

Barnabas Encourages Christians in Antioch Acts 11:19-26

Third- and fourth-graders are becoming increasingly independent and have a dawning realization that grown-ups aren't the only people who can make a difference in the lives of people around them. They have a role, too! Use this lesson to help kids learn that they can encourage others in their faith. God can, and will, use them to impact other people's lives in a positive way.



► **Bible Point**
Encourage each other to believe in Jesus.

Key Verse
"But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness" (Hebrews 3:13).

Weaving Faith Into Life
Children will encourage someone this week.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	Human Sculptures <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Pretend they're ice sculptures and butter sculptures, and learn the Key Verse.	Bibles	
2 Bible Exploration	No Gentiles Allowed <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Play a game forming groups and not letting others in.	Bible	
	Encouraging Christians <i>(about 15 min.)</i> Retell the Bible passage in their own words.	Bibles, index cards, pens	

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.



LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	Musical Encouragers <i>(about 15 min.)</i> Play a musical game while writing encouraging notes to one another.	Bible Truth Sleuth, markers, CD player, tables with chairs Teacher Pack: CD	Tear out the Lesson 12 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.
	Giant Encouragement <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Make a big card for church workers.	poster board, paper, glue sticks, markers, craft materials	
4 Lasting Impressions	Daily Challenges <i>(about 5 min.)</i> Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word.	Bible Truth Sleuth, pens	
	Weaving Faith at Home <i>(about 2 min.)</i> Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.		

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.



Barnabas Encourages Christians in Antioch

Acts 11:19-26

**BIBLE BACKGROUND
FOR LEADERS**

Reason to Praise

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In the chapters leading up to today’s passage, God revealed to Peter that the message of Christ is not only for Jews but for non-Jews as well. Peter then took that message to the household of Cornelius, a Roman centurion, and God poured out the Holy Spirit on these non-Jews who then came to faith in Christ. The Jerusalem church had a hard time accepting that non-Jews could become believers in Christ, but after Peter explained everything that had happened, they praised God that he had granted even the Gentiles eternal life through Jesus (Acts 10:1–11:18).

Reason to Scatter

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In today’s passage, we see that the early followers of Christ had been scattered from Jerusalem because of the persecution that began after Stephen was killed. The Jews had stoned him after he accused them of killing the Messiah, Jesus. But everywhere the scattered followers went, they told people about Jesus (Acts 7:1–8:4).

Spreading the News

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The believers who were scattered to Antioch, at that time the third largest city in the Roman Empire, began sharing the message of Christ not only with the many Jews who lived there, but also with the non-Jews. When Jerusalem’s church heard that a great number of people had turned to the Lord, they were ready to accept these non-Jewish believers, and they sent Barnabas (whose name means “Son of Encouragement”) to see what was happening and to contribute to the spreading of the gospel message.

Barnabas invited Saul (whom we know as the Apostle Paul) to Antioch for a year to help teach because the church was expanding so quickly. Barnabas had befriended Saul and defended him before the apostles

in Jerusalem after Saul had met Christ on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-30).

What happened in Antioch was significant because it was, apparently, the first time Jewish and non-Jewish Christians joined together in fellowship. People there were accustomed to rubbing shoulders with people of different backgrounds and of different ethnic groups. The church in Antioch set a wonderful example for churches to follow in centuries to come.

The Jesus Connection

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As the text tells us, Jesus’ followers were first called Christians in Antioch. It’s significant that in Antioch this diverse group of followers took on a name that means “like Christ.” As they lived out Jesus’ example and encouraged others in the faith, people noticed. What a compliment it would be for others to consider us to be like Jesus!

Pray about how your life can reflect Jesus in a way that would help draw others to God. You can write your prayer here.





Human Sculptures Supplies

Bibles

1 GETTING STARTED

Human Sculptures

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Welcome kids warmly as they arrive, and ask them how their week went.

Say: **Raise your hand if you've seen an ice sculpture or a butter sculpture.** Pause for responses.

Say: **People use many different things to create artwork. We're going to make human sculptures. The person in each pair whose birthday is next will stand up straight and frozen like you're a block of ice. You'll hold yourself in that position so that nothing can move you. The other partner is the ice sculptor. You'll try to make the frozen person move into different positions.**

If you're an ice block, you need to be as strong as you can so that it's hard for your partner to move you. If you're the ice sculptor, it's your job to move your partner into different positions without hurting your partner. I'll give you about one minute to try moving your partner's hands, arms, legs, or feet.

Give kids a moment to form pairs, and then give pairs about a minute to try this activity. Then have them switch roles and do it again.

Say: **We're going to do this activity again, but this time instead of being an ice sculpture, you're going to be a butter sculpture. Since butter is soft and easy to move around, the person who is being sculpted will be loose and easy to move.**

If you're the butter, you'll move your body wherever your sculptor guides you. If you're the sculptor, you'll carefully move your partner's hands, arms, legs, or feet into different positions that are comfortable for your partner. As you sculpt your partner, say something encouraging to him or her. For example, you could say, "I learn a lot from you when we talk together," or "You do a great job of listening to people who are talking."

Give pairs about a minute to sculpt, and then have them switch roles and do it again.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

When the second minute has passed, lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- Was it easy or hard to sculpt your partner the first time? Why?
- Was the second time easier? Why or why not?



Have a willing child read the Key Verse, Hebrews 3:13: “But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.”

Ask:

- **What is deceitfulness?**
- **How can sin be deceitful?**
- **How do you think sin’s deceitfulness can harden us?**
- **How was our sculpting experience the first time like what happens when we have sin in our lives?**
- **How does encouraging each other help us soften?**

Say: **We can ► ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER TO BELIEVE IN JESUS. Let’s take a look at how Barnabas encouraged the early Christians in Antioch.**

2 BIBLE
EXPLORATION

No Gentiles Allowed

What You’ll Do ■■■■■■

Direct kids to scatter around the room. Explain that you’ll call out a random number and they’ll form groups of that number. Once they have a group of the correct number, they should jump up and down and shout “hooray!” Some kids will be left out of the groups, so they won’t be able to celebrate.

Call out a number that’s less than the number of kids in your group and that will leave some kids out. For example, if you have 12 kids, you could call out the number 5.

After all the groups have formed, have kids scatter again. Repeat the activity several times.

Now have kids form groups of three or four, making sure everyone is included. Have kids discuss these questions in their groups.

Ask:

- **What did you think when you couldn’t find a group?**
- **When you were in a group, what was it like leaving others out?**

Open your Bible to Acts 11:19-21, and show the passage to the kids.

Say: **The events in this Bible passage take place shortly after a well-known believer was stoned to death for believing in Jesus. His name was Stephen. When other believers heard about Stephen’s brutal death, they all scattered. When the believers scattered, they didn’t talk about Jesus to anyone who was different from**



No Gentiles Allowed Supplies

Bible





Encouraging Christians Supplies

Bibles
index cards
pens

them. They wanted to stay safe rather than help others know who Jesus was. So they were very selective when it came to telling people about Jesus.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- How are the believers' actions like us only letting certain people into our groups during our game?
- What keeps us from telling everyone we meet about Jesus?

Say: Sometimes it makes us uncomfortable, but when we ► **ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER TO BELIEVE IN JESUS**, we're being obedient. There was one group of Jews who started telling others about Jesus even though they weren't Jews. Let's learn about them now.

Encouraging Christians

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Help kids form trios, and give each group a Bible, an index card, and a pen. Have kids turn in their Bibles to Acts 11. Assign each group one of the following sections of the Bible passage: Acts 11:19-21, Acts 11:22-24, Acts 11:25-26. Make sure each passage is assigned to a group. It's okay if a passage is assigned to more than one group.

Say: **Each group needs to choose a Reader, a Recorder, and an Encourager. The Reader will read your passage out loud to the group. Then the Recorder will write down your group's answers to the questions I ask in a moment. The Encourager will help the group stay on track and report back to all of us later.**

Allow about one minute for the Readers to read the passages you assigned. Then ask the following questions. After each question, ask trios to research and discuss the answer, and have the Recorder write the group's response on its card.

Ask:

- In your passage, who was the encourager?
- Who was encouraged in your passage?
- How did the encourager in your passage encourage others?
- What happened because of their encouragement?

After trios have finished recording their answers, start with the group that discussed verses 19-21, and have each Encourager share with the other groups each of their answers.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- In what ways could the Holy Spirit make a difference in Barnabas’ desire to encourage the believers?
- What are some things that encourage you in your faith?
- Is it easy or hard for you to encourage others in their faith? Explain.
- Why is it good for us to encourage one another?

Say: **It can be hard for us to encourage others in faith. Sometimes we may feel like we need to be encouraged ourselves or that we don’t know how to encourage people. Barnabas had help—Acts 19:24 says he was full of the Holy Spirit! God wants to help us ► ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER TO BELIEVE IN JESUS. Let’s see how we can do that.**

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Musical Encouragers

What You’ll Do

Have kids sit at the tables. Distribute markers and this week’s Bible Truth Sleuth pages, and have kids turn to the “Encouragers” activity. Ask kids to write their names somewhere on their papers.

Say: **God knows we need to be encouraged. That’s why he tells us to do it! So we’re going to encourage one another in our faith, just like the believers in the Bible did.**

Move the chairs away from the tables, and cue the CD to “Wherever You Go” (Joshua 1:9) (track 16 on the CD). You’ll start and pause the CD several times during this song and “Trust in the Lord” (Proverbs 3:5-6) (track 17 on the CD).

When you begin the music, have each person move one space to the left and write something to encourage the person whose name is on the paper. When the music stops, have kids stop writing and move to the next paper. Continue starting and stopping the music until kids make it back to their original positions.

When kids return to their own papers, have them read the encouraging comments from their peers. Allow one minute for kids to read.



Musical Encouragers Supplies

- Bible Truth Sleuth markers
- CD player
- tables with chairs

Teacher Pack

- CD: “Wherever You Go” (Joshua 1:9) (track 16), “Trust in the Lord” (Proverbs 3:5-6) (track 17)

Musical Encouragers Easy Prep

Tear out the Lesson 12 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.



Giant Encouragement Supplies

poster board
paper
glue sticks
markers
craft materials

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- Did it feel better to encourage others or to read the words of encouragement others wrote? Why?
- How did reading the words of encouragement help you want to pass encouragement on to others?

Say: It feels good to be encouraged. When other Christians encourage us in our faith, it makes us want to keep growing in our faith. Barnabas saw the power of encouragement firsthand. That's why it's good to ► **ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER TO BELIEVE IN JESUS.**

Giant Encouragement

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Say: **Christians ► ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER TO BELIEVE IN JESUS.** God loves us so much that he puts people in our lives who encourage us as we grow. God wants you to be that kind of person, too. Before we leave, we're going to practice encouraging others in their faith. We're going to take a few minutes and create a giant greeting card to give to the people in our church who serve God.

Ask:

- Who are some people in our church who help us grow closer to Jesus, and how do they help?

Distribute paper, and have available glue sticks, markers, and craft materials. Say: **We're going to decorate a giant encouragement card. On your piece of paper, draw an encouraging picture or write a note of encouragement to someone who serves in our church. Be creative, but be sincere. Then bring the paper up and glue it onto the poster board to make a collage card.**

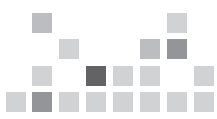
Give kids time to write and draw. Help them think of ways they can portray their encouragement in words and pictures. Then go as a group to the church office, lobby, or a common area to display the card where church staff will see it.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

When you return, lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- Why is it important to encourage one another?
- Who are some people you know who could use some encouragement? Why?
- Which encouraging exercise from today could you use to encourage someone this week?



Say: **A little encouragement can go a long way—just as it did with Barnabas and the church in Antioch. Just think about how great you feel when someone encourages you. So let's ► ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER TO BELIEVE IN JESUS.**



4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Say: **Let's think this week about how we can be encouragers.**

Have kids find this week's Daily Challenges on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages and choose one to do this week. They can choose one or more of these three options:

- **Watch for a time when someone in your family seems discouraged this week. Then encourage him or her with words or actions.**
- **Decide to go out of your way to encourage at least one person every day. Write down in a journal what you did or said, and then pray for the people you encouraged.**
- **Send a card to a Christian friend, telling that person you appreciate him or her. Encourage your friend with your words. You could even draw an encouraging picture in your letter.**

Make sure you choose a Daily Challenge as well, and tell the kids what you chose. Kids will be more inclined to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What's a practical way you're going to do your Daily Challenge? Include a time, a place, and other ideas.**

Say: **Barnabas knew it was important to tell everyone about Jesus—no matter who the person was. Just like Barnabas, we can ► ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER TO BELIEVE IN JESUS. Let's encourage—and be encouraged—this week by following through on our Daily Challenges.**

Daily Challenges Supplies

Bible Truth Sleuth pens





Weaving Faith at Home

Encourage kids to talk with their parents about the Daily Challenges they chose and what they learned about encouraging others. Kids can also do the activities in the “HomeConnect” section of their Bible Truth Sleuth pages with their families.

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church’s families. Available at group.com/digital.

Take a couple of minutes to pray with your kids. Have kids stand in a circle and pray a prayer of thanks to God for the person to their left. Start with the person on your left, and end the prayer with this closing. Pray: **Dear God, you know how much we need to be encouraged as we grow closer to you. Help us this week to look for ways to encourage others in their faith. Help us to be strong in our faith and to be good followers of you. In Jesus’ name, amen.**