

Use Week of:

Unit 31 • Session 2

Barnabas in Antioch

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Acts 11

STORY POINT:

Barnabas went to Antioch to encourage believers.

KEY PASSAGE:

1 Chronicles 16:31

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.

INTRODUCE THE STORY

(10–15 MINUTES)

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TEACH THE STORY

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APPLY THE STORY

(25–30 MINUTES)

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LEADER Bible Study

In the face of persecution, the early church saw growth as believers dispersed following Stephen's death. (See Acts 7.) As they went, they carried the good news with them. Jesus' disciples had cared for the church from Jerusalem, but God began to call them out as missionaries too.

In Acts 8, Philip went to Samaria and Judea. The Holy Spirit led him to share the good news with an Ethiopian official. Paul encountered Jesus in Acts 9 and began spreading the gospel. Peter performed miracles and people believed in Jesus. In Acts 10, God made it clear to Peter that the gospel was not only for the Jews but also for Gentiles. Peter gave testimony about the salvation of Gentiles to Jewish leaders in Jerusalem who thought people needed to follow Jewish law to be saved.

As the message about Jesus went out, churches were started. One of these churches was in Antioch, which was the capital of Syria. When the church at Antioch began, it was made up only of Jewish Christians. But, as Acts 11:20 reveals, some Christians from Cyprus and Cyrene went to Antioch and began sharing the gospel with Greeks (Gentiles). Many Gentiles believed.

When the church in Jerusalem heard about this, what was their response? They sent Barnabas to Antioch to encourage the believers there! Then even more people believed in Jesus. The Bible tells us that Antioch was the place where believers were first called "Christians."

As you teach kids this week, emphasize the story point: Barnabas went to Antioch to encourage believers. Even though some people tried to stop it, the gospel spread throughout the earth—not only to Jews but also to Gentiles. We should celebrate when other people repent and turn to Jesus, and we can encourage them to grow in their faith and in their love for the Lord. The good news about Jesus is for everyone.

The BIBLE Story

Barnabas in Antioch

Acts 11

God had called Peter to tell everyone the good news about Jesus, no matter who they were or where they came from. So **Peter shared the gospel not only with Jews, but with Gentiles. The Gentiles in Caesarea heard Peter's message and believed. God gave His Holy Spirit to these new believers, and they were baptized.**

Before long, the apostles and other believers throughout Judea heard that Gentiles had believed the good news about Jesus.

They were surprised, so Peter shared about the vision God had given to him of the sheet of clean and unclean animals and his encounter with Cornelius. Peter explained that the gospel is for all people. Then the believers praised God and understood that Jesus had come for the Gentiles too!

At the same time, believers who scattered after Stephen's murder had traveled to places like Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch of Syria. In those places, the believers only shared the gospel with the Jews.

But some believers from Cyprus and Cyrene went to Antioch and preached the gospel to the Greeks, too. God was with them, and a large number of the Greeks believed the good news.



The church at Jerusalem heard about these new believers, so they sent Barnabas to Antioch. Barnabas was a good man. He loved God and was full of faith and the power of the Holy Spirit. When Barnabas arrived, he saw that God was gracious to these believers. **He was glad and encouraged them to keep following God. Even more people trusted in Jesus.**

Then Barnabas left Antioch and went to Tarsus to look for Paul. He found Paul and brought him back to Antioch. They stayed with the church in Antioch for a year, teaching large crowds of people. Jesus' followers were first called Christians at Antioch.

Christ Connection: Even though some people tried to stop it, the gospel spread throughout the earth—not only to Jews but also to Gentiles. The good news about Jesus is for everyone. God calls us to celebrate when others believe and help them know and love Jesus more.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Show a map:** Display a Bible map where the whole group can see it. As you tell the story, point out areas that are mentioned. Place markers, such as small paper flags or pushpins to each of the places discussed in the story so kids can see how the gospel spread.
- **Wear a costume:** Dress in Bible times clothes and tell the story to the kids as if you were giving report on the growth of the early church.

INTRODUCE the Story



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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to share about a time they learned something new. What did they learn, and who helped them understand?

SAY • Learning new things can be really rewarding and exciting. Today we will learn about a time a man called Barnabas traveled to a new place to teach the people there new things. What do you think Barnabas taught them?

Activity page (5 minutes)

- “Journey to Antioch” activity page,
- 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete the “Journey to Antioch” activity page. Kids will complete the maze to lead Barnabas from Jerusalem to Antioch.

SAY • Today we will learn about a time a man called Barnabas traveled to a city named Antioch to tell people about Jesus. Have you ever traveled somewhere to tell about Jesus?

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Words of encouragement

Instruct the kids to sit in a circle. Select a kid to start the game by saying something encouraging about the kid to his left. Play will pass to the right.

SAY • In our story today we will learn about a man named Joseph, who the apostles called Barnabas. His nickname means “son of encouragement.” Why do you think people called him that? Today we will learn about a time he traveled to Antioch to tell people about Jesus.

OPTION 2: Thank-you cards

Provide the kids with thank-you cards or allow them to make cards by folding cardstock in half. Help the kids write encouraging messages to their leaders or pastors, thanking them for the work they do each week.

• thank-you cards or
cardstock
• pencils and markers

SAY • Today we will learn about Barnabas. He was a leader in the early church. He encouraged other believers and helped teach people about Jesus. We have church leaders who help us learn about Jesus, and they need encouragement just like anyone else.

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.

Countdown

· countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

· leader attire

[Leader enters wearing business casual attire.]

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

LEADER • Hey friends! Welcome back to the Model UN.

If you were here last week, you may remember that the United Nations is a group that works together to bring peace and security to the world. Each nation that is a member of the United Nations sends a representative, called a delegate, to meet with the other nations' delegates. Their jobs are to say and do things that will be best for their countries.

As you can imagine, a group of people representing many different nations will often struggle to get along. We are all different and often want very different things. But the UN provides a place where different nations can push for what they want without using violence.

Last week, we talked about how the church is an even greater organization. It is similar to the UN in

that it is for all nations, but it is better than the UN because it is led by God, not by humans. This week, we have a story about how God used a man called Barnabas almost like a delegate. Barnabas went to the people living in a city called Antioch and explained to them what God wanted.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Let's review out big picture question before we get too far into the story. *What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.* God's plan all along was to bless the world through His chosen people. Jesus was that blessing. His life, death, and resurrection made the way for sinners from every nation to be saved from sin and transformed into new creations that love and worship God.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review. · Giant Timeline

LEADER • Last week, we learned how God showed Peter that the gospel is for all people. God doesn't love only certain kinds of people. All people are made in His image, and He wants every person to hear the gospel, repent of sin, and be saved by faith. This week we will hear a story called "Barnabas in Antioch."

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Acts 11. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Barnabas in Antioch."

- Bibles
- "Barnabas in Antioch" video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Story Point Poster

LEADER • Once Peter had explained his vision, the early church realized that keeping the gospel for just Jewish people wasn't God's plan. The church experienced more growth as many Gentiles began to hear the gospel and believe it.

When the church leaders in Jerusalem heard about the new believers in places like Antioch, they decided to send someone to help them live the way Jesus wanted them to live. **Barnabas went to Antioch to encourage believers.** He even found Paul to help teach them and grow their faith.

The Bible tells us that Barnabas' real name was Joseph. The nickname *Barnabas* means "son of encouragement." You'd have to be a really great source of encouraging words for people to basically change your name to "The Encouraging Guy." That was exactly what the early church needed though. Christians at this time faced a lot of persecution from people who did not believe the truth. In the middle of hard times, we all need someone to remind us of the gospel and how good God is. ***What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.***

Christ connection

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

LEADER • Even though some people tried to stop it, the gospel spread throughout the earth—not only to Jews but also to Gentiles. The good news about Jesus is for everyone. God calls us to celebrate when others believe and to help them know and love Jesus more.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 31, Session 2” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about who encourages them in their faith. Guide them to discuss ways they can be an encouragement to others.

· “Unit 31, Session 2”
Questions from Kids
video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

Show the Wilton family photo and ask a volunteer to read the accompanying script.

· “Meet the Wiltons”
printable

LEADER • This family has seen the gospel spread from New Orleans to Pittsburgh and beyond! **Barnabas went to Antioch to encourage believers.** The Wilton family went to Pittsburgh to encourage churches there to grow and multiply.

Ask a volunteer to pray for the Wiltons and for any missionaries your church supports.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together 1 Chronicles 16:31. Then sing the key passage song.

· Key Passage Poster
· “Rejoice, Be Glad
(1 Chronicles 16:31)”
song

LEADER • Although this key passage comes from the Old Testament, it fits perfectly with these stories of the church growing and moving outward from Jerusalem as Gentiles began to believe. God is the God of the whole world, and of all people.

God wants to see everyone come to faith. That’s the reason for the gospel! *What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.* Someday, Jesus will return, and all of creation with praise God together.

• “Come, Ye Sinners,
Poor and Needy”
song

Sing (4 minutes)

LEADER • Barnabas went to Antioch to encourage believers.

Nothing is as encouraging as remembering the truth of the gospel: God wants to rescue poor, needy sinners.

Sing together “Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Father, we love You because You are good and You love us. Thank You for all You have done and all that You will do. Help us to be encouraging to one another and lift one another up to love and worship You. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

APPLY the Story



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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- cardstock
- “Key Passage Flip Cards” printable

Print onto cardstock the “Key Passage Flip Cards” printable and cut the cards apart. Provide each kid with one card and demonstrate how to fold the card in half so that only one level is showing at a time. Kids will work through the levels, filling in the missing words to complete the key passage. After each level, kids should fold that level under to work on the next level without peeking at earlier levels.

SAY • *What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.* God’s plan is reason to rejoice. Apart from Him, we have no hope of salvation. In Him we have hope and a promise of eternal life. We know that God loves us, and His plans cannot be stopped. Someday, all nations will rejoice in Him when Jesus returns and destroys all evil.

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster
- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970, optional)

Distribute a Bible to each kid. Help them find Acts 11. Consider pointing out Jerusalem and Antioch of Syria on the New Testament Mediterranean Map. (*G10, E10*) Remind kids that Acts is immediately after John.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. How did the Jewish believers react after Peter explained what happened with Cornelius? (*They glorified God and understood that Gentiles could be saved by faith too, Acts 11:18*)
2. Who did the scattered believers share the gospel with? (*only the Jews, Acts 11:19*)
3. In what city were believers first called *Christians*? (*Antioch of Syria, Acts 11:26*)
4. Who can we share the gospel with? *Direct kids to see that God's plan all along has been for people of all nations and tribes to come to faith. As a result, we can be sure that God wants us to share the gospel with everyone we meet.*
5. How do you feel when you think about sharing the gospel with someone? *Help kids think through the common emotions they might experience. Remind them that it is normal to feel nervous, afraid, or uncertain. Help them understand that the Bible teaches us the Holy Spirit will empower us and help to give us the words we need to share the gospel. Remind them that even a negative reaction from the person listening doesn't mean we should stop sharing the gospel.*
6. How can you encourage other believers? *Guide kids to think practically. Remind them that telling someone you care or thanking them for the ways they help you love Jesus are great ways to encourage others. Sometimes, even just listening to others' problems is all it takes.*

SAY • Barnabas went to Antioch to encourage believers.

The gospel spread and the church grew. We can encourage others and spread the gospel too, which in turn can grow the church.

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

“Meet the Wiltons”
printable



Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Be an encourager

Remind kids about the Wilton family. Show the photo that you displayed in the missions moment.

SAY • What are some ways you can encourage your friends in their faith? Can you encourage someone to come to church? To read the Bible? To pray more?

Remind kids that they encourage others, like Barnabas did and like missionaries do today.

Form pairs or small groups of kids. Ask the kids to discuss different ways they could encourage one another. Point out that we can remind our brothers and sisters to live out their faith daily by reading the Bible, praying, and telling others about Jesus.

Review the big picture question and answer: ***What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.*** Ask them to pray for each other so they will be ready to talk about Jesus with their friends, families, and communities.

OPTION 2: Good news telephone

Direct the kids to sit in a circle. Whisper something, like the big picture question or the story point, into the ear of a kid. That kid will turn and whisper the phrase to the kid on his left, and so on around the circle. The last kid will say the phrase aloud to the whole group.

Play a second round using a different phrase that each kid says aloud.

SAY • When you were whispering the phrase, it was hard to tell if the message got twisted. When you said the phrase for everyone to hear, it was easier to catch mistakes and correct them. In a way, this is helpful

**LOW
PREP**

when thinking about the gospel. When we spread it boldly, it encourages those around us and those who know the gospel can help us catch mistakes if we are misunderstanding something in the Bible.

Barnabas went to Antioch to encourage believers.

We can encourage one another just by reminding one another of God's love for all people.

Reflection and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper to each child. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure to send the sheets home with kids alongside the activity page so that parents can see what their kids have been learning.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.

- pencils and crayons
- paper
- Bible Story Coloring Page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.