

LESSON 7: PEOPLE THINK PAUL AND BARNABAS ARE GODS

Leader Guide for Grades 5 & 6

Classroom: Deeply Rooted

 Acts 14

10/04/2020

Teachers Dig In

Dig In to the Bible

- Read: Acts 14
- In This Passage: Paul and Barnabas travel around, preaching and healing people. When they heal a crippled man in Lystra, the people think Paul and Barnabas are gods! Paul and Barnabas quickly point people to the only true God, sharing how he's already been at work in their lives.
- Bible Point: God is the only God...
- Application: ...so we point people to him.
- Summary Verse: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name goes all the glory for your unfailing love and faithfulness" (Psalm 115:1).

Dig Deeper

- You'll Be Teaching: *God is the only God.* Kids probably can't relate to Paul and Barnabas' experience exactly—they've probably never mistaken them for a god, and they probably never mistook someone else for a god. However, kids *do* sometimes forget to give God the glory for the amazing things he does in and through them. Use this lesson to help kids see how God is at work in their lives and point others to him as he works.
- Think About: What has God done for you? Tell someone!

Dig In to Prayer

- Ask God to give your kids opportunities to point others to him.

Quick Tip

- Being authentic and vulnerable with your kids is an important way to point them to God. Kids often view their Sunday school teachers as people who have all the answers, live near-perfect lives, and have it all together. We all know nothing could be further from the truth! Help kids see what God is doing in your life and how much you need him by sharing age-appropriate personal stories. (When we ask you to share first, do it!) It'll take the focus off you and move it onto God.

This Lesson at a Glance



OPENING

Kids share about a topic related to the lesson.

Supplies

- Bible



CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

Kids guess their mistaken identities and practice giving credit to God.

Supplies

- Bibles
- modeling dough
- coins (1 per child) (you'll get them back)
- marshmallows (1 per child)
- mailing labels

Easy Prep

- On mailing labels, write or print the names of various famous people or characters kids will know, such as movie stars, pop stars, or Disney characters. You'll need 1 label per child.



OBJECT LESSON

Kids discover their bodies' limitations.

Supplies

- chairs



DEEPER BIBLE

Kids give God credit for their talents, good deeds, accomplishments, and possessions.

Supplies

- Bibles
- paper
- pens



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Kids run around a baseball bat to get dizzy.

Supplies

- plastic baseball bats or pool noodles (1 for every 3 kids)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Easy Prep

- If you're using pool noodles, cut them in half.



LOW-ENERGY GAME

Kids play finger football.

Supplies

- pieces of paper or scrap paper (1 for every 2 people)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)



CRAFT

Kids make fake plants.

Supplies

- foam cups (1 per child)
- 18-inch lengths of 20-gauge floral wire (3-5 pieces per child) (check your local craft or hobby store)
- permanent markers in a variety of colors
- tissue paper in a variety of colors
- glue sticks

Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.



LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Kids thank God and point to him.

**Marked supplies can be reused from Core Bible Discovery*

Let's keep kids safe! You can help by using supplies as instructed for only ages 3+, purchasing child-safe items, and being aware of allergy concerns.



OPENING

Welcome

[5 min]

Supplies

- Bible

Welcome

- Thank kids for coming.
- Just for fun, have kids pat the people next to them on the back.
- Make announcements.
- Introduce new kids.
- Celebrate birthdays by having kids say “Appy-hay irthday-bay!” (“happy birthday” in pig Latin).
- Collect the offering.

Introduce the Lesson

Say: **Today we’re going to learn that God is the only God, so we point people to him. In our Bible story, we’ll learn how people got confused about who God is.**

Share

- Tell kids which subject *you* found most confusing when you were in school.
- Have kids form pairs. Ask kids to share which school subjects *they* find most confusing.
- After partners have discussed, ask two or three kids to share with the whole group.

Summarize

Open a Bible to Acts 14, and say: **Sometimes school is confusing. But God doesn’t have to be! In fact, it’s pretty simple: God is the only God. No one and nothing else is! Let’s see what the Bible says about that. The Bible is amazing! It’s full of incredible stories—and they’re all true! God gave us the Bible so he can speak to us anytime. He’s the one true God, so he’s always here for us. Let’s hear from him as we explore the Bible. And let’s talk to him right now.**

Pray, praising God for being the only true God.



Supplies

- Bibles
- modeling dough
- coins (1 per child) (you'll get them back)
- marshmallows (1 per child)
- mailing labels

Easy Prep

- On mailing labels, write or print the names of various famous people or characters kids will know, such as movie stars, pop stars, or Disney characters. You'll need 1 label per child.

Give Credit

Distribute modeling dough. Say: **In the next two minutes, use your modeling dough to make the most beautiful sculpture you can. It could be a flower, an animal, a tree, or anything else you think of.**

After two minutes, walk around and pick up kids' sculptures one at a time, admiring them. Then give compliments to someone *e/se*, not the child who actually made the sculpture, about how beautiful it is. Continue until you've complimented the wrong child for each sculpture.

Ask: • **How did it feel when I gave someone else credit for your work?**

Say: **Today we're learning that God is the only God, so we point people to him.** We'll see what happened when people in our Bible story tried to give someone else credit for being a god.

Do Lamé Magic Tricks

Say: **Our Bible story is about two guys named Paul and Barnabas. Let's see what God did through Paul and Barnabas that they got credit for. First, let me give you some background. Paul and Barnabas were traveling to a bunch of towns, telling people about Jesus. Their main mission was to reach people who didn't know the real God at all. They didn't just *talk* about Jesus, though. Check this out!**

Read Acts 14:3.

Say: **Let's see what miraculous signs and wonders we can do. Let me show you a few tricks.**

Teach kids the following "lame magic tricks." These are intentionally not particularly amazing, but ham it up by adding a lot of "ta-das!" as if you're doing something incredible.

- Show kids how to make a circle by touching the tip of an index finger to the tip of a thumb. Have kids do this with both hands, linking the circles. Next, kids will put their hands behind their heads to hide their linked fingers and then present their hands as unlinked circles in front of them.
- Give each child a coin. Show kids how to close a hand around the coin and then put the other hand over it. Kids will flip their hands so the closed hand is on top and the coin drops into the other hand, then they'll reveal how the coin "magically" switched hands.
- Give each child a marshmallow. Have kids make the marshmallows disappear by putting them in their mouths and then showing their empty hands.

Ask: • **How impressed were you with these "miraculous signs and wonders"?**

Say: **Okay, our signs and wonders weren't so wonderful. But God is the only God, and he gave Paul and Barnabas the ability to do really amazing things...like this!**

Read Acts 14:8-10.

Ask: • **How impressed are you by Paul and Barnabas' signs and wonders?**

Say: **The people in the town of Lystra were *really* impressed. So much so that they mistook Paul and Barnabas for someone else!**

Read Acts 14:11-13.

Be Someone Else

Say: **Let's see what it's like to be mistaken for someone else.**

Put a prepared mailing label on each child's forehead, but don't let kids read the names you're putting on them. If kids have bangs, put the labels on their chins instead.

Say: **Walk around the room and interact with the other people, imagining that they actually are the people or characters their labels say. For example, if you see Mickey Mouse, you might say something like "Oh! I loved seeing you at Disney World!" Don't use the person's or character's name. Based on how people act toward you, you'll try to guess who you are.**

Allow several minutes for kids to interact, and then have kids guess who they are. After guessing, kids can remove their labels and see if they were right.

Ask: • **What would you do if people really treated you like the person or character on your label?**

Say: **The crowd in Lystra was so sure Paul and Barnabas were real gods that they were preparing to give them sacrifices! Let's see what Paul and Barnabas did.**

Read Acts 14:14-17.

Say: **God is the only God, so we point people to him. It was important to Paul and Barnabas that they set the record straight and point people to the one true God. In fact, they even shared God Sightings, which are ways the crowd could've seen God at work when he sent rain and gave them joyful hearts.**

Ask: • **Share your own God Sightings—ways you've seen God at work.** Start with your own God Sighting.

Say: **God is the only God, so we point people to him. One way to do that is by sharing our God Sightings!**

Practice Giving Credit

Say: **Maybe no one has ever mistaken you for God. But you might get compliments for other things, like scoring the winning soccer goal or acing a hard test. God is the only God, so we point people to him. God's the one who made us and gave us the ability to do awesome things! When we get compliments, we can give that credit to God. For example, if someone tells you how creative your art project is, you could say, "I'm thankful God gave me the ability to be creative, just like he is!"**

Have kids form pairs. Have partners alternate giving each other a compliment from the list below, and the other partner will respond by saying something that points to God.

- You're so smart; you aced that test!
- You're *really* good at soccer. I bet you could be a professional someday!
- I love your outfit.
- I wish I were as funny as you! You always make me laugh!

Ask: • **What was it like turning those compliments around to point to God?**

Say: **God is the only God, so we point people to him. Like Paul and Barnabas did, we can turn praise for ourselves into a way to share about God!**

Unfortunately, this story didn't end with the people of Lystra deciding to follow the one true God. In fact, some other people came in and confused them and made them *hate* Paul and Barnabas. They dragged Paul out of town and beat him up.

But you know what Paul and Barnabas did? They got up the next day and kept going to other towns. They even went *back* to Lystra eventually to help strengthen the people who did believe in Jesus. No matter where they went, they pointed people to God because God is the only God. Whether or not people believe what we say about him, we can keep pointing to God.



OBJECT LESSON

Can't Do it!

[10 min]

Supplies

- chairs

Make Circles With Legs While Drawing a Six

Say: **In our Bible story, people thought Paul and Barnabas were gods. But Paul explained that God is the only God.**

Ask: • **If you were Paul and Barnabas, besides using your words, how else might you prove that you weren't a god?**

Say: **Our bodies can show our human limitations. I'll show you!**

- Have each child sit in a chair and lift his or her right foot about 4 inches off the ground.
- Show kids how to move their right feet clockwise in a circle just off the ground.
- While they keep moving their feet in a circle, have kids use their right index fingers to draw the number six in the air.

Ask: • **What happened to your foot when you tried to draw a six?**

Say: **You probably found that your foot paused or that your leg moved straight up or down instead of in a circle. That's because the left side of our brains controls the right side of our bodies. Our brains struggle to process two different directions at the same time, so they combine the directions into a single motion, causing our feet to want to draw a six, too. Don't believe me? Trying drawing the six with your left hand—no problem! Invite kids to experience the difference.**

Lift Your Ring Finger

Say: **Now let's try another body challenge. Can you lift your ring finger? It's not as easy as it seems.**

- Have each child place his or her right hand on a table or the floor with the palm down.
- Have kids tuck their middle fingers under their hands.
- Without moving their hands, have kids lift their thumbs, their pointer fingers, and then their pinky fingers off the table. They'll be able to do so without a problem.
- Without moving their hands, have kids try to lift their ring fingers off the table and observe what happens.

Say: **We can't move our ring fingers! That's because the tendons in your middle and ring finger are connected—and tendons are the parts of our bodies that connect muscle to bone. If you tuck your pointer finger instead, you'll have no problem moving all your fingers.**

Talk About It

Ask: • **How can the things we can't do point people to God?**

Say: **God gave us limitations on purpose. We can't do everything. But God can do everything! God is the only God. We point people to him when we admit that we aren't perfect and that we need his limitless love and power in our lives.**



Supplies

- Bibles
- paper
- pens

Set It Up

Say: **We're learning that God is the only God, so we point others to him. Paul and Barnabas could've taken credit for all the miraculous signs and wonders God allowed them to do. They could've said, "Yeah, we're pretty cool—we did all that!" But they gave God the credit for those awesome things—because *God* had actually done them. Unlike Paul and Barnabas, you've probably never had anyone mistake you for a god. So what can we give God credit for? Let's dig in to that.**

Dig Deeper

Say: **We're going to look at four things in our lives that we can use to point to God. The first one is our talents.**

Have a child read Ephesians 2:10.

Ask: • **What's something you're good at?**

• **How does it change your thinking to consider that God made you with that skill?**

Distribute paper and pens. Ask kids to think of all the things they're talented at, and have each child begin a list on a sheet of paper. Then have kids set the lists aside.

Say: **Sometimes we do good deeds. That's awesome, and it's another thing we can use to point people to God! But listen to this.**

Have a child read Matthew 6:1.

Ask: • **What's the difference between doing good deeds to bring *yourself* praise versus to bring**

God praise?

Say: **When we do good things in order to be admired by others, that's pointing to ourselves and taking credit for God's work through us. But God is the only God, so we point others to him.**

Have kids add to the lists they started by listing good deeds they've done.

Say: **Another thing we can give God credit for is success, or our accomplishments.**

Have a child read Proverbs 16:9.

Say: **Wherever we go and whatever we're successful at, it's because God made a path for us to get there.**

Ask: • **Think of something you've been successful at. How did God make the way for that to happen?**

Have kids add to their lists by writing down their accomplishments.

Say: **Let's look at one more thing we can give credit for.**

Have a child read James 1:17.

Say: **God gave us all the things we have!**

Ask: • **Quick—name one thing that's in your bedroom.**

Say: **Every good and perfect thing we have is a gift from God. Whether God's given us a lot of stuff or just a little, those things are blessings from God! We can point to God instead of bragging about how much we have.**

Have kids finish their lists by writing down at least 10 items they have at home.

Thank God

Say: **When you look at your list, it could be tempting to take credit for your talents, good deeds, accomplishments, and possessions. But as we saw in the Bible, all those things are actually opportunities for us to point people to God. I have a little rhyme to help you remember that:**

Whatever I have, whatever I do,

I'll use it all to point to you.

Have kids repeat the rhyme with you several times.

Say: **Let's thank God for all the things on our lists. We'll all read our lists aloud at once so we're talking over each other. Even though we won't be able to hear each other, God can hear us all!**

Pray: **Thank you, God, for...** Have kids read through their lists aloud. Close with: **In Jesus' name, amen.**

Say: **Let's read one more verse as a closing prayer.**

Read Psalm 115:1, and then have kids repeat the first half: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name goes all the glory."



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

From Confused to Clear

[10 min]

Supplies

- plastic baseball bats or pool noodles (1 for every 3 kids)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Easy Prep

- If you're using pool noodles, cut them in half.

Tip

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today's lesson during the game. You can find the downloadable album [here](#).

Spin and Run to Experience Confusion

Say: **Today we're learning that God is the only God. We learned about a time some people got confused and thought Paul and Barnabas were gods. Let's play a game where you'll get confused in a fun way!**

- Form teams of three, and give each team a plastic bat or pool noodle.
- Have teams line up along one end of the room and spread out about 3 to 5 feet away from each other.
- The person holding the bat or pool noodle will be the first Spinner.
- Invite another person in each team to be the first High-Fiver. The High-Fiver will move to the opposite end of the room somewhere that *isn't* directly across from his or her team.
- The third person on each team will be the first Spotter and will stand near the Spinner while he or she spins to help if the Spinner starts to fall over.
- At your cue, all the Spinners will hold one end of the bat or pool noodle and rest the other end on the floor. Then the Spinner will lean down so his or her forehead is resting on the top of the bat or pool noodle.
- In this position, Spinners will then quickly spin in circles around the bat for three full rotations, stand up, drop the bat or pool noodle, and run to the team's High-Fiver to give him or her a high-five.
- If the Spinner is having trouble finding the High-Fiver, the Spotter can point out the High-Fiver for the Spinner.
- If you'd like, play upbeat music while kids play.
- Allow teammates to swap roles for as many rounds as time allows.
- If anyone starts to feel a little queasy due to dizziness, allow those kids to stick to the roles of High-Fiver and Spotter.

Talk About It

Ask: • **What was it like to find your team's High-Fiver when your head was spinning?**

• **How does that remind you of what it's like to be really confused?**

Say: **When we're confused it's hard to figure out what's right or true. We can feel a little lost, and it's helpful when someone points us in the right direction. People get confused about who God is, too. There are a lot of things in our world that people mistake for being as powerful as God.** Tell about something you've seen people equate with God's power, such as people crediting good things happening in their lives to the universe or saying that "Mother Nature" holds all the power in our world.

Ask: • **What are other things you've heard or seen that people mistake for being as powerful as God?** If kids need some help, guide them in thinking about things they've seen in movies about "powerful" characters such as superheroes or wizards and talk about what's real and how only God is super-powerful.

Say: **Make-believe and stories about superheroes aren't bad. God gave us our creativity and our imaginations, but it's important to remember the truth that God is the only God. Paul and Barnabas pointed people to God when the people got confused, and we can do that, too!**



LOW-ENERGY GAME

Credit Where Credit Is Due

[10 min]

Supplies

- pieces of paper or scrap paper (1 for every 2 people)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Tips

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today's lesson during the game. You can find the downloadable album [here](#).
- If you have small pieces of scrap paper you'd like to use, simply have kids ball together smaller pieces of paper to create their paper footballs.

Play Finger Football

Say: **Today we're digging into the truth that God is the only God. When people got confused and thought Paul and Barnabas were gods, they made sure they pointed people to God instead of themselves. We can point out evidence of God all around us in big and small things. Let's play a fun game where you'll see we can celebrate God and give him credit for everything good.**

- Form pairs and give each pair a piece of paper.
- Have pairs crumple the paper to make a ball. If kids know how to do so, they could fold finger footballs instead.
- Partners can take turns being the Goal and the Punter.
- As the Goal, kids hold their hands with thumbs touching and pointer fingers up to make a football goal for the Punter to get the ball through.
- As the Punter, kids hold the ball between their fingers with one hand and flick it with the other hand, aiming for the ball to go through the goal.
- Each time a partner makes a goal, the pairs can celebrate and think of something God's made or done that made the goal possible (such as hands, fingers, eyes, the ability to aim, the ability to learn from past tries, the trees that made the paper that made the paper balls, and so on).
- If you'd like, play upbeat music while kids play.

Talk About It

Ask: • **What things did you discover could point to God as you made goals in the game?**

• **What are things in you or your life that can point to God?** Share your own example first, such as a way God has changed your heart toward a person or healed a friendship you thought was over.

Say: **God is the only God, and he's always doing things around us. We'd usually celebrate ourselves for making a goal, but instead, we can give God credit and help others know to watch for God. Paul and Barnabas pointed people to God, and we can, too!**



Supplies

- foam cups (1 per child)
- 18-inch lengths of 20-gauge floral wire (3-5 pieces per child) (check your local craft or hobby store)
- permanent markers in a variety of colors
- tissue paper in a variety of colors
- glue sticks

Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.



Tip

- Some preteen boys might find the idea of making fake flowers girly. Encourage them that they can make cacti instead. Also, they could make these as gifts for their mothers or mother-figures.

Make Fake Plants

Show kids the sample craft you made. Give each child a foam cup. Set out the remaining supplies to share, and have kids follow these directions to make fake plants.

- Bend a piece of floral wire into the stem of a plant. It could be a stem with leaves, a spiral, a cactus shape, or anything else you want to do!
- Poke the bottom of the stem into an upside-down cup.
- Add crumpled tissue paper to complete your flower or add buds to your cactus.
- Create more plants as time allows.
- Decorate the cup with permanent markers. Be sure to include the point: God is the only God.

Talk About It

Ask: • **What would you say if someone told you the plants you just made are real plants?**

• **How is what happened in the Bible a little like someone saying those plants are real?**

• **Why can't you make real plants?**

• **Why can't people—even Paul and Barnabas—do miracles without God's power?**

Say: God is the only God, so we point people to him. If someone thought the plants we just made

were real, we'd think that person was crazy! They're really cool-looking, but they're obviously not real plants. In the Bible story, people thought Paul and Barnabas were the real God, but God is obviously much more powerful than any human! And he's the only one who can make real plants. When you show your plants to other people, talk about the difference between the one and only real God and other things people worship as if they're gods. Plus, you can point people to God as they see how creative he made you to be!

Have kids take their fake plants home and show their friends and families what they've learned about the one true God.



LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

[5 min]

Pointing Prayers

Pray and Point

Say: **God is the only God, so we point others to him. Let's thank him and point to him as we pray.**

- Have kids each think of something they've never thanked God for before, such as toilet paper, a pillow, or school.
- Give each child a turn to pray aloud, "Thank you, God, for...", pointing up as they pray.

Wrap Up

Pray: **God, we praise you because you're the only God! You've done so much for us, and we want your help pointing others to you. In Jesus' name, amen.**

Thank kids for coming, and encourage them to come back next week.

The Heart of God, Lesson 7: People Think Paul and Barnabas Are Gods. Design and base content copyright © Group Publishing, Inc. Licensed for use with 1-20 students. Permission to reproduce granted for local church use only.