Preschool–Grade 6

Barnabas

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: Be an encourager. Stand by people others are afraid of or leave out, and help them stay close to the Lord.
Bible passage: Acts 4:36–37; Acts 9:26–31; Acts 11:22–26. Read them before class.
Memory verse: "For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord." *Acts 11:24 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board.

1. Opening game: What's in a Name? (5–10 minutes)

Write three describing names on the board: *Helper, Cheerer, Giver*. Read a short situation, and the kids call out which name fits best: 1) Someone carries a classmate's books when her arm is hurt. 2) Someone shares his snack with a friend who forgot lunch. 3) Someone says, "You can do it!" before a friend's spelling test. Then ask: *If people gave you a new name because of how you act, what would you want it to be?* Say: "Today we will meet a man the apostles gave a new name, because of the kind of man he was."

2. Bible story: The Son of Consolation (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Acts 4. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

A new name. Look up Acts 4:36–37. A man named **Joses** was **surnamed**, given another name, **Barnabas** by the apostles. Barnabas means "The son of **consolation**": a person who comforts and encourages. He was a **Levite**, from the tribe of Levi, and from **Cyprus**, an island in the sea. He sold his land, brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet, so it could be given to anyone who had need (4:35).

They were all afraid. Saul had fought against the believers; he had come to bring them bound to the chief priests (9:21). Then the Lord Jesus spoke to him in the way, and Saul preached Jesus in Damascus. **Look up Acts 9:26.** When Saul came to Jerusalem, he **assayed**, tried, to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him and didn't believe he was a disciple.

But Barnabas took him. Look up Acts 9:27. Barnabas took Saul, brought him to the apostles, and **declared**, told them clearly, how Saul had seen the Lord in the way, that the Lord had spoken to him, and how he had preached **boldly** at Damascus in the name of Jesus. **Look up Acts 9:28.** After that, Saul was with them, coming in and going out at Jerusalem. When some people went about to **slay** him, to kill him, the brethren brought him to Caesarea and sent him to Tarsus (9:29–30). Then the churches had rest and were **multiplied**: they grew (9:31).

Barnabas in Antioch. In Antioch a great number believed and turned unto the Lord (11:21), and the church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas (11:22). **Look up Acts 11:23.** When he had seen the **grace** of God (God's kindness at work in them), he was glad, and **exhorted** them all, urged and encouraged them, that with **purpose of heart** (their whole heart, on purpose) they would **cleave** unto the Lord: hold on to Him and stay close. **Look up Acts 11:24.** He was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, and much people was added unto the Lord.

Barnabas goes looking. Look up Acts 11:25–26. Barnabas went to Tarsus to **seek** Saul, to look for him. He found him and brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they taught much people, and the disciples were called **Christians** first in Antioch.

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. The disciples were all afraid of Saul (Acts 9:26). Why do you think Barnabas took him anyway?
2. Barnabas told the apostles what God had done for Saul (9:27). How can our words help someone be accepted?
3. Barnabas exhorted the believers to cleave unto the Lord (11:23). What helps you stay close to the Lord?
4. Barnabas went all the way to Tarsus to find Saul (11:25). What does that show about him?
5. Who in your school, team or church might need a Barnabas?

Recall questions

1. What was Barnabas's first name? *(Joses, Acts 4:36)*
2. What island did he come from? *(Cyprus, 4:36)*
3. Where were the disciples first called Christians? *(Antioch, 11:26)*

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **full of the Holy Ghost** means filled with God's Spirit, **faith** means believing and trusting God, and **much people was added unto the Lord** means many people came to the Lord. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post

5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Barnabas was full of the Holy Ghost, and he helped people cleave to the Lord. God loves you, and He wants you close to Him too. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.
This week: be a Barnabas to one person. Sit with someone who is alone, welcome someone new, or tell a friend something good God has done.

6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Acts 4:36: What does the name Barnabas mean? *("The son of consolation")*
2. Acts 4:37: Where did Barnabas lay the money? *(At the apostles' feet)*
3. Acts 9:26: Why didn't the disciples let Saul join them? *(They were all afraid of him and believed not that he was a disciple)*
4. Acts 9:27: Where had Saul preached boldly? *(At Damascus)*
5. Acts 9:30: Where did the brethren send Saul? *(To Tarsus)*
6. Acts 11:23: How did Barnabas feel when he saw the grace of God? *(He was glad)*
7. Acts 11:24: What was Barnabas full of? *(The Holy Ghost and faith)*
8. Acts 11:26: How long did Barnabas and Saul teach in Antioch? *(A whole year)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for Barnabas, a good man full of the Holy Ghost and of faith. Help us stand by people others leave out, and help us encourage each other to stay close to You. In Jesus' name, amen."

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post