

Use Week of:

Unit 31 • Session 2

Barnabas in Antioch

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Acts 11

STORY POINT:

The gospel continued to spread.

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.

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TEACH THE STORY
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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 preschoolers this week, emphasize the story point: The gospel continued to spread. 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 told Peter to tell everyone the good news about Jesus. So **Peter obeyed. He shared the gospel with people, no matter who they were or where they came from. He shared with Jews and also with Gentiles—people who were not Jews. The Gentiles heard Peter’s message, and they believed in Jesus.** God gave His Spirit to these new believers, and they were baptized.

Before long, **Jesus’ followers in Judea heard that the Gentiles had believed the good news about Jesus. They were surprised! Peter explained that the gospel is for everyone. Then Jesus’ followers praised God!**

Around this time, believers were living in places like Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch of Syria. They had moved away from Jerusalem after Stephen was killed because he loved Jesus. Most of them shared the gospel only with Jews, but some believers went to Antioch and told the Gentiles there about Jesus. When the Gentiles heard the good news, many of them believed.

The church in Jerusalem heard about these new believers, so they sent Barnabas to visit them. Barnabas was a good man who loved



God. **Barnabas saw that God was with the believers in Antioch, and he was glad. He encouraged them to keep following God. More people heard about Jesus and trusted in Him.**

Then Barnabas left Antioch to find Paul. Barnabas and Paul went to Antioch and stayed with the church there for one year. They taught large crowds of people. Jesus' followers were first called Christians in Antioch.

Christ Connection: The gospel continued to spread even when people tried to stop it. The good news about Jesus is for everyone. God wants us to celebrate when others believe in Jesus.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Cheer for good news:** Invite preschoolers to cheer every time they hear the word "gospel" or "good news."
- **Look at a map:** Display the "New Testament Mediterranean Map" from the Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970). Point to Cyprus, Antioch of Syria, and Jerusalem on the map as you mention them in the Bible story.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Barnabas in Antioch

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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

- "The Gospel Is for Everyone" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play a theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- "Christian Family Tree" activity page, 1 per child
- crayons or markers

Help children count the people in each row and write the number in each box. Challenge older preschoolers to count the total number of people on the page.

SAY • A family tree is a way of showing how a family grows. It starts with one set of parents, then you draw lines to all of their kids. And when those kids grow up and have kids, you draw more lines and people. God's family grows through people too. In this picture, one man tells two others the gospel, then each of those two tell two more people the gospel, and it keeps going until more and more people join God's family.

**LOW
PREP**

Choose this or that

Give preschoolers two options and invite them to move to one side of the room for one option and the other side for the other. Then bring everyone together and give another

two options. Use the options below or create your own.

- pizza or cheeseburgers
- red or blue
- swimming or climbing
- summer or winter
- soccer or baseball

SAY • We divided into two different groups over and over then came together as one. The Bible talks about two groups of people: Jews and Gentiles. Because of Jesus, these two groups came together as one in the church. Listen to the story to hear how the gospel spread to the Gentiles. *What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.*

Learn languages

Teach children how to say “The Lord reigns” in several languages using a language translator app.

SAY • Our key passage we learned last week encouraged people from many nations to say “The Lord reigns!” People in different nations speak different languages. As the gospel spreads to more and more people around the world, the more and more people worship God in their own language!

• smartphone or tablet with a translation app

Transition to teach the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, turn the lights off and on, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Encourage preschoolers to announce the good news that “God sent Jesus!” to everyone they pass on their way to Bible study.

• countdown video (optional)

TEACH the Story



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Introduce the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- Giant Timeline

Place a bookmark at Acts 11 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • Today's Bible story from the Book of Acts happened right after last week's story about Peter's vision. Let's listen to this true story from God's Word!

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline. Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Watch or tell the Bible story

- Story Point Poster
- "Barnabas in Antioch" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

SAY • The Jewish believers were surprised when they heard that the Gentiles had believed the good news about Jesus. When Peter explained the gospel is for everyone, they praised God! **The gospel continued to spread** even when people tried to stop it. So the church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to check on the Gentile believers in Antioch. Barnabas saw that God was with these new believers, and he was glad! God wants us to celebrate when others believe in Jesus.

Practice the key passage

Place the key passage marker at 1 Chronicles 16:31. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Form groups. Invite each group to tell the key passage to the next group. The last group should tell it to the first group.

SAY • **The gospel continued to spread** from one group of people to another! From Jews in Jerusalem to Gentiles in Antioch and beyond, all kinds of people heard the good news about Jesus. People from many nations praised God, just like our key passage says!

Sing the key passage song, “The Lord Reigns,” and the theme song, “The Gospel Is for Everyone.”

- Bible
- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- “The Lord Reigns (1 Chronicles 16:31)” song
- “The Gospel Is for Everyone” song

Learn the big picture question

SAY • Do you remember our 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.* All people are sinners, so the good news about Jesus is for everyone!

- Big Picture Question Poster



Missions moment

SAY • The gospel spread in the early church and it is still spreading today! The Wilton family has seen the gospel spread from one city to another! They moved to Pittsburgh to encourage churches there to grow and multiply. Let’s meet this missionary family and hear more about them.

Show the Wilton family photo and read the story. Pray for the Wiltons and for the gospel to spread in Pittsburgh.

- “Wilton Family” printable

Pray and transition to experience the story

EXPERIENCE the Story



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LOW PREP

• Bible

Pass the good news

Form two lines on opposite sides of the room with children facing one another. Give a Bible to the first child in one line. Direct him to take the Bible to the first child in the other line and take her place. Then she will take the Bible to the next child in the opposite line and take his place. Guide children to continue passing the Bible. Remind children to walk quickly but safely. Encourage younger preschoolers to sit down as they finish their turn. When the last child receives the Bible, she will return it to the first child. Cheer when the relay is finished.

SAY • You passed God's Word to everyone as you traveled around the room! As believers moved to new cities, they told others the good news of Jesus. **The gospel continued to spread!** The Jewish believers in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to check on the Gentile believers in Antioch. He was glad to see their faith and sent the good news back to the Jewish believers. They praised God! God wants us to celebrate when others believe in Jesus.

- whole milk
- foam plate
- food color
- liquid dish soap
- cotton swabs

Observe colors spread

Pour milk onto a plate, cover the bottom to a ¼-inch depth. Allow the milk to settle. Place one drop each of different

food colors near the center. Place a small amount of liquid dish soap on the end of a cotton swab. Gently touch the swab to the center of the milk. Watch the colors explode! Repeat the experiment giving children tasks to complete.

SAY • The way those colors spread out was beautiful! It is beautiful when the gospel spreads to more people too. In the beginning of the Book of Acts, all the believers were together in Jerusalem, kind of like how all our color was in the center of the milk. But when people tried to stop the gospel by hurting believers like Stephen, the gospel spread even more as believers moved to new cities! Kind of like how the soap made the colors spread all over the milk. **The gospel continued to spread** even when people tried to stop it. The good news about Jesus is for everyone!

Study a map

Display a world map. Point out Israel. Invite a preschooler to place a dot sticker there. Point out other areas mentioned in the Bible story, such as Syria and Cyprus, allow children to add dot stickers. Point out where you live, encourage preschoolers to place a sticker there. Encourage preschoolers to cover the land masses on the map with dot stickers.

SAY • Isn't it amazing that the gospel spread all the way from Israel to where we live! Believers shared the gospel with people, no matter who they were or where they came from. **The gospel continued to spread** around the world! *What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.* The good news about Jesus is for everyone.

· world map
· dot stickers
· New Testament
Mediterranean
Map (005802970)
(optional)

- guests (optional)
- “The Lord Reigns (1 Chronicles 16:31)” song (optional)
- “The Gospel Is for Everyone” song (optional)

Celebrate conversions

Tell preschoolers how you came to trust in Christ, emphasizing who told you the gospel. Be sure to keep your testimony age-appropriate. Then lead preschoolers to celebrate with you, dancing to worship music and praising God. Invite other leaders to share their conversion story as well. Celebrate each story of conversion with a praise party.

SAY • Thanks for celebrating with me about believing in Jesus and following Him. Jesus’ followers in Judea heard that the Gentiles had believed the gospel. They praised God! *What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.* The good news about Jesus is for everyone. God wants us to celebrate when others believe in Jesus.



Pretend to watch a football game

- foam football (optional)

Set up chairs in rows. Invite preschoolers to sit in the chairs and pretend that they are at a football game. Let them stand and cheer or pretend to eat snacks. If space allows, provide a small foam football for children to toss.

SAY • We’ve been learning about the Wiltons who live in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Many people in Pittsburgh like football and go to games in huge stadiums with thousands of people. The Wiltons can enjoy football, too, and they can share the gospel with their football friends. *What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.*

Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Serve two flavors of bear-shaped graham crackers for snack. Talk about how the first believers were Jews, but God began saving Gentile people too. **The gospel continued to spread** to all kinds of people, no matter who they were or where they came from. The good news about Jesus is for everyone. We can celebrate when others believe in Jesus.

Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. What are people called who are not Jews? (*Gentiles*)
2. Did many of the Gentiles believe the gospel? (*yes*)
3. Whom did the church in Jerusalem send to check on the new believers? (*Barnabas*)
4. Who is the good news about Jesus for? (*everyone*)
5. What should we do when we hear someone believes in Jesus? (*celebrate*)
6. ***What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.***

Transition

When preschoolers finish their snack, they may color the Bible story coloring page, play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question, or sing along to the key passage or theme song.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- bear-shaped graham crackers, 2 flavors (optional)

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- "The Lord Reigns (1 Chronicles 16:31)" song
- "The Gospel Is for Everyone" song
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers