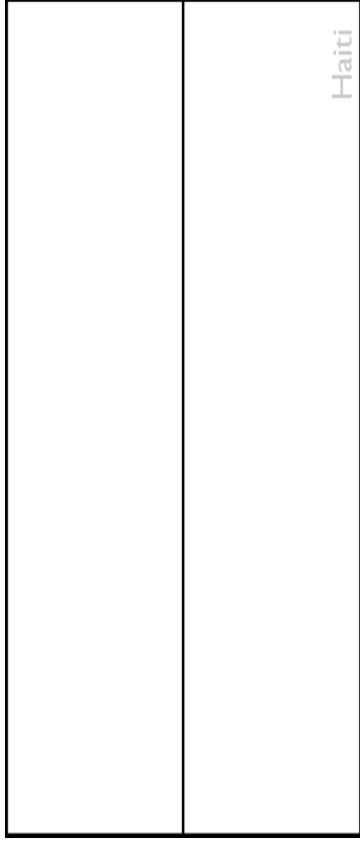
Philippines

Huwag kayong mabalisa patungkol sa anumang bagay. Sa halip, ipaalam ninyo ang inyong mga kahilingan sa Diyos na may pasasalamat sa pamamagitan ng panalangin at ng panalanging may paghiling (**Tagalog**)



Iceland

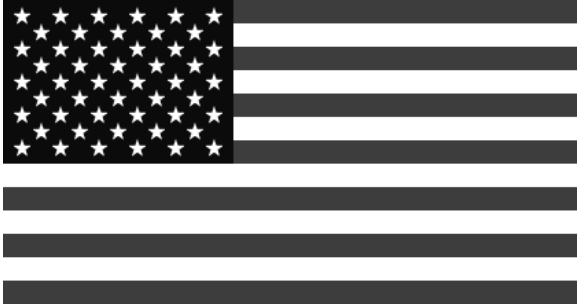
Verið ekki hugsjúkir um neitt, heldur gjörið í öllum hlutum óskir yðar kunnar Guði með bæn og beiðni og þakkargjörð (**Icelandic**)



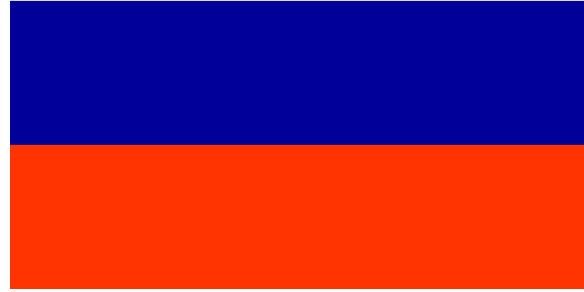
Haiti

Pa bay kò nou traka pou anyen. Men, nan tout sikonstans mande Bondye tou sa nou bezwen nan lapriyè. Toujou chonje di l' mèsì tou lè n'ap lapriyè. (**Haitian**)

COLOR GUIDE FOR FLAGS



United States



Haiti



Mexico



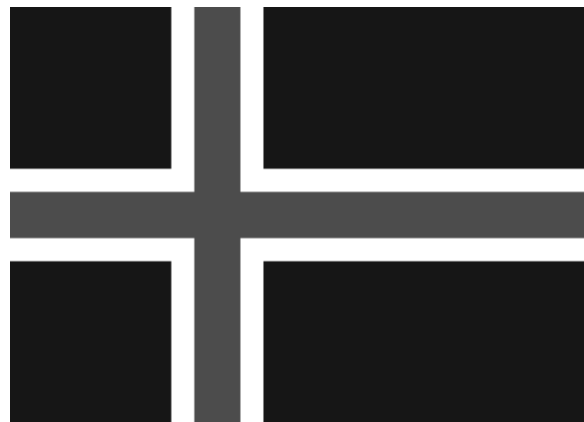
New Zealand



Philippines



Jordan



Iceland