

ADULT STUDY GUIDE

This is the adult component of the Enduring Faith Bible Curriculum. This piece follows the **same scope and sequence** as the other levels: **Early Childhood, Elementary, and Youth**. This alignment presents some amazing opportunities.

- First of all, it helps all ages speak a **common theological language**.
- Second, it helps God’s people build an understanding of the **lifelong nature of learning God’s Word**—that we don’t just learn the narratives once or twice before moving on to other matters.
- Third, and critical to this curriculum, it helps **equip households** to teach the faith at home.

If parents and other adults spend time meditating and discussing the narratives of the Bible while the younger generations in the congregation study the same narratives, then there will be greater opportunity throughout the week to **reflect together** upon what the narrative says and what it means. In other words, studying the narratives of the Bible as adults is a blessing in and of itself, but it also helps **equip parents and faith leaders** to be more confident and feel empowered to extend those conversations into the household.

FEATURES OF THIS STUDY

This study guide is meant to provide some guidelines and springboards for discussion in your Bible study groups.

- The **first page** of each lesson provides the central focus statements, not only for the Adult level, but also for the other levels. Use this as a way to orient yourself to the **main themes and goals** of the lessons across all levels. You’ll also find helpful **tips for preparation**.
- The **middle two pages** begin with an introductory “**Launch**” section, which provides prompts for beginning the study and an open-ended reflection question to kick off group discussion. The following “**Learn & Live**” section breaks down the text into three to five narrative sections. Each one of these sections has some additional commentary, a reflection question, and some helps to better understand possible answers to the reflection question. The “**Leave**” section provides prompts for a final reflection question and some other considerations to close the lesson. The **sidebars** include leader tips and bonus activities to help you think through options for extending the lesson.
- The **final page** of each lesson is the student piece. Copy one lesson handout per learner, and distribute this at the beginning of class.

TIPS FOR USE

This study guide is designed primarily to help give you, the leader, some thoughts and prompts to help guide and assist facilitation of the class. Below are some tips for how to use it.

- This is meant to be a Bible study, so each learner will need access to a Bible. Encourage your learners to bring their own to class.
- Don’t neglect the lesson handout. The primary reason for this page is to create some space for each learner to reflect and engage the questions on his or her own. Often, any given group will have one or two vocal learners and others who may not speak up. Consider using techniques to help engage all learners in the process, such as having each learner write down his or her reflection privately before sharing, having each learner share with a partner before opening up discussion, or changing the seating arrangements to create small groups.
- Use the opening reflection question as a time to build community. Adult learners, generally speaking, desire to share their experience with one another, and this lesson starter provides an opportunity for this.
- For each narrative section, ask volunteers to read the text aloud while the rest follow along. Don’t force anyone; adults, like children and youth, may be self-conscious about their reading or public speaking ability.
- Download the Enduring Faith Page from the online digital resource center and hand out copies to your learners. Near the end of the lesson, talk through the prompts, which help the learners extend the lessons in their households throughout the week. Encourage learners to take this page home along with the lesson handout to be used throughout the week.

CALLED CHRISTIAN

The Church in
Antioch Grows
Acts 9:26–31;
11:19–30
AD 39

BIBLE TRUTH

The Holy Spirit works through God's Word.

LEARNER GOAL

I can consider why understanding the work of the Holy Spirit through God's Word matters so much for the Church.

BIBLE VERSE

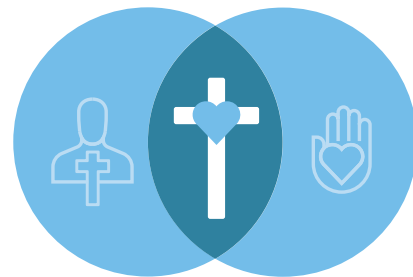
Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.
John 13:34

LAW & GOSPEL

I disgrace the name of Christ when I fail to live as one of His followers. **Through His grace, God forgives my sin and makes me His child, giving me His name.**

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

Following his conversion, Saul (also called Paul) is introduced by Barnabas to the apostles in Jerusalem. The Church had spread to Antioch, so the leaders in Jerusalem send Barnabas there. He exhorts the people to remain faithful, and he brings Saul from Tarsus to help him minister among the people in Antioch for a whole year. The name *Christian* is first used for the believers in Antioch. The Church in Antioch sends relief to the believers in Judea.



CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

God gives me His own name in my Baptism.

CALLING: WHY AM I HERE?

I can rejoice in my name as Christian and use my gifts to grow the Christian Church.

GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE

See how this lesson builds on previous learning for each age.

ADULT

I can consider why understanding the work of the Holy Spirit through God's Word matters so much for the Church.

YOUTH

I can describe how the Holy Spirit works through the Word to spread the Gospel.

ELEMENTARY

I understand that the Holy Spirit works through God's Word.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

I know Jesus loves me and helps me to love others.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read the narrative and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible (TLSB)*.

MORE TIME Read **Acts 11:1–18** in *TLSB* with study notes for more context on the work of the Spirit during this time.

IN DEPTH Review the Third Article in *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation (2017)*.



LEADER NOTE

Each congregation has its own history. Some facts and figures, like founding dates or number of different buildings used by the congregation over the years, may seem inconsequential at first, but after some consideration may yield fascinating insights about the congregation's role in its context. Other pieces of information, like fun facts, may also provide interesting details that relate to the congregation's future. Encourage your learners to break into groups and consider what they do and do not know about the congregation. Then, move into the text, leading them to consider what they can learn from the history of the congregation in Antioch that applies to their congregation today.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Consider doing a review of the Third Article of the Creed from *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (2017).

LAUNCH

WELCOME

Welcome the group, and open in prayer. It may be a good time to take prayer requests and pray, either now or at the conclusion.

REVIEW

Review the Bible Truth, Bible Verse, and Learner Goal. Then, begin with the opening question.

OPENING REFLECTION

If you are able, note two or three important facts about your congregation's history and what those mean for your congregation today.

LEARN & LIVE

ACTS 9:26–31

BIBLE COMMENTARY

Three years have passed since Saul's conversion (Galatians 1:17–18). He has been boldly preaching Christ in the synagogues of Damascus, but has had to flee for his life as he had so confounded the Jews there with his preaching and teaching that they plotted to kill him. Now Saul goes to Jerusalem, where he attempts to join the disciples, but he is rejected by them as they do not believe in his conversion. Can the one who, for so long, had instigated events that led to such great persecution against the Church now have such a turn of heart? This change cannot come by man's power, but by the power of the Holy Spirit. One member of the Jerusalem congregation, Joseph (nicknamed Barnabas or "son of encouragement"), listens to Saul and advocates for him. Though Saul only meets with Peter and James the brother of Jesus, and only for fifteen days (Galatians 1:18–19), he is accepted by the congregation and boldly preaches Christ in Jerusalem. Like in Damascus, however, Saul's very person and message provoke opposition, this time with the Hellenists, a faction of Greek-speaking Jews. Upon hearing of the plot to kill Saul, the congregation in Jerusalem helps him escape via the port city of Caesarea to his home in Tarsus. There Saul will remain, with no mention of his actions in Scripture, for the next seven or eight years. Back in Jerusalem, Galilee, and Samaria, the Gospel is preached and the Church is built up in peace. Saul no longer ravages the Church there, and the Holy Spirit working through the Means of Grace graciously multiplies and builds up the Church.

REFLECTION QUESTION

How did Barnabas go about making peace, and what was the end result of that peace? What can we learn from this as the Church today?

REFLECTION HELPS

Barnabas listened to Saul and advocated for him among the apostles. Saul preached the Gospel, and it was ultimately his message that proved his apostleship. In line with this, the message of the Gospel continued to spread as Saul, the one who had previously persecuted the Church, now joined it. Today the Church can learn to be patient and kind with new believers, all the while being discerning of whether the message new believers speak is in line with the Word of God.

ACTS 11:19–26

BIBLE COMMENTARY

Some seven or eight years have passed, and we now turn our eyes to something extraordinary. We see the Church grow in a congregation in Antioch. Located some three hundred miles north of Jerusalem near the Mediterranean coast, Antioch was one of the most important cities in the Roman Empire, falling only behind Rome and Alexandria in population. At the time of Stephen's martyrdom and Saul's subsequent persecution, Jews from the Jerusalem congregation had relocated to Antioch. Now, some eleven years later, a report comes to the Church in Jerusalem that among the believers in Antioch are Hellenists, disrupting the status quo. The Church sends Barnabas to investigate. The choice of Barnabas may seem unusual, leading some scholars to infer that the apostles were busy in other business at the time. Regardless, by the hand of God, Barnabas is the perfect man for the job. He first encourages the Antioch congregation with his exhortation. He then seeks out Saul in the city of Tarsus and brings him to Antioch. For an entire year, the two of them, reunited after such a long hiatus, teach the burgeoning center of the faith. Here the term *Christian* is first used for followers of Christ.

REFLECTION QUESTION

Identify all the different ways God preserved and expanded the Church in the Antioch congregation. What can the Church today learn from the events of this section?

REFLECTION HELPS

God used the scattered Jews from the persecution to establish the congregation, the events of the Hellenists to bring Barnabas there, and Barnabas to bring Saul to teach the congregation. God is able to use situations and people in ways beyond our comprehension, so we should cling to God's Word in all things.

ACTS 11:27–30

BIBLE COMMENTARY

During this time, prophets come from Jerusalem and, by the power of the Spirit, predict an upcoming famine. God had offered this special gift of prophecy for this special case, and we who live in the post-apostolic era should not expect the same gifts. What we can learn, however, is that the Church in Antioch had grown so large and unified that they send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem with a special monetary gift to support the congregation there. The mission plant now is able to support the home congregation.

REFLECTION QUESTION

What might this section imply about the shifting nature of the Church during this time period? What can we learn from this today?

REFLECTION HELPS

Though the apostles were in Jerusalem, the congregation in Antioch was beginning to take a more active role in assisting the Church. The Church is not limited to geography, but exists wherever the Word is preached in purity and the Sacraments are rightly administered.

LEAVE

FINAL REFLECTION

Why does understanding the work of the Holy Spirit through God's Word matter so much for the Church today?

TAKE HOME

Equip your learners with ideas for taking the lesson into their households by giving them access to the Enduring Faith Pages.

CLOSE WITH PRAYER

If you haven't yet, take prayer requests, or encourage a volunteer from the class to pray as you prepare to leave.



BONUS ACTIVITY

If you have time, consider doing a brief exploration of the life of Barnabas, a critical figure not only in this narrative but also in the Book of Acts.

Read **Acts 4:32–37**.

What does this section add to the narrative, and what does it help illuminate about the character and role of Barnabas?



CHRIST CONNECTION

Christ, the Word of God Himself, has sent the Holy Spirit to us. The Spirit uses the Means of Grace, the spoken and read Word of God and the Sacraments, to create and sustain faith in God's people.



LEADER NOTE

The Church today only exists because God works through the Word of God to create and sustain faith. We are people of the Word, and we should rely on this more than worldly wisdom in our life together as God's people. We boldly proclaim the Word to this lost and broken world.

CALLED CHRISTIAN

ADULT
Unit 9
LESSON HANDOUT
Lesson 4

BIBLE TRUTH

The Holy Spirit works through God’s Word.

LEARNER GOAL

I can consider why understanding the work of the Holy Spirit through God’s Word matters so much for the Church.

BIBLE VERSE

Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. John 13:34

The Church in Antioch Grows
Acts 9:26–31; 11:19–30

REFLECTIONS

OPENING REFLECTION If you are able, note two or three important facts about your congregation’s history and what those mean for your congregation today.

ACTS 9:26–31 How did Barnabas go about making peace, and what was the end result of that peace? What can we learn from this as the Church today?

ACTS 11:19–26 Identify all the different ways God preserved and expanded the Church in the Antioch congregation. What can the Church today learn from the events of this section?

ACTS 11:27–30 What might this section imply about the shifting nature of the Church during this time period? What can we learn from this today?

FINAL REFLECTION Why does understanding the work of the Holy Spirit through God’s Word matter so much for the Church today?

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