

On the Line FOR PEACE

A Peacemaker in the Bible

ANANIAS: Brave enough to call an enemy brother

Ananias and the Jesus-followers in Damascus were nervous. There were rumors that Saul was on his way to their town. He had official papers from the chief priest, to capture any Christian believers and take them back to stand trial in Jerusalem. **Saul was breathing threats and murder against the disciples. He was an enemy of the Christians. He was terrorizing believers.**

Saul was the last person Ananias wanted to meet. Then in a vision, the Lord said to Ananias, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and to the house of Judas. Look for a man named Saul."

Was God crazy? Why would any follower of Jesus go knocking on a door where Saul was staying? Ananias quickly said: "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your followers in Jerusalem; and he has authority from the chief priest to take into custody anyone associated with your name."

Was God crazy? Why would any follower of Jesus go knocking on a door where Saul was staying?

Did God just write Saul off as a bad person and tell

Ananias to forget about going? No! The Lord told Ananias

how Saul was going to become a person who would spread God's good news. Ananias was to go and find Saul.

Ananias's hands were probably shaking as he bent over to put on his sandals. How foolish to go hunting for trouble! Was he doing the right thing? He headed for Straight Street and too quickly found the house of Judas. As he knocked on the door he took a deep breath and said a quick prayer.

He entered the house and there was Saul. Before he could think, the shocking words came out of his mouth, "Brother Saul."

Why had he called him brother? Saul was an enemy. He was a terrorist! He wanted to arrest people.

But God had already made Saul a brother. As Ananias reached out and touched him, scales fell off Saul's eyes and his sight was restored. A bright light and a vision from the Lord had blinded him on his way to Damascus. Now Saul could see again.

Ananias had crossed the line. He had gone to someone he considered an enemy and called him *brother*. Calling him a brother opened the door for God to restore Saul's sight.

Crossing enemy lines and offering friendship can still open doors that help us see other people in new ways.

(Story based on Acts 9:1-19.)



by Jane Yoder-Short

WHO IS YOUR BROTHER OR YOUR SISTER?

The Ananias story reminds us how hard it is to reach out to someone we think hates us.



We realize what a big step it was for Ananias to call Saul *brother*.

It was a bigger step than for a city whiz to call a country hick *brother*.

It was a bigger step than for a poor kid to call a rich snob *sister*.

It was a bigger step than for a coward to call a bully *brother*.

It was a bigger step than for an elegant dresser to call a slob *sister*.

You get the picture. Who are you reluctant to call *brother* or *sister*?

Plan a “Saul and Ananias Sunday”

Celebrate a Saul and Ananias Sunday by wearing shoes that don’t match.

Ananias and Saul were different. In the beginning, they held very different beliefs. Saul wanted to put an end to Jesus’s followers.



Ananias thought following Jesus was the most important thing in the world. Their ideas clashed, but when they came together they became brothers.



With your Sunday school class or junior youth group, plan a Sunday to all wear shoes that don’t match. Choose shoes with

heels about the same height, so you can easily walk. Spend time explaining to the adults in your church why your shoes don’t match. (Wear a sign that says, “Ask me why my shoes don’t match.”)



Explain how Saul and Ananias were very different people but ended up walking the same path—the path of faithfully following Jesus. Explain how Ananias was brave enough to call his enemy *brother*.