

Paul's First Journey

BIBLE PASSAGE: Acts 13:1-3; 14:8-28

MAIN POINT: The Holy Spirit sent Paul and Barnabas to tell Jews and Gentiles about Jesus.

KEY PASSAGE: Acts 1:8

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How do people hear about Jesus? God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved.

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Leader BIBLE STUDY

Jesus' followers preached the gospel in Jerusalem, and the good news spread to places like Judea and Samaria. More and more people believed, and new churches began as both Jews and Gentiles began to follow Jesus.

Barnabas went to Antioch—a city about 300 miles north of Jerusalem—where he brought Paul to help teach the believers. The church in Antioch grew. It was here that the disciples first became known as Christians. (See Acts 11:26.)

The Holy Spirit told the believers at the church in Antioch to send out Paul and Barnabas to preach the gospel. The church obeyed, and Paul and Barnabas traveled to several

cities and all over the island of Cyprus, telling both Jews and Gentiles about Jesus.

Consider Paul—once a devoted persecutor of Christians—now a Christian missionary, devoted to obeying God’s call to go and tell others the good news about Jesus. This was Paul’s first missionary journey, and it wasn’t easy. Paul and Barnabas faced rejection in every place that they traveled. Some of the people believed, but some of them were angry. Many people rejected the truth about Jesus. In some places, the Jews made plans to kill Paul.

In no place did Paul and Barnabas soften their message or abandon their mission. In Lystra, Paul healed a man, and when the witnesses to this miracle began to worship Paul and Barnabas, the two men emphatically gave credit to the one true God. When Paul’s enemies attacked him and left him for dead, Paul continued on. Paul and Barnabas shared the gospel in Derbe (DUHR bih), and many people believed.

The Holy Spirit sent Paul and Barnabas to tell Jews and Gentiles about Jesus. If Paul had not taken the gospel to the Gentiles, many of us would probably not be believers today. God uses people to tell others about Jesus so that people all over the world can be saved from their sin by trusting in Jesus as Lord and Savior.



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The BIBLE STORY

Bible Storytelling Tips

Paul's First Journey

Acts 13:1-3; 14:8-28

- **Display a map:** Show a map of Paul's missionary journeys. Trace Paul's first journey as you tell the Bible story.
- **Move:** Move around the front of the room as you tell the Bible story, reflecting Paul and Barnabas' movement between cities.

Saul, who became known by his Roman name, Paul, was with the church in Antioch. The Holy Spirit chose Paul and another believer, Barnabas, for a special work. So they obeyed and left Antioch to do the work. **God led Paul and Barnabas to tell the good news about Jesus to not only the Jews, but the Gentiles**—or people who were not Jews.

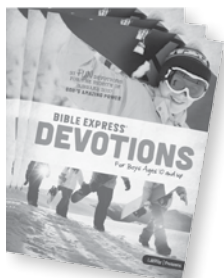
Paul and Barnabas traveled to Lystra (LISS truh), and Paul healed a man there who was lame; the man had never been able to walk. The people saw what Paul had done, and they thought Paul and Barnabas were gods! They began to worship them, but Paul and Barnabas tore their clothes and shouted, “No! We are not gods. We are men just like you! We want to tell you the good news of God.”

Then some people showed up from Antioch and Iconium (igh KOH nih uhm), cities where Paul and Barnabas had preached about Jesus. These people **caused trouble so that the people in Lystra turned against Paul and Barnabas too. They threw stones at Paul and dragged him out of the city.** They thought he was dead, but the believers in Lystra gathered around Paul, and he got up.

The next day, Paul and Barnabas went to the city of Derbe (DUHR bih). They told people there about Jesus, and many people believed. Then they went back to Lystra and to Iconium. They encouraged the believers there to continue in the faith. They told the believers that they would face suffering because they believed in Jesus. Paul and Barnabas also chose leaders for the churches there.

Finally, Paul and Barnabas returned to the church at Antioch. They reported everything God had done on their journey and how God had helped them share the good news with the Gentiles.

Christ Connection: Paul and Barnabas faced many people who rejected the good news about Jesus. But God had a plan for Paul to share the gospel with Gentiles, no matter what troubles Paul faced. Many believed in Jesus. The church grew and the gospel was shared so that people all over the world could be saved from their sin by trusting in Jesus as Lord and Savior.



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD'S WORD?
GET
BIBLE EXPRESS!**

Invite kids to check out this week's devotionals to discover how God's Word can help them grow in the gospel. Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Introduce the STORY

SESSION TITLE: Paul's First Journey

BIBLE PASSAGE: Acts 13:1-3; 14:8-28

MAIN POINT: The Holy Spirit sent Paul and Barnabas to tell Jews and Gentiles about Jesus.

KEY PASSAGE: Acts 1:8

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How do people hear about Jesus? God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to share where they would go if they could go on vacation anywhere in the world. Ask them to talk about what modes of transportation they might use on their trip.

Activity page (5 minutes)

- “How Does It Grow?” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete “How Does It Grow?” on the activity page. Kids should match each person, place, or thing with what helps it grow.

SAY • How does a baby grow? (*milk*) How does a dog grow? (*dog food*) How does a plant grow? (*water and sunlight*) How does the church grow? (*The church grows when people hear the gospel and believe in Jesus.*)

We will learn today about how God used a man named Paul to spread the gospel in many places.



• world map (optional)

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Go on a journey

Invite kids to imagine they are going on a journey around

the world. They may go anywhere they want. You may choose to display a large world map for kids to reference.

1. Choose one kid to pick the first destination (for example, Egypt).
2. Ask another kid how you will get there (for example, running).
3. Lead all of the kids to act out the mode of transportation for a few seconds before reaching the destination. (Kids will run in place.)
4. Announce that you have arrived. Ask two or three kids what they would like to do in that location.
5. Act out those activities (climb the Pyramids, lay in the sand, and so on).

Play multiple rounds, giving every kid an opportunity to provide some input into the journey.

SAY • Whew! That was a lot of fun. Today we are going to hear a story about a man who went on a journey to tell people about Jesus.

OPTION 2: Called to go

Instruct kids to stand at one side of the room. Stand at the other side of the room. Call for kids who match a certain description to move forward. For example, “Everyone wearing red, take three steps forward!” or “Everyone born in March, take one hop forward.”

Vary your descriptions so all kids participate. If time allows, choose volunteers to call out descriptions.

SAY • Today’s Bible story is about a man whom God called to go on an important journey. We’ll find out where he went and what he did there.

Transition to teach the story

Teach the STORY

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Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire

• compass

[Leader enters wearing a white outfit: white pants, white shirt or jacket, and a white hat. Leader is carrying a compass.]

LEADER • Hello, hello! I'm back from the water. I had a wonderful time exploring the Pacific Ocean. Here's a cool fact: the word *Pacific* means "peaceful." Did you know that the Pacific Ocean is the biggest ocean on earth? It covers about one-third of the earth's surface. You could combine all of the landmass of the continents, and the Pacific Ocean would still be bigger! Amazing.

Now, because the Pacific Ocean is so big, I really had to rely on my compass to navigate. A lot of the time, all I could see in every direction was more water! I'm glad to be back here for a break before my next expedition, though. It's time for me to tell you our Bible story. It's about Paul. Paul was a believer who did a lot of traveling too. Let's dive in.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Who remembers our big picture question?

[*Allow kids to respond.*] Here it is: ***How do people hear about Jesus?*** If you know the answer, say it with me: ***God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved.*** Let's say our big picture question and answer together: ***How do people hear about Jesus? God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved.***

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline or big story circle.

LEADER • Last time, we heard the story of Paul's conversion and baptism. *Conversion* means a change to a right relationship with God. Paul had been a Jew and did not think Jesus was the Messiah, but God opened his eyes. Paul believed that Jesus really is Lord and Messiah. Jesus saved Paul from his sins and chose him to spread the gospel. Today we are going to find out what Paul did next.

• Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Acts 13:1-3; 14:8-28. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Paul's First Journey."

LEADER • Paul was ready to go after Jesus changed him! Paul and Barnabas were at the church in Antioch. Think of the church in Antioch as kind of their "home base." **The Holy Spirit sent Paul and Barnabas to tell Jews and Gentiles about Jesus.**
How do people hear about Jesus? God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may

• Bibles
• "Paul's First Journey" video
• Big Picture Question Poster
• Bible Story Picture Poster

repent and be saved. Paul and Barnabas left Antioch in Syria and went to the island of Cyprus. Then they went to a city in Asia that was also called Antioch. From there, Paul and Barnabas went to Iconium (igh KOH nih uhm), Lystra (LISS truh), and Derbe (DUHR bih) before they went back home.

At each place, Paul and Barnabas went into the synagogues to talk to the Jews. They told the people that the only way to be forgiven of sin is to trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior. Paul said that no one could be saved by keeping the law; no one is good enough to save himself.

Some of the people who listened to Paul believed what he was saying, but many of the Jews did not like this message. Since the Jews would not listen, Paul preached the gospel to the Gentiles, or non-Jews. This made the Jews angry, and they ran Paul and Barnabas out of town.

Paul and Barnabas faced many people who rejected the good news about Jesus, but God had a plan for Paul to share the gospel with Gentiles—no matter what troubles Paul faced. Many believed in Jesus. The church grew and the gospel was shared so that people all over the world could be saved from their sin by trusting in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Christ connection

LEADER • Paul faced trouble in every city, but he did not quit the job God gave him to do. Paul was a missionary. A missionary is someone who obeys God's call to go and tell others the good news about Jesus. God used Paul in His plan, and He uses people

today to tell others about Jesus so that people all over the world can be saved from their sin by trusting in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

How do people hear about Jesus? God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Acts 1:8.

LEADER • Jesus' words came true! The Holy Spirit came and empowered Jesus' disciples to go into all the world to share the gospel. That's what Paul was doing on his first missionary journey. Paul wasn't a good missionary on his own; the Holy Spirit worked through him.

How do people hear about Jesus? God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved. Let's say our key passage one more time and then we will sing.

Lead boys and girls in singing "To the End of the Earth."

- Key Passage Poster
- "To the End of the Earth." song

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

LEADER • **The Holy Spirit sent Paul and Barnabas to tell Jews and Gentiles about Jesus.** They obeyed, and many people believed in Jesus. With the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus' followers began the work of sharing the gospel with the world. Today, there is still much work to be done. Check out this video.

Show the "Unit 30, Session 2" discussion starter video.

Then lead kids to discuss the following questions:

- Why do we tell people about Jesus?

- "Unit 30, Session 2" discussion starter video

- Do we have to go to other countries to share the gospel?
- What is the difference between being on mission and being a missionary?
- Why is it important to support missionaries?

LEADER • God calls His church to send and support missionaries to people who have never heard the gospel. God may call you to go to another country and be a missionary, or He may call you to be on mission right where you are.

With the Holy Spirit's help, we can all tell others about Jesus until the whole world hears.

Sing (4 minutes)

• "A Mission from Above"
song

LEADER • We are the church, and we will tell the world about Jesus. We have a message of good news to share. Let's sing!

Sing together "A Mission from Above."

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Lord, thank You for sending Jesus to save us from our sins. We know that we can never be good enough to earn salvation, so we put our trust in Jesus, who never sinned. This good news is for everyone! Help us to not be ashamed or embarrassed to tell others about You. We love You, Father. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

Apply the STORY

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Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- ball

Display the key passage poster and invite kids to read Acts 1:8 aloud together. Then guide kids to stand in a circle. Give one kid a ball. He should say the first word of the key passage and then toss the ball to another kid. That kid should say the first and second words of the key passage and then toss the ball to another kid. The third player will say the first, second, and third words.

Continue tossing and adding words until kids recite the entire passage. If a kid says the incorrect word, pause and lead the whole group to say the key passage together up to that word. Then continue from there.

SAY • In the Book of Acts, we see Jesus' followers doing just what Jesus said would happen. They were filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, and they took the gospel to places all over the world.

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster

Guide kids to open their Bibles to Acts 14. Challenge them to name the four Bible books that come before the Book of Acts. (*Matthew, Mark, Luke, John*) Instruct kids to determine if the following statements are true or false. Give

the reference for kids to check their answers.

1. Paul traveled with his friend Barnabas. (*true, Acts 13:2-3*)
2. People in Lystra thought that Paul and Barnabas were gods. (*true, Acts 14:11*)
3. Paul and Barnabas were happy to be worshiped. (*False, they tore their clothes and told the people to stop; Acts 14:14-15*)
4. Everyone was happy with Paul and Barnabas. (*False, people turned against them; Acts 14:19*)
5. After Lystra, Paul and Barnabas traveled to Derbe. (*true, Acts 14:20*)
6. Paul and Barnabas told believers their lives would be easy if they followed Jesus. (*False, they would face suffering; Acts 14:22*)
7. Paul and Barnabas returned to the church at Antioch. (*true, Acts 14:26*)
8. Paul and Barnabas did not tell anyone what happened on their journey. (*False, they reported everything God had done; Acts 14:27*)

SAY • Paul once persecuted Christians, but Jesus changed him and he became a missionary. ***How do people hear about Jesus? God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved.***

The Holy Spirit sent Paul and Barnabas to tell Jews and Gentiles about Jesus. They obeyed God's call. The gospel spread, and the church grew.

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Around the World basketball (Round 1)

Hang a small basketball hoop or position an empty trash can against one wall. Use masking tape or painter's tape to

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.



- empty trash can or basketball hoop
- paper wad or basketball
- masking tape or painter's tape

Option: Label some of the spots corresponding to places on Paul's journey: *Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe.*

Tip: If your group is small, play with one team and challenge kids to move around the arc as many times as they can.

mark five *X*s on the floor in a semi-circle around the hoop, a few feet from the basket. Form two teams and instruct kids how to play.

1. The first player from team 1 will attempt to score a basket from the first *X*. If she scores, she moves to the next *X*. The shooter continues until she misses.
2. Then the next player from team 1 resumes at the *X* that was last shot from. Continue until all the players on team 1 have had a turn.
3. Each time the team moves around the arc, award 25 points and continue play from the first *X*.
4. Each time the arc is completed, encourage kids to stand a little farther behind the *X* to shoot. Then allow team 2 to play.

SAY • Paul and Barnabas traveled around to places like Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. They shared the gospel, many people believed in Jesus, and the church grew. ***How do people hear about Jesus? God uses Christians to tell others about Jesus so they may repent and be saved.***

OPTION 2: Encourage or interview missionaries

Identify a missionary your church supports. If a missionary is available to visit your class, invite him or her to tell the boys and girls about the work of a missionary.

Allow kids to ask questions. You may choose to ask questions like these:

- What is the best thing and the hardest thing about being a missionary?
- What do you do to help people learn about Jesus?
- How can we pray for you?

If a missionary is not available for an interview, provide

- stationary
- pencils or markers

stationery and invite kids to write notes to encourage him or her. Discuss the challenges missionaries face as they share the gospel and ways kids can pray for them. Collect the cards and letters to mail together this week.

SAY • The Holy Spirit sent Paul and Barnabas to tell

Jews and Gentiles about Jesus. God sometimes calls people to be missionaries. A *missionary* is a Christian chosen by God who obeys and goes to tell another group of people the good news about Jesus. God might one day call us to be missionaries too.

No matter where we are, we can all support missionaries and live on mission to make Jesus known in our homes, cities, and far beyond.

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, thanking God for making the way for all people—people from every nation—to be part of God’s family.

As time allows, lead kids to complete “Mark the Way I” on the activity page.

- pencils
- Journal Page
- “Mark the Way I” activity page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week’s *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.