

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.

ON YOUR FEET

Paul, Barnabas, and
a Man Born Lame
Acts 13:1–3; 14:8–18
AD 47

BIBLE TRUTH

Our God is the one true God.

LEARNER GOAL

I can examine the text to see how Paul and Barnabas reveal that our God is the one true God, and I can apply that understanding to my own life.

BIBLE VERSE

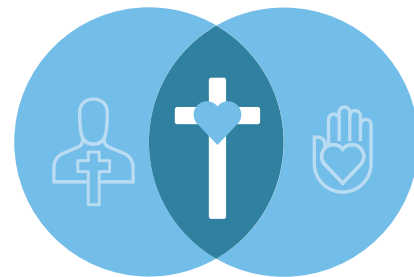
Jesus Christ . . . is the true God and eternal life. 1 John 5:20

LAW & GOSPEL

In our sinful world, I fail to recognize the true God or His followers. **God reveals Himself to me and the world in Word and Sacrament.**

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

The Holy Spirit leads the Church at Antioch to send Paul and Barnabas on a momentous missionary journey. In Lystra, they heal a man who had never been able to walk. The people who see this think Paul and Barnabas are gods come down to earth, and they attempt to offer sacrifices to them. In grief, Paul and Barnabas tear their clothes and rush into the crowd, barely preventing them from making the offerings.



CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

God reveals Himself to me in the Word and Sacraments.

CALLING: WHY AM I HERE?

I can trust God to keep me in His Word.

GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE

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

ADULT

I can examine the text to see how Paul and Barnabas reveal that our God is the one true God, and I can apply that understanding to my own life.

YOUTH

I can share the truth that our God is the one true God.

ELEMENTARY

I understand that God is the one and only true God.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

I know God is the one true God, and He wants everyone to be saved.

LESSON PREP

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

MORE TIME Read Acts 13:4–14:7 in *TLSB* with study notes.

IN DEPTH Read Acts 14:19–28 in *TLSB* with study notes.



LEADER NOTE

This question is both deep and broad. As the text of this lesson is relatively short, consider breaking your learners up into groups or pairs and giving them extra time to reflect together on what they think the greatest misunderstanding people have about God or Christianity is. Then encourage your learners to share what their groupings came up with, seeing what similarities and differences arise. Misunderstandings are many and are often caused by misinformation, lack of information, or ignorance toward the Christian faith. After discussion, point your learners to the text, where they will see how Paul and Barnabas address this very issue on their missionary journey.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Consider reading or pointing your learners to the article “The Work of the Spirit” in *The Lutheran Study Bible*, page 1876, for more insight into how we are to approach the special work of the Spirit today.

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

In your experience, what is the biggest misunderstanding people have about God or the Christian faith? Why do you think that is? What is the best way for the Church to address that misunderstanding?

LEARN & LIVE

ACTS 13:1–3

BIBLE COMMENTARY

After their brief mission of relief to Jerusalem (Acts 11:30; 12:25), Paul and Barnabas are back in Antioch. There they, together with three other men, serve the Church. This service involves both prophecy (proclaiming God’s Word) and teaching (the ongoing instruction of the people in God’s Word). We should think of these two not as opposite roles but as complementary ones. Thus, the five men serve in a pastoral function. We know of Paul and Barnabas, but we know little of the other three. It is obvious, however, from the words of the account, that the other three men have varied backgrounds and origins, and may thus represent the diversity of the Antioch Church. During a worship service, which also involved the discipline of fasting, the Holy Spirit speaks through a prophet. The message is that Barnabas and Saul should be set apart for a special kind of mission work. Though not clear from the text, it’s likely that the Spirit spoke audibly through one of the prophets there, and that the call of the Spirit was not based on a feeling but actually heard aloud by the congregation. We today should not expect this sort of revelation from God, as we have the very Word of God, both heard and read in the Bible, available to us in ways people in the Early Church could only imagine. After this revelation, Barnabas and Saul are set apart and sent. After waiting some fourteen years since his conversion, Saul is now officially sent to proclaim Christ to the nations. Though the rite of ordination is not commanded, we in the Church today continue in the pattern set by the Early Church. We ordain and send men into the pastoral office to continue the work of proclamation of God’s Word and teaching God’s people.

REFLECTION QUESTION

What can we learn from this section about life in the Early Church in Antioch? In what ways does this compare to life in the Church today?

REFLECTION HELPS

The Antioch Church had five diverse men who performed pastoral duties, prophecy and teaching. They worshiped the Lord together, praying and fasting. We in the Church today likewise gather for worship. Though we should not expect a direct, new message from the Holy Spirit, we still receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit as we hear the Word preached to us and receive the Sacraments.

ACTS 14:8–13

BIBLE COMMENTARY

Now well into their missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas preach and teach in Lystra, a city in central Asia Minor. It seems that they find an open place to preach, possibly a marketplace, as crowds gather to listen. One man, physically disabled from birth, hears the Word of God and believes. Paul looks intently at him and sees his faith. It is unclear from the text whether Paul's perception came through observation or the prompting of the Holy Spirit, but regardless Paul commands the man to stand up. The man does, and miraculously he who had never walked in his life now springs up and walks. This miracle parallels miracles of Jesus (Luke 5:17–26) and Peter and John (Acts 3:1–10), where the healings publicly validated the authority of the Word of God. The response of the Lystrans is powerful and misguided. Those who see the miracle attribute it to their pagan Greek mythological gods. Even more so, they assume that Paul and Barnabas are incarnations of Hermes and Zeus, respectively. This may tell us something about the physical presence of these two men, with Paul as the chief speaker (Hermes) and Barnabas the more imposing, elder figure (Zeus). Things start out so well but are twisted so quickly.

REFLECTION QUESTION

How did the people at Lystra take something that was good and turn it to evil? How do people today twist the Word of God for their own goals, and what can the Church do to guard against this?

REFLECTION HELPS

In Lystra, the people saw the miracle and attributed it to their pagan gods, even going so far as naming the missionaries gods themselves. Today people twist the Word of God in many ways, including prosperity gospel teaching, fake faith healers, and other hucksters. The Church should always keep their focus on Christ and His good gifts to us in the true Gospel.

ACTS 14:14–18

BIBLE COMMENTARY

When Paul and Barnabas see what is going on, they rend their clothes as an outward sign of their inner anguish at this sacrilege. They rush to the midst of the people, likely to the place where the priest of Zeus is offering sacrifices, and make their defense. They appeal to the natural knowledge of God, who is not found in idols, but is living. This opens the door for the Gospel, but still so many of the people continue with their sacrifices. Like Paul and Barnabas, we are to proclaim the truth and trust that God will work.

REFLECTION QUESTION

How would you describe Paul and Barnabas's approach to witnessing to the people here? What are the strengths and limits of this approach, and how would you imagine Paul and Barnabas followed up their speech?

REFLECTION HELPS

Paul and Barnabas appealed mainly to the natural knowledge of God. The strength is that it opened the door for further discussion, but it was not complete as the Gospel was not proclaimed. They would have followed by proclaiming the Gospel.

LEAVE

FINAL REFLECTION

Examine how Paul and Barnabas reveal that our God is the one true God. Apply that understanding to your life and witness.

TAKE HOME

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

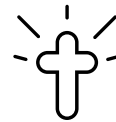
CLOSE WITH PRAYER

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



BONUS ACTIVITY

If you haven't already done so, consider looking over a map of Paul's first missionary journey with your learners. Point out the location of Lystra, but also consider locating other destinations from their journey both on the map and in their Bibles. This will help give some added context to the lesson.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Christ is the one true God, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit to all eternity.



LEADER NOTE

Paul and Barnabas go out into the world, proclaiming Christ. God works a miracle through them, revealing His power. When people misunderstand the miracle, Paul and Barnabas redirect the situation toward the truth of God using culturally appropriate tactics. We, too, are to speak the truth at all times, but also understand the context of the culture into which we speak.

