

## GOOD NEWS FOR THE PEOPLE OF ANTIOCH

All Activity Sheets

### KEY WORDS

PEACE ANTIOCH CHRISTIANS FOLLOWERS SENT

### BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Acts 11:19-26

### LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the students know that in Antioch, the followers of Jesus were called “Christians” for the first time

### MEMORY VERSE

“Again Jesus said, ‘Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I’m sending you’” (John 20:21, NIV\*).

### PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

Children know very well what it means to be or not to be part of a group. They want to dress like everyone else, be the first to buy the new electronic game, or have the most advertised toy. They strive to be accepted, wish to have many friends, and be the most popular at church and school. In the first years of primary school, their friends’ opinions are very important.

Many times they feel that they are not important because they’ve never done anything “great”. Their grades are not as good, or they’re not as popular as some other children. This lesson about the anonymous Christian missionaries who started the church in Antioch will encourage them. They will begin to understand that not everyone who does important things is known. They will start to see that living for God and sharing our faith is one of the most important things we will do in our life. Pray that the children in your group will trust God when they talk to people about Jesus.

### BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

For the first time since Jesus’ resurrection, his followers “intentionally” preached the Gospel to Gentiles who had no ties to the Jews.

The Samaritans whom Philip preached to were half Jews, and were not popular. Cornelius was a man who feared God, who sought the truth. But in Antioch, no one had asked for the Gospel message. In spite of everything, the persecuted Christians decided to go to a city with a bad immoral reputation to preach the Good News to those who were not Jews. We do not know who those believers were. There is no record of their names. We only know where they were from and the report of their resounding success. They were common Christians, whose faithfulness opened the doors to the whole world so that Christianity would spread. Their effort was so remarkable that the leaders of the Jerusalem church, upon hearing what was happening, sent Barnabas to investigate.

Barnabas was known as a person who encouraged people. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. When he arrived in Antioch and saw the wonderful response of the believers, he knew he needed help. He needed someone to understand these people and their way of being, and to teach them about Jesus. He needed someone to take leadership of the emerging church of Antioch. That man was Saul of Tarsus, who was later known as the Apostle Paul.

For a year, Barnabas and Paul taught the believers in Antioch and preached to those who were not Christians. The church continued to grow by leaps and bounds. And an important detail was that in those days for the first time, followers of Jesus were called "Christians". The term meant "Christ-ones", or "little Christs," which was originally meant as mockery. In spite of everything, it was a tribute to Christ, since the believers very eloquently preached and lived for the only Christ and Lord.

In our world today, we make an equation between greatness, popularity and riches. We list our achievements and label them; as if listing them would make us better. Unfortunately, today the church often falls into those traps of the world. We also have our leaders, lecturers and popular writers whom people want to hear. We do not often pay homage to the servant of God, not so well known, who year after year faithfully fulfills his responsibilities within the congregation. We all know those servants of the Lord who teach our children, clean our churches, and direct the musical groups, write the church bulletin, or cook for the various activities. We must recognize that their silent labors have an impact on many lives. God chose these kinds of people to take the Christian faith to the farthest corners of the world.

God used a man with a tender heart, someone who encouraged others. Barnabas was not afraid to ask for help to establish the church in Antioch. He was not afraid that eventually, that person could overshadow him. This passage clearly teaches us what God's heart and plans were like. The "popular" are not impressed by the Lord, nor those who seek positions to be seen. On the contrary, he looks for those who commit themselves and who faithfully perform their task.

## INTRODUCE THE LESSON

### Important words

Say: "In our Bible story today, the important word is 'Christian'."

Show the word: "Christian." Ask: "Who knows what 'Christian' means?" (It is the person who belongs to Christ, the Savior. It is the person-child or adult-who loves and obeys God.) Allow a volunteer to place the word on the mural of important words.

Ask: "Who can tell me the name of the two people who told the 'Good News' in our stories the last two weeks?" (Phillip and Peter). Tape up two cards with the names of Phillip and Peter. Present the card with the name of Barnabas for the group to read. Ask a child to tape the name of Barnabas next to the others.

Present the name "Paul." You can write: Saul = Paul so that the children can become familiar with the two names. Give a short explanation about the name Saul before he knew the Lord, and Paul after he met Jesus.

Paul and Barnabas continued with the work of preaching the Word of God, that is, the Good News. They were true missionaries. Missionary work includes various activities. Some missionaries are preachers. Others work in hospitals as doctors and nurses. Some work on computers. There are those who teach people how to live for God. This week we will remember to pray for the missionaries who teach.

Many of us give the Good News to people we already know. But what do the missionaries do? (They talk about Jesus to people who do not know him, in other countries and in other cultures.) Who knows what "culture" means? It is the way in which people live their lives. Culture includes the foods they eat, the way they dress, the type of houses they prefer, their ideas about God, and other customs and traditions.

Today's lesson is about people who brought the Good News of Jesus to other cultures. Let's see what happened.

## TEACH THE LESSON

### Barnabas and Paul preach the Good News (dramatization of Acts 11:19-26)

In advance, dress the children who will participate in the drama in the clothes of the time. If they do not want to wear different clothes, let them wear their own clothes. Have the children act their parts as you read the story.

#### Scene 1

Narrator: Stephen was stoned until he died. After that, many believers were put in jail. Others fled from Jerusalem to be safe. But wherever they were, they taught about Jesus. Some went to the city of Antioch. This was not a Jewish city. Most people there were Gentiles since they were of Greek origin. But when they heard the Good News, the Greeks believed and received Jesus. Very soon, the Christians of Jerusalem heard the news about what was happening there.

Barnabas and the Christians: (Barnabas reads a message on a scroll, then talks to the Christians in Jerusalem.) "Listen to this! There's a new church in Antioch that is growing and growing. They say that there are many Gentiles who follow Jesus. Is that true?"

Narrator: The church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch to see what was happening there (Barnabas leaves.)

#### Scene 2

(Athena, Demetrius, and the Christians of Antioch enter, followed by Barnabas).

Athena: Welcome to the city, Barnabas!

Barnabas: It is very nice to be with you here in Antioch!

Demetrio: - It is an honor for us that you came to visit us.

Christians: You are very welcome, Barnabas! Please teach us more about God. We want to know how to love and obey God.

Barnabas: (Speaking to the anxious Christians) "Worship God only. Always put him first. In everything you say and do, obey what Jesus taught.

Narrator: More and more people in Antioch began following Jesus.

Barnabas: (He steps forward a few steps) These Christians are so interested in living for Jesus! I need to teach them more, but I need help. (Barnabas walks out, Athena, Demetrius and the other Christians sit down.)

Narrator: Barnabas traveled to Tarsus. He went to talk to a Jewish teacher named Saul. Earlier, Saul had hated and persecuted Christians, but now he was a believer. Saul's other name was Paul.

#### Scene 3

Barnabas: (Speaking to Paul) Good morning, friend!

Paul: Good morning, Barnabas! Why are you here in Tarsus?

Barnabas: I need your help.

Paul: How can I help you?

Barnabas: There are many Christians in Antioch. Many of them are gentiles. They did not know about our God until they received Jesus as their Savior. They need teachers to help them know more about God's love and how they should obey Him. Can you come and help me teach them?

Paul: What a good idea! Let's go right away!

Narrator: Paul and Barnabas leave the room. Paul and Barnabas travel to Antioch.

#### Scene 4

Paul and Barnabas meet with the Christians of Antioch. Everyone stands up.

Christians: Welcome back, Barnabas!

Barnabas: Hello. I present my friend Paul. He is a teacher who knows the Word of God very well.

Demetrio: (He touches Paul on the shoulder) We're happy that you came to teach us, Paul.

Athena: Yes, we have so much to learn!

#### Scene 5

(Paul, Barnabas and the Christians are sitting down, Demetrio and Athena are standing).

Demetrius: (Speaking to the audience) For one year, Barnabas and Paul were here in Antioch. They preached to people who did not know Jesus. They also taught those who did not believe, like Athena and me.

Athena: We listened and learned how to love and obey God. Soon the people of Antioch began calling us Christians. This word means "one that belongs to Christ."

Demetrio: The people make fun of us. But we are proud to carry this special name. This is the first time that the followers of Jesus have been called "Christians".

Christians: (Together) A Christian is a person who receives Christ as Lord and Savior. Christians love and obey God. The people in Antioch can see that we are like Jesus. That's why they call us "Christians."

## CONNECT THE LESSON

### Teach new Christians

Give the children time to complete Student Activity Sheet #243-A. Remind them that we teach new Christians to be Christlike disciples. Then guide the students to complete the missing words (look for them in the word scramble) in Student Activity Sheet #243-B. Then they can color the figures. Encourage the students to take home the activity sheets and share the Good News about believing in and following Jesus.

## PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

You can use any of the silhouettes with the Bible memory verse, either the silhouettes of transportation or the silhouettes of animals. Hide the cards all over the room before the session begins. When the time comes, tell the children to look for them. Remember that you must have 17 cards. When the children find them, ask them to put them on the table in order. At the end, everyone will say the Bible verse together. If there are words that students do not understand, explain what they mean.

## WRAP-UP

### Pray

Pray for each one so they can tell the message of salvation without fear or shame. Ask a child to pray for the missionaries, especially those who are in countries where they are persecuted.

### Encourage

Encourage the children to continue telling the Good News, just as Paul and Barnabas did.

### Invite

Be sure to say something interesting about the next session. Encourage the children to attend and to bring friends.