Preschool–Grade 6

Barnabas

Sunday School Lesson for Preschool (Ages 3–5), 20–30 minutes

Main point: I can be kind and help others, like Barnabas.
Bible passage: Acts 4:36–37; Acts 9:26–31; Acts 11:22–26. Read them yourself before class.
Memory verse: "he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith" *Acts 11:24 (KJV).* The old words mean: **full of the Holy Ghost** is filled with God's Spirit, and **faith** is trusting God.
You need: a Bible, a teddy bear or other stuffed animal, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: put a bookmark in your Bible at Acts 9.

1. Opening game: Cheer Up, Bear! (5 minutes)

Sit in a circle. Hold the teddy bear and make it look sad: "Bear is sad today. Nobody wants to play with Bear." Pass the bear around the circle. Each child gives the bear a gentle hug or says a kind word: "I'll be your friend!" "You can play with me!" When the bear comes back to you, make it happy: "Bear feels so much better!" Say: "Kind words and kind friends help us feel better. Today we will hear a true story about a man named Barnabas who was a kind helper."

2. Bible story (5 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Acts 9. Say: "This story is true. It is in God's Word." Read each line slowly and do the motion. When you see **Say it with me**, the kids say the line back to you.

There was a man named Barnabas (Acts 4:36). *(Wave hello.)*
His name means a man who helps people feel better (4:36). *(Give yourself a hug.)*
Barnabas sold his land and gave the money to help (4:37). *(Hold out both hands, giving.)*
Say it with me: "Barnabas helped!"
A man named Saul came to the church (9:26). *(Walk in place.)*
Everyone was afraid of Saul (9:26). *(Shake and hide your face.)*
But Barnabas took Saul to the apostles, Jesus' helpers (9:27). *(Pretend to hold a friend's hand and walk.)*
He told them Saul had seen the Lord Jesus (9:27). *(Hands around your mouth.)*
Say it with me: "Barnabas was kind!"
Barnabas told people to stay close to the Lord (11:23). *(Hug yourself tight.)*
Barnabas was full of the Holy Ghost (11:24). *(Hands up high.)*
Many people came to the Lord (11:24). *(Wave everyone in.)*
Barnabas and Saul taught people together (11:26). *(Stand side by side with a friend.)*
Say it with me: "I can be kind too!"

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3. Questions to ask (3 minutes)

1. What did Barnabas do with his money? *(He gave it to help, Acts 4:37)*
2. Who was everyone afraid of? *(Saul, 9:26)*
3. Who was kind to Saul? *(Barnabas, 9:27)*

4. Memory verse (3 minutes)

Say: "The Bible says Barnabas was 'a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.'" Teach the motion: thumbs up on "good man," hands up high on "full of the Holy Ghost," and hands together like praying on "faith." Say the verse with the motions three times: in a normal voice, in a whisper, and in a happy loud voice. Then say "Acts 11:24" and clap three times.

5. What this means for us (3 minutes)

Say: "God loves you! Everyone has done wrong things. That is called sin (Romans 3:23). Jesus is God. He came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins. He was buried. Then He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us what to do (Acts 2:38). We repent: we tell God we are sorry, and we stop doing wrong. We are baptized in Jesus' name, down under the water, and our sins are washed away. And God gives us the Holy Ghost. That is God's own Spirit in us. When people are filled with the Holy Ghost, they speak in other tongues, words God gives them (Acts 2:4)."
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.

6. Activity: A Friend I Can Help (5–10 minutes)

Give each child a take-home sheet. In the drawing box, help them draw themselves next to a friend they can be kind to. While they color, ask: "Who was kind to Saul? How can you be kind to a friend this week?" Kids who finish early can take turns giving the teddy bear a kind word.

7. Prayer

Say each line, and the kids say it after you:
"Thank You, God, for Barnabas.
Help me be kind like him. Help me help my friends. In Jesus' name, amen."

Tips for little ones: keep the story moving. If they get wiggly, do the "walk with a friend" motion again around the room in pairs. Keep Saul simple: everyone was afraid of him, and Barnabas was kind to him. Send the take-home sheet home so parents can tell the story again this week.

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