Preschool–Grade 6

Barnabas

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: An encourager stands by people others won't, and points them to the Lord.
Bible passage: Acts 4:36–37; Acts 9:26–31; Acts 11:22–26. Students read it out loud themselves.
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)* and "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do." *1 Thessalonians 5:11 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read Acts 4:32–37, Acts 9:1–31 and Acts 11:19–26. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses.

1. Opening game: Who Would You Sit With? (5–10 minutes)

Read each situation and let students vote with a thumb up (I'd do it) or a thumb sideways (it would be hard): 1) A new student sits alone at lunch. 2) Someone who used to be mean to your friends says they've changed. 3) A kid nobody picks for teams stands at the side. 4) A friend is about to quit something hard. After each, ask: *What stops people from stepping in? What would it cost you?* Say: "Today we will meet a man who stepped in when everyone else was afraid."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Read out loud: Acts 4:36–37; 9:26–31; 11:22–26. Students take turns, a verse or two each. Old words in these passages:

- **surnamed** (4:36): given another name; **being interpreted**: which means
- **consolation** (4:36): comfort and encouragement; **a Levite**: from the tribe of Levi
- **assayed to join himself** (9:26): tried to join
- **declared** (9:27): told clearly; **in the way**: on the road
- **disputed against the Grecians** (9:29): argued with Greek-speaking Jews; **went about to slay him**: tried to kill him
- **edified** (9:31): built up and made strong; **multiplied**: grew in number
- **tidings** (11:22): news; **exhorted** (11:23): urged and encouraged
- **with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord** (11:23): that with their whole heart, on purpose, they would hold on to the Lord
- **seek** (11:25): look for

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

Look closer. Point out these details with the class:

- **A name that fits.** Joses was surnamed Barnabas, "The son of consolation" (4:36). The next time we see him, he is giving (4:37); then he is standing by Saul (9:27); then he is exhorting a whole church (11:23). His life matched his name.
- **The risk.** Saul had come to bring believers bound to the chief priests (9:21), and the disciples "were all afraid of him" (9:26). Barnabas didn't just believe Saul quietly; he took him, brought him to the apostles, and told them what the Lord had done (9:27).
- **He saw grace and was glad.** In Antioch, Barnabas "had seen the grace of God" and "was glad" (11:23). An encourager looks for what God is doing in people and is happy about it, not jealous.
- **He went looking.** Saul had been sent off to Tarsus (9:30). Barnabas went to seek him and brought him back to the work (11:25–26). Later Acts lists them together: "Barnabas and Saul" (11:30).

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. Barnabas's name described his character (4:36). If people named you for how you treat others, what would your name be?
2. The disciples had good reasons to be afraid of Saul (9:21, 9:26). How do you decide when to give someone a second chance?
3. Barnabas "declared" what God had done for Saul (9:27). How can we speak up for someone without gossiping or pretending?
4. Barnabas exhorted the believers to cleave unto the Lord "with purpose of heart" (11:23). What does it look like to follow the Lord on purpose?
5. Acts 11:24 says Barnabas was full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, "and much people was added unto the Lord." How are those two things connected?
6. Who is a "Saul" in your life right now: someone left out, new, or not trusted, who needs one person to stand by them?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words: **full of the Holy Ghost** means filled with God's Spirit; **much people was added unto the Lord** means many people came to the Lord. In 1 Thessalonians 5:11, **wherefore** means so, **comfort yourselves together** means comfort each other, and **edify** means build up and make strong.
Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Acts 11:24 this week; keep working on 1 Thessalonians 5:11 next week too.

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

5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "Barnabas was full of the Holy Ghost, and he urged people to cleave unto the Lord. God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: '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) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-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 utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
Pray with the students, 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: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. Who has been a Barnabas to me, and what did they do?
2. Who is one person I could stand by or encourage this week, and how?
3. Write a short prayer asking God to fill you with the Holy Ghost and with faith, and to make you an encourager.
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: do what you wrote in question 2. Then write or say a thank-you to the person you named in question 1.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for people who stand by us and point us to You. Make us like Barnabas: good, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, glad when we see Your grace in others, and ready to stand by people others leave out. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a student asks what happened to Saul: Saul is the man later called Paul (Acts 13:9). His meeting with Jesus on the road to Damascus is Acts 9:1–19, and later the Holy Ghost called Barnabas and Saul to a work together (Acts 13:2).

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