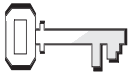


Spreading the Word



References

Acts 13:1-12; *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 166–169



Memory Verse

“The Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them’ ” (Acts 13:2, NIV).

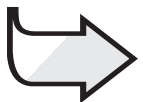


Objectives

The children will: **Know** that God’s love reaches out to everyone.

Feel excited about the good news about Jesus.

Respond by being a willing channel of God’s grace.



The Message

God sends us as messengers of His grace.

Monthly Theme

God never stops loving us.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

After a year in Antioch the Holy Spirit speaks to the Christians, telling them to set apart Paul and Barnabas for the work God has called them to do. The Christians fast and pray before laying hands on the two men and sending them off. They go first to Cyprus and witness to the proconsul. When Elymas the sorcerer tries to turn the proconsul against the faith, Paul tells him he will lose his sight for a while. God sends Paul and Barnabas as messengers of His grace.

This is a lesson about grace.

God’s grace is open to all. The Holy Spirit spoke to the Christians in Antioch to send Paul and Barnabas to share God’s grace with others. By temporarily blinding Elymas, God pointed out the error of Elymas’s teachings and gave him another chance to accept His grace.

Teacher Enrichment

“As His representatives among men, God does not choose angels who have never fallen, but human beings, men of like passions with those they seek to save. Christ took humanity that He might reach humanity. A divine-human Saviour was needed to bring salvation to the world. And to men and women has been committed the sacred trust of making known ‘the unsearchable riches of Christ.’ Ephesians 3:8.

“In His wisdom the Lord brings those who are seeking for truth into touch with fellow beings who know the truth. It is the plan of Heaven that those who have received light shall impart it to those in darkness. Humanity, drawing its efficiency from the great Source of wisdom, is made the instrumentality, the working agency, through which the gospel exercises its transforming power on mind and heart” (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 134).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 6.

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	A. <i>Whispers</i> B. <i>Messages of Grace</i>	none individual message for each child, "letter carrier"
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	none <i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> simple offering device relating to the field of mission emphasis paper, pencils, large envelope
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	man dressed in Bible-times costume envelope, paper, Bible Bibles, paper, envelope
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Grace Scenarios</i>	large sheet of paper, marker
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Unexpected Grace</i>	Bibles

*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Listen to last week’s memory verse and encourage the children to share any experiences from last week’s lesson study. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.



Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

A. Whispers

Have everyone sit in a circle. Whisper a message to the person on your right and one to the person on your left. Have them pass the message around the circle by whispering to their neighbor. When the messages have gone around the circle, ask the person who received it last to say it out loud. Try it two or three times, starting in different places in the circle and have different people choose a message.

Debriefing

Ask: **How easy was it to hear, understand, and pass on the messages? How did you feel when there was more than one message at a time?** (confused, stressed) **God has given us a special message to share with others. A message of His grace. It is very important that we find ways to communicate clearly so people understand God’s message. That’s what today’s message is about:**



GOD SENDS US AS MESSENGERS OF HIS GRACE.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- individual message for each child
- “letter carrier”

B. Messages of Grace

In advance, prepare a message for each child, telling them that God loves them and stating at least one positive thing about that child. Prepare some extras for visitors, saying how much God loves them. Have someone dressed as a letter carrier come in and deliver the letters. Allow time for the children to read their letters.

Debriefing

Ask: **How did you feel when you got your letter?** (surprised, happy, good) **Why did your letter make you feel good?** (It said something nice.) **When you have some good news or something good happens to you, what do you want to do?** (tell others) **Is it easy to keep good news to yourself?** (No, it’s difficult. It just bubbles out.) **God has given us the best news of all to share with others—the news that He loves us. That’s what today’s message is about.**



GOD SENDS US AS MESSENGERS OF HIS GRACE.

Say that with me.

Prayer and Praise

Any
Time



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing from last week's lesson study and review last week's memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special warm greeting to all visitors.



Suggested Songs

- "Psalm 118:24" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 94)
- "Jesus, We Want to Meet" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 95)
- "His Banner Over Me Is Love" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 25)
- "God Is So Good" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 13)
- "O, How He Loves You and Me" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 28)



Mission

Use a story from *Children's Mission*. Emphasize that God sends people like you and me to be messengers of His grace.



Offering

Say: **There are lots of different ways of communicating: telephone, fax, e-mail, TV, radio, just to name a few. The best way of communication is when we can see someone face to face. When we give our offerings, we invest in different ways of communicating the gospel to those around us.**

You Need:

- simple offering device relating to the field of mission emphasis



Prayer

Say: **This morning we are going to write a letter to God. You can thank Him for all the good things He has given you and tell Him about anything that worries you. If you want, you can draw the different things.** Put all the letters in the large envelope, seal it, pray over it, and ask God to hear and answer the prayers.

You Need:

- paper
- pencils
- large envelope

2

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- man dressed in Bible-times costume

Experiencing the Story

Invite a man dressed in Bible-times costume to act as John Mark and tell the story.

As you read or tell the story have the children do the following:

When they hear: They do:

Paul/Barnabas	thumbs up
Elymas	thumbs down
proconsul	fold hands and bow

Read or tell the story.

My name is John Mark. I am a friend of **Paul** and **Barnabas**. We are on a journey to tell others about God's love. I have come to learn how to teach others; as yet, I don't know very much. But I am getting ahead of myself. Let me go back to the beginning.

Paul and **Barnabas** had worked together in Antioch for a year. They were very busy teaching, preaching, and helping people. The church grew and grew.

One day some of the members were fasting and praying. They were asking God to guide them and tell them what He wanted them to do. While they were praying, the Holy Spirit said: "I have called **Paul** and **Barnabas** to do a special job for Me. I want you to pray for them and send them off to tell the good news about Jesus in other places."

Everyone was sad when they heard that **Paul** and **Barnabas** were going away, but they also wanted others to hear about Jesus. So the believers in Antioch fasted and prayed before gathering for a special prayer meeting. At this meeting the elders in the church laid hands on **Paul** and **Barnabas** and prayed for them.

Paul and **Barnabas** agreed to take

me along to teach me how to evangelize. At the port of Salamis we caught a boat that was sailing to Cyprus. We traveled across the island, stopping at all the Jewish synagogues and teaching everyone who would listen about Jesus.

Finally, we arrived at the other side of the island at another port called Paphos. There we met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet called Bar-Jesus or **Elymas**. He was an important man and one of the Roman **proconsul's** attendants.

Cyprus is not a huge island, so news of strangers traveled fast. The **proconsul** had heard about **Paul**. He was curious to hear the Word of God. **Elymas** was not happy. He was afraid that he would lose his influence with the **proconsul**. So he tried to turn him against **Paul** and **Barnabas**.

The Holy Spirit showed **Paul** what was happening. **Paul** turned and looked directly at **Elymas** and said: "You are a child of the devil. You are an enemy of everything that is right. You are full of tricks and ways to fool people. You will never stop trying to put roadblocks in the way of the Lord. Because of your actions you will be blind for a while. You will not be able to see the light of the sun."

Immediately **Elymas** felt a dark mist rolling in front of his eyes. He blinked. He rubbed his eyes. He tried to push it away. Everything got darker and darker.

Elymas was blind, just as **Paul** had said he would be. He could not see a thing. He began to reach out for a hand to guide him so he did not fall.

The **proconsul** was amazed. One moment **Elymas** could see; the next he was blind. This convinced the **proconsul** that **Paul** was teaching the truth. And that's how he came to believe in God.

We traveled to many different places. Everywhere we went, we told the good

news that God's grace was free and available to everyone.

I learned a lot traveling with **Paul** and **Barnabas**. It helped me later on as I continued to tell others about Jesus.

Debriefing

Ask: **Why did Paul and Barnabas leave Antioch?** (The Holy Spirit told the believers to pray for them and send them to teach in other places.) **Where did they go first?** (Seleucia, then Cyprus.)

What did they do when they got to Cyprus? (They traveled around the island telling people about Jesus.)

Who tried to stop them? (Elymas) **Why?** (He was afraid of losing influence over the proconsul.)

What did Paul do? (He told Elymas he would be blind for a while.)

What did the proconsul think when Elymas became blind? (He believed that Paul and Barnabas came to the people with a message from God.)

God wants us to carry the same message today. Let's remember:



GOD SENDS US AS MESSENGERS OF HIS GRACE.

Memory Verse

In advance, write each word of the memory verse on a slip of paper and put it in the envelope.

(Large group, use more than one set.) Have the children empty the envelope and put the words in the right order. Let them use their Bibles if necessary. Put the words back in the envelope and repeat until they know the verse.

Today's memory verse is: **"The Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them' " (Acts 13:2, NIV).**

You Need:

- envelope
- paper
- Bible

Bible Study

In advance, write the texts below on paper and put them in the envelope.

Say: **Let's discover more about God's gift of grace and how it works in our lives. I need a volunteer to take a message from God from our envelope.**

Allow time, then have the reader ask the group to answer the question.

1 John 4:9	How did God show His love to us?
Colossians 1:12-14	What has God rescued us from?
1 Peter 5:7	What does God say everyone who believes in Him can do?
James 3:17, 18	What does God promise to everyone?
Jeremiah 29:11	What is God's plan for us?

Debriefing

Ask: **Can you remember why Paul and Barnabas set out on their journey?** (The Holy Spirit spoke to the believers in Antioch.) **Does God have a plan for your life?** (Yes.) **Let's read Jeremiah 29:11 again.** Allow time.

Paul had many difficulties. Do we need to worry when we face difficulties? (No. God has promised to be with us.)

What do our texts tell us about God? (He loves us. He is with us all the time. He has rescued us from sin and wants what is best for us.) **God offers the same grace to everyone. We are His messengers of grace to the world around us. Let's remember:**



GOD SENDS US AS MESSENGERS OF HIS GRACE.

You Need:

- Bibles
- envelope
- slips of paper

3

Applying the Lesson

You Need:

- large sheet of paper
- marker

Grace Scenarios

Pin up a large sheet of paper and put a dot in the middle. Say: **This is you. Let's draw your world.** Draw three circles and label them: home, school, activities.

Choose some of the following scenarios and ask: **How could you be a messenger of grace in this situation?** You may want to substitute other scenarios that better suit your situation.

Home Scenarios

Your older sister is studying for a test. Your little brother keeps nagging her to come and play with him. How can you be a messenger of grace?

It is not your turn to do the dishes. They are in the kitchen sink. Your Mom is helping your Dad. There are lots of pans to wash and you hate washing pans. How can you be a messenger of grace?

Mom or Dad always have to remind you to do your chores. How could you make this into a grace situation?

School Scenarios

The teacher is out of the room. Everyone is talking and making noise. The teacher has asked you to work quietly on your papers. How can you be a messenger of grace?

Your friend is having a hard time understanding math. You find it easy. You

want to play ball at break time. You want to practice so you will make the team. What can you do to be a messenger of grace?

Your friends are being unkind to one of the other children. You don't like that child either, but feel they are being unfair. How can you be a messenger of grace?

School Activities

You are often chosen to be a sports captain. You like picking the best players for your team. Some people always have to wait until last to get picked. How can you be a messenger of grace?

You have been offered a leading role in a school program. There are three performances. One is on Friday night. How can you be a messenger of grace?

Debriefing

Ask: **Is it always easy to be a messenger of grace? Why?**

When we are faced with difficult situations/choices, what can we be sure of? (God's grace is big enough to help us deal with the situation and help us to spread His grace to others.)

Let's say our message together:



GOD SENDS US AS MESSENGERS OF HIS GRACE.

Sharing the Lesson

Unexpected Grace

Ask: **What is grace?** (It is a gift we don't deserve; something we cannot earn. All we have to do is accept it.)

Let's plan a surprise gift for someone. Plan a collective surprise, an activity the children could do together, such as singing at an old folks home, weeding a garden, cleaning up around the church. Plan what you need to do to help others.

Or help the children plan an individual gift of grace, something a child can do individually for a friend or family member.

Debriefing

Ask: **What does it feel like to be a messenger of grace by doing something no one expects?**

What can we say when people ask why we are giving our gift of grace?

Read 1 John 4:9 aloud. Say: **God has given us so many gifts of grace that we want to be messengers of His grace to others.** Invite each child to tell about something they will share with others this week.

Let's say our message together:



GOD SENDS US AS MESSENGERS OF HIS GRACE.

Closing

Remind the children that God's grace is free, that His gifts of love are for all. Pray that God will continue to be with each child as they share those gifts with others this week.

You Need:

- Bibles

Spreading the Word

References

Acts 13:1-12; *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 166–169

Memory Verse

“The Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them’ ” (Acts 13:2, NIV).

The Message

God sends us as messengers of His grace.

Have you ever been on a long trip? How did you travel? Paul and Barnabas were sent on a special trip—a trip to tell others of God’s grace. But not everyone was happy as they preached. Read on to discover what happened.

Paul and Barnabas had worked together in Antioch for a year. They kept busy teaching, preaching, and helping people. And the church in Antioch grew and grew.

One day some of the members were fasting and praying. They were asking God to guide them, to tell them what He wanted them to do. While they were praying, the Holy Spirit spoke to them. He said, “I have

called Paul and Barnabas to do a special work for Me. Place your hands on them. Then pray for them and send them off to tell the good news in other places.”

Everyone was sad when they heard that Paul and Barnabas were going away. But they also wanted others to hear about Jesus. So the Antioch believers fasted and prayed. Then they gathered for a special prayer meeting. The elders in the church laid hands on Paul and Barnabas and prayed for them. Then they sent them on their way.

Paul and Barnabas took a young man, John Mark, with them. He would learn from them and help them in their work. The three of them caught a boat at the port of Salamis and sailed to Cyprus. They traveled across the island, stopping at all the Jewish synagogues and teaching everyone who would listen.

Soon they moved on to Paphos on the other side of the island. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet called Bar-Jesus or Elymas. He was an important man and one of the Roman proconsul’s attendants.

Cyprus was not a huge island, so news of strangers traveled fast. The proconsul soon heard about Paul and his companions. He was curious to hear the Word of God. Elymas was not happy about that. He was afraid that he

would lose his influence with the proconsul. So he tried to turn the proconsul against Paul and his friends.

But the Holy Spirit showed Paul what was happening. Suddenly, Paul turned and looked directly at Elymas.

“You are a child of the devil,” he said. “You are an enemy of everything that is right. You are full of tricks and ways to fool people. You will never stop trying to put roadblocks in the way of the Lord. Because of your actions, you will be blind for a while. You will not be able to see the light of the sun.”



Immediately, Elymas felt a dark mist rolling in front of his eyes. He blinked. He rubbed his eyes. He tried to push it away. Everything got darker and darker. Elymas really was blind. He could not see a thing! He began to reach out for a hand to guide him so he did not fall.

The proconsul was amazed. One moment Elymas could see; the next he was blind. This convinced the proconsul that Paul was teaching the truth. He listened and learned, and he soon believed in God.

Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark traveled on to many other places. Everywhere they went, they told everyone the good news: God's grace is free and available to everyone. We can be like Paul and his friends. We, too, can tell people we meet about God's wonderful love and grace.

Daily Activities

Sabbath

- Paul and Barnabas went to Cyprus by boat. If possible, go for a walk where you can see boats. Ask your family to name some Bible stories that involve boats.
- Ask God to protect people who are traveling.

Sunday

- For worship today read and discuss Acts 13:1-12. What is the lesson for your family in this story?
- Try to find a picture of a sailing boat in Bible times. How does it compare with modern boats?
- Make a boat shape out of paper and write your memory verse on the sail. Use this to teach the verse to your family.
- Ask God to help you to be His messenger.

Monday

- With your family, read Jeremiah 29:11. What was God's plan for Paul and Barnabas? Does He have a plan for you?
- Trace the first part of Paul and Barnabas's journey on a Bible map. How far did they travel? On a modern map, measure the same distance from your town to another city.
- Ask God to help you understand His plan for your life.

Tuesday

- Read and discuss Colossians 1:12-14 during worship today. What does God's grace rescue us from? Ask two people to tell you what God's grace means to them.
- During family worship sing "Jesus Loves Me." Then thank God for His love.

Wednesday

- Read 1 John 4:9 to your family for worship. How has God shown His love for you? Find a way to show someone in your family how much you love them.
- Cut out a paper heart. Ask your family to think of things that remind them of God's grace. Write them on the heart and put it where everyone can see it.
- Sing some praise songs, then thank God for His gifts of grace.

Thursday

- Read the lesson story about Paul and Barnabas with your family. Who went with them? Why? What message did they share with others?
- Look at Jeremiah 33:3. How does God keep this promise? Does He use any of the ways we use? Discuss what this means with your family.
- How many different ways can you send a message to a friend who lives across town? Send a message today. Tell your friend that God loves them all the time. Ask God to bless your friend.

Friday

- During worship today read and discuss Acts 13:1-12. Act out the story of Elymas. Who will you be?
- Look up *proconsul* in a dictionary. Ask your family: What kind of a person would be a proconsul?
- Say your memory verse together before prayer. Thank God for a special day to spend with Him.