

BIBLE POINT

Day 1

Jesus' power helps us do hard things.

Bible Story: Ananias helps Saul. (Acts 9:1-19)

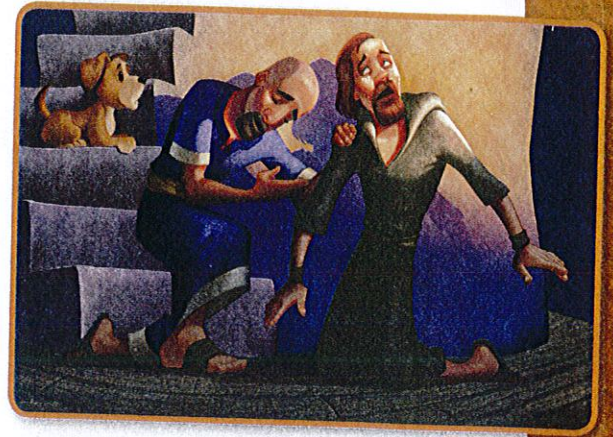
Bible Verse: "I can do all things through him who strengthens me."
(Philippians 4:13)

Catholic ID: Sacrament of Baptism

Saint of the Day: Saint Thérèse of Lisieux

Consider This...

- ▶ The Bible makes it evident that God often asks his followers to do hard things. Noah built an ark. Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son. Mary bore the Son of God. Saint Ananias had the terrifying job of reaching out to Saul.
- ▶ To understand the difficulty of Ananias' job, it's important to realize just how much Saul hated the early Church. He approved the stoning of Saint Stephen, arrested Christians in Jerusalem, and set his sights on imprisoning Christians living in Damascus. Christians ran away from Saul—not toward him!
- ▶ Ananias' name means "protected by the Lord." It's likely that his parents didn't know the importance of such protection during this important, history-altering mission.
- ▶ In Acts 9:15, God doesn't ease Ananias' misgivings with words of comfort or empowerment. He simply shares his life-changing plan for Saul and urges Ananias to go.
- ▶ Because of his selection and obedience, Ananias got to be the first person to welcome Saul as a Christian. In spite of any misgivings or fear, Ananias warmly greeted Saul with the phrase "Brother Saul."



Why It Matters...

Jesus still asks his followers to do hard things. The kids at your VBS know it's hard to forgive when someone hurts their feelings. They've experienced the difficulty of splitting time between parents' homes after a divorce. Kids can tell you how tough it is to make new friends, do what's unpopular, learn a new skill in school, and reach out in friendship to someone who's lonely. That's why today's activities will encourage kids with the truth that Jesus' power can fortify them through life's challenges. Just as Ananias drew strength from God's reassurance and plan, kids will come away with renewed inspiration that *they* can trust in Jesus' power to tackle the hard things they face. In the Sacrament of Baptism, God gave us sanctifying grace—His Divine Life within us. We receive forgiveness and new life in Christ, becoming *children* of God and members of Christ's Body, the Church. Through Baptism, God our Father empowers us with courage to bravely shine His light and love in the world: "Having received in Baptism the Word, 'the true light that enlightens every man,' the person baptized has been 'enlightened,' he becomes a 'son of light,' indeed, he becomes 'light' himself."

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux faced many trials including the loss of her mother at a young age, terrible illness, crushing trials of faith, and everyday annoyances and difficulties. Thérèse clung to the power of God given to her in Baptism to persevere through these trials, so remind your kids that we have this same grace to do hard things as she did.