Preschool–Grade 6

Paul and Barnabas

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

Main point: God calls and sends ordinary people to tell others about Him, and the people He sends point every bit of the glory back to Him.
Bible passage: Acts 13:1–5 and Acts 14:8–22. Students read them out loud themselves, then Acts 11:22–26.
Memory verse: "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." *Acts 13:2 (KJV)* and "Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake." *Psalms 115:1 (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 11:22–26, 13:1–5 and 14:8–22. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses, or go around the room a few verses each.

1. Opening game: Take the Credit? (5–10 minutes)

Read each situation. Students vote: **Keep** (accept the praise) or **Point** (point it to God or others). 1) You score the winning point after the whole team set it up. 2) Someone you prayed for gets well. 3) A teacher praises your project that your older brother mostly did. 4) A friend says, "You're the best singer in the church." Ask: *Is it wrong to be thanked? When does praise turn into something it shouldn't be?* Say: "Today two men are offered worship, and how they answer shows who they serve."

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

Read out loud: Acts 13:1–5. Old words in this passage:

- **ministered to the Lord** (13:2): worshiped and served God; **fasted**: went without food to seek God
- **Separate me** (13:2): set apart for Me; **whereunto**: to which
- **laid their hands on them** (13:3): put their hands on them as they fasted and prayed, then sent them out
- **synagogues** (13:5): meeting houses where Jews read God's Word

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Read out loud: Acts 14:8–18. Old words in this passage:

- **impotent in his feet** (14:8): his feet had no strength; he had never walked
- **stedfastly beholding** (14:9): looking steadily at him
- **in the likeness of men** (14:11): looking like men. The people of Lystra named them after their false gods (14:12).
- **rent their clothes** (14:14): tore their clothes, a sign of how upset they were
- **men of like passions with you** (14:15): people just like you; **vanities**: empty, worthless things
- **suffered** (14:16): allowed; **scarce restrained** (14:18): barely stopped them

Read out loud: Acts 14:19–22. Paul was stoned and left for dead, but "he rose up" and went right back into the city. Days later he returned to the same towns, telling the disciples that "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (14:22).

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. The call in Acts 13:2 came while the church was worshiping and fasting. What does that tell you about where God's direction usually comes from?
2. Paul "perceived that he had faith to be healed" (14:9). What part did the man's faith play?
3. Barnabas and Paul tore their clothes when people tried to worship them (14:14). Why such a strong reaction?
4. In 14:17 Paul says God "left not himself without witness." What witness of God do you see around you every day?
5. The same crowd that wanted to worship Paul later stoned him (14:19). What does that teach about living for people's praise?
6. Paul went back into the city that stoned him (14:20). What gives someone that kind of courage?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words: **ministered** means worshiped and served; **separate me** means set apart for Me; **whereunto** means to which. Psalms 115:1 says, "Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory." Put together, Acts 13:2 is God's call; Psalms 115:1 is the heart of the people He sends.
Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Acts 13:2 this week; keep working on Psalms 115:1 next week too.

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

Say: "Paul and Barnabas told Lystra to turn to the living God. That message is for us too. 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 is one person in my life God might be sending me to tell about Him?
2. When people praise me, do I point it back to God? Where do I keep the credit for myself?
3. Write a short prayer asking God to use you and to keep you humble.
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: pray by name for the person you wrote down, and look for one chance to tell them something God has done.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, You made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things in them. Not unto us, but unto Your name be the glory. Call us, send us, and keep us faithful even when it's hard. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a student asks about Jupiter and Mercurius: they were the names of false gods the people of Lystra worshiped (Acts 14:12). Paul called such things "vanities," empty things, and pointed the people to "the living God" (14:15). Keep the focus there.

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