



Children's Story

Year C, Easter 3

From Hate to Love!

Title: From Hate to Love!
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Text: Acts 9:1-20

Today is the 3rd Sunday of Easter, the season when Christians around the world celebrate that Jesus is alive! You might wonder what difference does it make that Jesus is alive? We can't see him or touch him, so does it matter that the disciples saw him on Easter morning? During this Easter season, we are hearing stories from the Bible book of Acts. The stories are about what happens to the disciples after Jesus goes to heaven.

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Bible story:

Saul was a man full of hate. He hated the way that so many people were following the teaching of this "Jesus" man. He knew that the Romans had killed Jesus on the cross, and he did not believe that Jesus was alive again. He thought everyone should be forced to go to the temple and do everything the way they used to-so he took a bunch of soldiers with him and he arrested Christians, throwing them in jail and even killing some of them. He thought he was right and the Jesus followers were wrong. Then one day, while he was walking into a city, Jesus spoke to him. There was a light so bright it made Saul blind, and a voice from heaven asked him; "Saul, why are you hurting me?"

After that, Saul believed that Jesus was alive. He stopped hurting people. He started listening to the people who loved Jesus. Pretty quickly, his hate turned into love. He started teaching about Jesus too. His name was changed to "Paul" to show that he was changed too. Paul was one of the greatest teachers about Jesus' love that there ever was.

Sophie learns to love:

Sophie really could not stand to be anywhere near Jerome, a nasty boy in her class. She really, really, didn't like his loud mouth teasing, his stinky tuna sandwich breath, the way he won all the games of tag at recess, or did better on math tests than she did. He always liked to tell her that he was better at math, and faster at tag. Some of the popular kids really liked Jerome and that made Sophie jealous. Jerome was just plain annoying!

Sophie decided that she didn't just dislike Jerome, she hated him. She started thinking about ways to be nasty to him. She tattled to the teacher and said Jerome was pushing other kids when they were playing tag. She told the math teacher that Jerome cheated on his tests. She whispered to other grade two kids that they shouldn't sit with him at lunch time.

Sophie's teacher noticed how mean Sophie was being to Jerome, so he asked Sophie to stay after class to talk about it. "Sophie, why are you being mean to Jerome?" He asked. Then he told her; "Did you know that Jerome is helping other kids with their math homework at the club after school? And he often shares his lunch with the children who don't have good lunches? I know he is kind of loud sometimes, but Jerome really wants to be a good part of our class. Can you help him with that?"

Sophie was surprised. She hadn't thought there was anything to like about Jerome, but she was wrong. She changed her heart from hate, to...maybe not love, but she started to like Jerome a little. After the talk with her teacher, Sophie decided that she could take the hate out of her heart and replace it with something better. She started to help Jerome with the math homework club.

Knowing that Jesus was alive changed Saul from hate to love. Jesus can help change our hate to love as well , and we can be freed to help others instead of hurt them.

Prayer:

Thank you Jesus for teaching us that our hate can be turned into love. You were kind to people who were mean to you. When you asked Saul why he was so hateful, his life changed and he started teaching people to follow you. Please help me to treat others with the kindness and love that will turn hate into love. AMEN

Question for adults:

What hate in your life longs to be changed into love? What can you do to help someone?"