

The Case of the Eager Enemy's End

Acts 7-9

**Story-telling Tips**

Ahead of time:

1. Read the Bible verses and story. Pray!
2. Choose story action cues and/or prepare storyboard pictures, if using. (Included in Visual Aids book)
3. Practice telling story with the pictures, timing your presentation. Shorten, if necessary to fit your allotted time.

During your presentation:

1. Maintain as much eye contact as possible as you tell the story.
2. Put up storyboard figures/add story action cues as you tell the story. Allow the children to help you put them on the board, if desired.
3. Include the children in your story with a few questions about what they think will happen or words/concepts that might be new to them.
4. Watch the kids for signs that their attention span has been reached. Shorten, if necessary.

INTRODUCTION/ LISTENING ASSIGNMENTS

“Our story is called: The Case of the Eager Enemy's End. Here is your listening assignment... ”

Read from Detective Dan's Listening Assignment signs, but questions are summarized below:

Detective Dan's Lesson #1 Listening Assignment:

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Who was the Eager Enemy and what was he eager to do?
2. What happened to the Eager Enemy that changed what he wanted to do?

Detective Dan's Lesson #2 Listening Assignment:

Our Bible verse is 1 Chronicles 16:34: "Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever."

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. How did the LORD love and change the Eager Enemy?
2. Why was it so amazing that the LORD would love him?

Detective Dan's Lesson #3 Listening Assignment:

I found four clues, but one of them is NOT in the story.

They are: grapes; a bright light; a soldier; and a jail.

Hold up each of the four pictures for the children to see as you identify them. Better yet, put them up on your flannelgraph board, off to one side.

I need to know:

1. Which three pictures belong in the story and which one does not?
2. How are the other three pictures important in the story?

Detective Dan's Lesson #4 Listening Assignment:

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Who gave thanks to the LORD for His love?
2. What did the LORD forgive him for doing?

Detective Dan's Lesson #5 Listening Assignment:

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Who hated the good news of Jesus in our story?
2. Why did he love it and thank God for it, in the end?

Read the questions, THEN SAY,

“Ok, Hide 'n' Seekers! Put on your best listening ears and see if you can hear the answers to Detective Dan's questions. When I finish telling the story, we will see if we can answer all the questions.”

“The Case of the Eager Enemy’s End” Acts 7-9

Story with lines separating paragraphs (text in bold, optional interaction cues in italics) Numbers correspond to storyboard pictures and placement upon the storyboard. Always feel free to use less pictures, if it’s best for your kids. Simply, black out the numbers next to pictures you do not plan to use. All pictures are found in the Visual Aids book. Put BG (background) pictures on storyboard ahead of time. SB pictures (listed below in story text) are added to board as you tell the story. These numbers are also found on the back of each picture.

Tip: Stack pictures in numerical order before telling story for easy use. Use sticky-back velcro to attach pictures to storyboard felt. Use sticky-tac putty to stick a picture on top of another picture.

Saul (SB1) worked hard to keep rules. Not just God’s rule, but lots of extra rules that weren’t in the Bible. He thought keeping all those extra rules was how to please God. Rule-keepers like Saul were called Pharisees.

Saul tried to please God, but...he HATED Jesus (SB2)! Saul didn’t think Jesus was God’s Son. He thought Jesus was just a fake!

And Saul didn’t just hate Jesus, he also (SB3) hated the people who believed in Jesus. (People who believed in Jesus were--and still are--called Christians.)

Saul would do ANYTHING to get the Christians to stop saying one thing: (SB4) “Jesus is God’s Son, the Savior!”

“(SB5) Shh! Be quiet!” Saul ordered the Christians. “Jesus ISN’T God’s Son, the Savior!” he told them.

Show me your shhh! Saul wanted the Christians to be quiet about Jesus!

“I will hurt you and put you in jail, if you say Jesus is God’s Son, the Savior,” Saul warned the Christians... and many times (SB6) he DID just that! Saul hated Christians in Jerusalem so much that hurting them and putting them in jail wasn’t enough for him. Saul even wanted them dead! Oh, Saul!

Can you make a really mad, hateful face? That’s how Saul felt about Jesus and the Christians!

But Saul didn’t stop there. He didn’t want to just get rid of the Christians in Jerusalem. He wanted to get rid of them EVERYWHERE. So one day, (SB7) Saul went to talk to the (SB8) leaders at the Temple. They also wanted to get rid of the Christians. Saul asked them for a special job.

“Send me to the big city of Damascus,” Saul asked them. “There are lots of Christians there who are telling people about Jesus. We have to stop them. Give me some soldiers and I will go and find those Christians. We will arrest them and put them in jail,” Saul told the leaders.

The leaders agreed. Saul and the soldiers set off for Damascus. He was going to stop those Christians who said Jesus was God’s Son. Jesus was just a fake! Saul was sure of that. He would make those believers be quiet, once and for all!

But Saul was wrong! Jesus really WAS God’s Son! Jesus saw everything Saul was doing. He knew Saul hated Him. He knew Saul hated the people who believed in Him, too. Jesus knew that Saul was hurting them. But soon, all of this would change. Who would change things? Why Jesus, Himself!

Saul and the soldiers were almost to Damascus when suddenly (SB9) a bright light shone around Saul. Saul (SB10) fell down to the ground when he saw the light.

This was no regular light. It was coming from SOMEBODY in HEAVEN! Can you guess who it was? It was (SB11) JESUS, all bright and shiny with God’s wonderful glory! Wow!

Story with lines separating paragraphs (text in bold, optional interaction cues in italics)

Then out of that bright light, Saul and the soldiers heard Jesus speak, "Saul! Saul! Stop hating Me! Stop hurting My people!"

"Who are you?" Saul asked, shaking with fear.

Can you make a scared face?

"I am Jesus, God's Son, the Savior!" Jesus told him.

Uh oh! Saul was in big trouble! He had been WRONG! Jesus really WAS God's Son! The Christians had been right.. and he had been hurting them--God's dearly loved people! What would Jesus do? Would Jesus hate Saul? Would Jesus hurt Saul, just like Saul had hurt the Christians?

No, Jesus would not! Jesus loved (SB12) Saul. Jesus chose to forgive Saul, even though Saul had done all those bad things! Jesus wasn't going to hurt or hate Saul. He was going to SAVE Saul. He had (SB13) a wonderful plan to use Saul to tell others how they could be saved, too.

(SB14) Saul thought about Jesus. And as he thought about Jesus, God's Holy Spirit started working in his heart. He helped Saul see that he was a sinner. Saul couldn't please God by being good enough on his own. He helped Saul see that only Jesus' perfect life could please God. Only Jesus' perfect life could pay for his sins against God and bring God's forgiveness.

The Holy Spirit helped Saul want to stop disobeying God (the Bible calls that "repenting"). He helped Saul trust in Jesus as his Savior. Isn't God so kind even to His enemies, even terrible enemies like Saul?

Saul joyfully accepted these gifts of repentance and faith from God. Now Saul knew Jesus was God's Son, the Savior of God's people! Saul was forgiven! He had become one of God's dearly loved people!

Saul was a changed man! Now he wanted to love Jesus and live his life for Him! He was such a changed man, that God even gave him a new name: Paul!

Let's cheer and praise God for being so kind to sinners, like Saul and even like us! Yay!

"I'm sorry for hating You, Jesus," Paul prayed. "I'm sorry for hurting the people who believed in You. Now I believe in You, too. Thank You for not hating me. Thank You for forgiving me and making me one of God's people!" Paul said.

How happy Paul was that Jesus forgave people like him--people who had done very bad things. Paul was so happy that he couldn't keep this good news to himself! So, what do you know Paul did next?

Can you remember what Jesus had planned for Saul to do?

Paul started telling others (SB15) the good news of Jesus: "Hey, everybody! I was wrong! Jesus IS God's Son, the Savior! Believe in Him! And oh, how WONDERFUL is His love! It is more than I could ever deserve... that He would love and forgive even me!" Paul told them. "You can know God's love, too! Yes! God will forgive you, when you turn away from disobeying Him and trust in Jesus as your Savior! Come, repent and believe in Jesus!" he exclaimed.

(SB16) God's Holy Spirit worked in the hearts of many as Saul spoke. They put their trust in Jesus and were saved, just as God had planned! Isn't that amazing! God would use Saul to tell others about Jesus!

Cracking the Case: (story wrap-up for Listening Assignments)

It's time to see how we did with our Listening Assignment.

Detective Dan's Lesson #1 Listening Assignment:

1. Who was the Eager Enemy and what was he eager to do? Saul was the eager enemy of the Christians--the people who believed in Jesus.

2. What happened to the Eager Enemy that changed what he wanted to do? Jesus appeared to Saul. Saul realized that Jesus was no fake. He was God's Son. He turned away from his sins and trusted in Jesus as his Savior. Then Saul became an eager FRIEND, instead of an eager enemy of Jesus and His followers.

For You and Me:

God is amazing! That He would love and forgive even His biggest enemies, even people like Saul! God loved Saul and saved him through Jesus. God can change us, too, when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. God loves to help us do this!

Detective Dan's Lesson #2 Listening Assignment:

Our Bible verse is **1 Chronicles 16:34**: "Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever."

1. How did the LORD love and change the Eager Enemy? The LORD could have punished Saul for hating Him and being so mean to the Christians. Instead, He showed Saul that Jesus really was God's Son, the Savior. He worked in Saul's heart and helped him trust in Jesus as his Savior.

2. Why was it so amazing that the LORD would love him? Saul deserved God's punishment for how he had hated Jesus and God's people. But instead of punishment, God loved Saul and forgave his sins through Jesus.

For You and Me:

There is no one so bad that God cannot forgive or change them. God can even work in the hearts of people who do not love Him at all. He can work in our hearts, too. He can help us turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

Detective Dan's Lesson #3 Listening Assignment:

I found four clues, but one of them is NOT in the story. They are: grapes; a bright light; a soldier; and a jail.

1. Which three pictures belong in the story and which one does not? The grapes do not.

2. How are the other three pictures important in the story? Saul hated Jesus and his followers. He hurt them and put them in jail. He took soldiers with him to arrest more Christians and put them in jail, too. But Jesus appeared to Saul in a bright light and Saul believed that Jesus really was God's Son, the Savior.

For You and Me:

Jesus doesn't have to appear to us in a bright light for us to believe in Him. He tells us who He is in the Bible. The Holy Spirit can work in our hearts and help us know Him and trust in Him as our Savior, even today. Just ask Him to help you!

Detective Dan's Lesson #4 Listening Assignment:

1. Who gave thanks to the LORD for His love? Saul did.

2. What did the LORD forgive him for doing? For hating Jesus and Jesus' followers, the Christians. For doing mean things to them and putting them in jail.

For You and Me:

Just like Saul, you and I disobey God. We all have done things that are wrong. We all need God's forgiveness for our sins. God offered that forgiveness to Saul long ago. He offers it to us, today, too, when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

Detective Dan's Lesson #5 Listening Assignment:

1. Who hated the good news of Jesus in our story? Saul did.

2. Why did he end up loving the gospel and thanking God for it? When Jesus appeared to Saul and spoke to him, Saul knew that Jesus really was God's Son, the Savior. Saul knew he especially deserved to be punished for being so mean to Jesus' followers. But instead, God chose to love him and save him.

For You and Me:

Saul went from hating Jesus to loving Him. He spent the rest of his life telling people the gospel. And that's the good news we need to hear and believe, too: that God will forgive our sins when we turn away from disobeying Him and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

The Gospel (story wrap-up if NOT using Listening Assignments)**Our Bible Truth is:****What Is God's Love for His People Like?
It's More than They Could Ever Deserve!**

How great is God's love, that He would love and forgive someone like Saul! Someone who had disobeyed Him and done such bad things!

How great is God's love, that He offers to love and forgive us, too! Yes, God offers to make us dearly loved His people, too, when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

Close in prayer.

Closing Unit 8 ACTS Prayer

A=Adoration C=Confession T=Thanksgiving S=Supplication

- A** We praise you, God. How great is Your love! It's more than we could ever deserve.
- C** God, You have given us Your good laws and we have broken them. We deserve Your punishment, not Your love. We need the Savior You sent us! We need Jesus to save us!
- T** Thank You for loving sinful people like us. You chose to send Your Son, Jesus, to make the way for us to become Your dearly loved people. Thank You for offering Your love to each of us. A love that will never end.
- S** Work deep inside our hearts. Help us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Help us to love You and live for You. Make us Your dearly loved people.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.