



# Barnabas Encourages the Church

**Lesson Aim: To show the importance of encouraging one another.**

## THE WORSHIP

**Who God Is:** The Spirit Who Changes Us

## THE WORD

**What He Has Done:** God led Barnabas to encourage the church and its leaders.

**Scripture Focus:** Acts 9:26-28; 11:22-26; 14:19-28 **Key Verse:** Acts 11:23

**Christ Connection:** Deuteronomy 3:28

## THE WAY

**The Big Question: Why is encouragement important?**

## UNIT 2 FOCUS VERSE

"The LORD is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid? ...I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD." Psalm 27:1, 13-14

<b>Unit 2: The Promise of Change</b>			
	Bible Story	What He Has Done	Lesson Aim*
6	God Changes Saul's Heart, Acts 9:1-19	The Holy Spirit filled Saul and changed his heart.	To know God can change our hearts.
7	Saul Escapes from Damascus, Acts 9:19b-25	God made Saul a bold witness for His kingdom.	To speak boldly to others about Jesus.
8	Peter and Tabitha (Dorcas), Acts 9:36-42; 1 John 3:18	God restored Tabitha's life.	To see the impact of kindness.
9	Peter Visits Cornelius, Acts 10:3-16, 19-20, 28, 34-35, 43-48	God proved to Peter that He saves Gentiles as well as Jews.	To know salvation through faith in Jesus is available to anyone.
10	Peter Escapes from Prison, Acts 12:1-17	God sent His angel to rescue Peter from prison.	To join together in prayer and watch for God to answer.
11	Barnabas Encourages the Church, Acts 9:26-28; 11:22-26; 14:19-28	God led Barnabas to encourage the church and its leaders.	To show the importance of encouraging one another.

**LEADER'S ENCOURAGEMENT** This week, read Colossians 2:2-3. Please join us in praying, "Thank You, Lord, for faithful friends who honor You in each relationship. Fill us all with Your Spirit that we might be faithful friends, encouraging and building up the church. Amen."

**Lesson Aims** are based on reflecting God's character as we participate in His actions to, for, and in the world.

**Take Home Elements:** The Journal Entry, Action Card, and Family Discussion Card may be sent home to encourage students to reflect on the lesson. The Journal Entry is an in-depth personal study. The Action Card is a visual reminder of the Bible story, God's action, and how we can join into that action. The Family Discussion Card gives parents and guardians a way to engage their students in what they are learning.

**Leader's Tip:** For larger gatherings, teach THE WELCOME, THE WORSHIP, and THE WORD in a large group setting and divide into small groups for discussion with THE WAY.



Getting started

## THE WELCOME

**Suggestion:** Choose a game that focuses on ideas such as sailboats, maps, travel, preaching, friendship, or encouragement.

### **ACTIVITY OPTION 1: DISCOURAGER—ENCOURAGER**

**Purpose:** To introduce the importance of encouragement.

**Supplies:** Peanut butter, 5 lifesavers (or hard candy), blindfold, towel, soap, optional: poster board, marker

**Preparation:** Soften the peanut butter before you begin.

#### **Directions:**

1. Ask for a volunteer. The volunteer leaves the play area, removes his/her socks and shoes, and is blindfolded by a helper.
2. While the volunteer is out of the room, have the remaining students stand outside the play area. Drop 5 lifesavers in different locations within the play area. Choose one person to be the encourager on your cue. Explain students' roles as discouragers and the one encourager.
3. Bring the blindfolded volunteer back into the play area.
4. On your signal, the volunteer must dip one foot in peanut butter (with help), then hop around on that foot, picking up the 5 lifesavers. The other students must attempt to distract the volunteer by shouting wrong directions and discouraging comments such as: "You're going the wrong way," "You're never going to make it," or "You missed it." Optional: Create a large poster with the comments students are allowed to make to keep them from getting too personal or cruel.
5. After a minute or two, point to the encourager. The encourager is to help the volunteer by shouting directions to the remaining lifesavers and offering words of encouragement while the others continue with their discouraging words.
6. After the volunteer has found all 5 lifesavers, the activity is done. Allow the volunteer to take off the blindfold and clean his/her foot.
7. Talk about how it felt to hear the words of discouragement and then to hear words of encouragement. How did it feel to be a discourager? encourager?

### **ACTIVITY OPTION 2: MUSICAL PAPER PLATES**

**Purpose:** To introduce the cities Paul and Barnabas traveled to on the first missionary journey.

**Supplies:** Paper plates, marker, music

**Preparation:** Write the name of each of the 9 cities Paul and Barnabas traveled to on a paper plate (Seleucia, Salamis, Paphos, Attalia, Perga, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe).

#### **Directions:**

1. Spread the paper plates out in a large circle. If you have less than 10 students playing, remove enough plates so you start with one less plate than the number of students playing.
2. Have the students stand outside the paper plates.
3. When you begin the music, students must walk around the circle. When the music stops, students must run and sit on a paper plate. Whichever student fails to sit on a paper plate is eliminated from the game.
4. Have students stand outside the paper plates again. Remove one of the plates from the game.
5. Repeat steps 3-4 until there is only one student left.



The Spirit who changes us

## THE WORSHIP

**Note to Leader:** The instructions below are suggestions only. Adapt this time of worship to suit your environment, resources, and cultural expression. Encourage students to broaden their view of corporate worship by including a variety of expressions such as group prayer, group praise, silent meditation, singing, listening to music, reading scripture, collecting an offering, drama, dance, visual arts, and/or a physical exploration of nature or neighborhoods.

**Ideas for Optional Visuals:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Today, we worship the Spirit who changes us. One of the ways He changes us is through encouragement. To encourage is to give someone hope or to urge someone toward action. The Holy Spirit encourages us through God's Word, and through our teachers, family, and friends. Let's give thanks for the encouragement we have received through the Holy Spirit.**

Read the Unit 2 Focus Verse: Psalm 27:1, 13-14.



Sing worship songs and guide students to focus on the Holy Spirit who changes us.



Read 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17.



Invite students to offer sentences of praise to God by completing the following sentence:  
**"Lord, we worship You for \_\_\_\_\_."**



## Barnabas was an encourager

# THE WORD Presentation

**Note to Leader:** Adapt this segment to your setting (Sunday School class, youth group, multi-age gathering, youth camp, retreat, etc.). In some settings, you may choose to have a student read the scripture aloud, and then have the leader, in his or her own words, briefly communicate the Teaching Points, the Christ Connection, and the Big Question. In other settings, a teacher, pastor, or other experienced speaker may present a lecture or extended message that includes those same elements.

### Ideas for Optional Visuals:

You may choose to include an object lesson, video clip, drama, dance, song, or work of art to illustrate the teaching points.

Option 1: Use the map at the end of this Leader's Guide to point out Antioch (Antakya, Turkey on modern maps) and to track Paul and Barnabas' journey (Acts 13:4-15:35).

Option 2: \_\_\_\_\_



## TEACHING POINTS

Consider current culture and influences impacting your students, and adjust the teaching accordingly.

*Read the suggested scripture and communicate each of the points noted.*

Last time, we learned God sent an angel to rescue Peter from prison when he was imprisoned because he was a leader in the church. Today, we will learn another leader, Barnabas, who encouraged the apostles and disciples to accept Saul after God changed his heart on the road to Damascus. We first hear of Barnabas in Acts 4:36. Although his name was Joseph, the apostles probably called him Barnabas, meaning "son of encouragement," because he was known for his generosity and gift of encouragement.

We learn in Galatians 1:17-18 that three years had passed from the time Saul had been converted to the time he arrived in Jerusalem.

The leader or a student reads Acts 9:26-28.

- The believers in Jerusalem didn't believe God had changed Saul's heart. Even though three years had passed, they may not have heard of Saul's conversion or may not have believed it. They remembered the Saul who was persecuting Christians and were afraid of him.
- Barnabas didn't just go and talk to the apostles; he took Saul to them so they could meet him face to face. He shared Saul's story and they listened. By helping the believers trust Saul, Barnabas took on the role of a peacemaker and encourager.

The leadership of the church in Jerusalem trusted Barnabas to go to Antioch to give encouragement and direction to the people there who were starting to follow Jesus.

The leader or a student reads Acts 11:22-26.

- Barnabas saw the potential in Saul. He went to Saul's hometown of Tarsus to get him, and brought him to Antioch.
- The Holy Spirit told the prophets and teachers of the Antioch church to set Saul and Barnabas apart for a special work (Acts 13:2). They traveled to many places to tell people about Jesus.

# THE WORD Presentation *continued*

- At this point, we see Saul began to be known by his Roman name, Paul. Saul was a Jew, born in the Roman city of Tarsus. Being proud of his Jewish heritage, it made sense he would use his Hebrew name, Saul. But, as he began to preach to the Gentiles, even becoming “the apostle to the Gentiles” (Romans 11:13), he may have decided to use his Roman name because it would have been a name that was more familiar to them.
- This trip was Paul’s first missionary journey. It included visits to Antioch, Seleucia, Salamis, Paphos, Perga, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. In most cities on this journey, the people who did not want to hear about Jesus would plot against Paul and Barnabas, but in each town, many believed. Barnabas and Paul never gave up, even when the Jews stirred up trouble against them.
- In Pisidian Antioch, when the Jews had them thrown out of the city, Paul and Barnabas simply shook the dust from their feet in protest and headed off to the next town (Acts 13:50-51). From there, they preached in Iconium until they learned of a plot to stone them (Acts 14:5).

The leader or a student reads Acts 14:19-28.

- In Lystra, Paul was stoned and dragged out of the city and left for dead. But, the disciples gathered around him, Paul got up, and he went back into the city! From there, they traveled to Derbe.
- In each town they visited, people believed and gathered as the church.
- Paul and Barnabas returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch to encourage believers, appointing elders in each church and committing them to the Lord.
- Paul and Barnabas told these new churches to expect hardships and to stay true to the faith. They didn’t tell them this to scare them; but so they wouldn’t be surprised when hardships came.
- To encourage is not to make others feel better or to give them false hope. It is to inspire and urge people to reach their potential and to give them hope and confidence to persevere.
- Everyone needs a Barnabas—someone to help them feel included, to encourage them, challenge them, and to invest in them.



Connecting the Old Testament, the New Testament, and Us

## **CHRIST CONNECTION**

In the whole story of God, what's the connection between this New Testament story and the Old Testament?

- God’s people have always been called to encourage each other. Over 1300 years before Barnabas encouraged Saul/Paul, God called Moses to encourage Joshua.
  - The leader or a student reads aloud Deuteronomy 3:28.
- God chose Moses to encourage Joshua. He chose Barnabas to encourage Saul. In the same way, He has chosen each of us to encourage someone.



## **THE BIG QUESTION**

Introduce and elaborate on this question. Students will answer it in their discussion group.

**Why is encouragement important?**



# THE WAY Discussion



**GETTING STARTED** Display and review the Discussion Group Covenant below:

**We will include everyone here, treating one another with respect and kindness.  
We will encourage everyone here to express their thoughts and opposing views.**

Every student shares his or her best experience or greatest challenge of the past week.



## READ IT AGAIN

Read Acts 9:26-28; 11:22-26; 14:19-28 silently or aloud.

**Why wasn't Saul immediately accepted when he arrived back in Jerusalem?**

**What did Barnabas say to encourage the believers in Jerusalem to accept Saul?**

**Did persecution discourage Barnabas and Paul? What did they tell believers about the hardships they would endure?**



**THE BIG QUESTION** Invite students to share their answers.

**Why is encouragement important?**



**TAKE ACTION** Lead students in a discussion using the questions below.

**By encouraging believers trust Saul, Barnabas was a peacemaker. How can you be a peacemaker this week?**

**Who has encouraged you to believe in Jesus?**

**Who encourages you to stay true to Jesus?**

**Paul and Barnabas never gave up. Who can you encourage to never give up?**

Ask each student to complete this sentence: **God calls us to encourage others SO THAT others might \_\_\_\_\_.**



**PRAY** Share prayer requests and answered prayers.

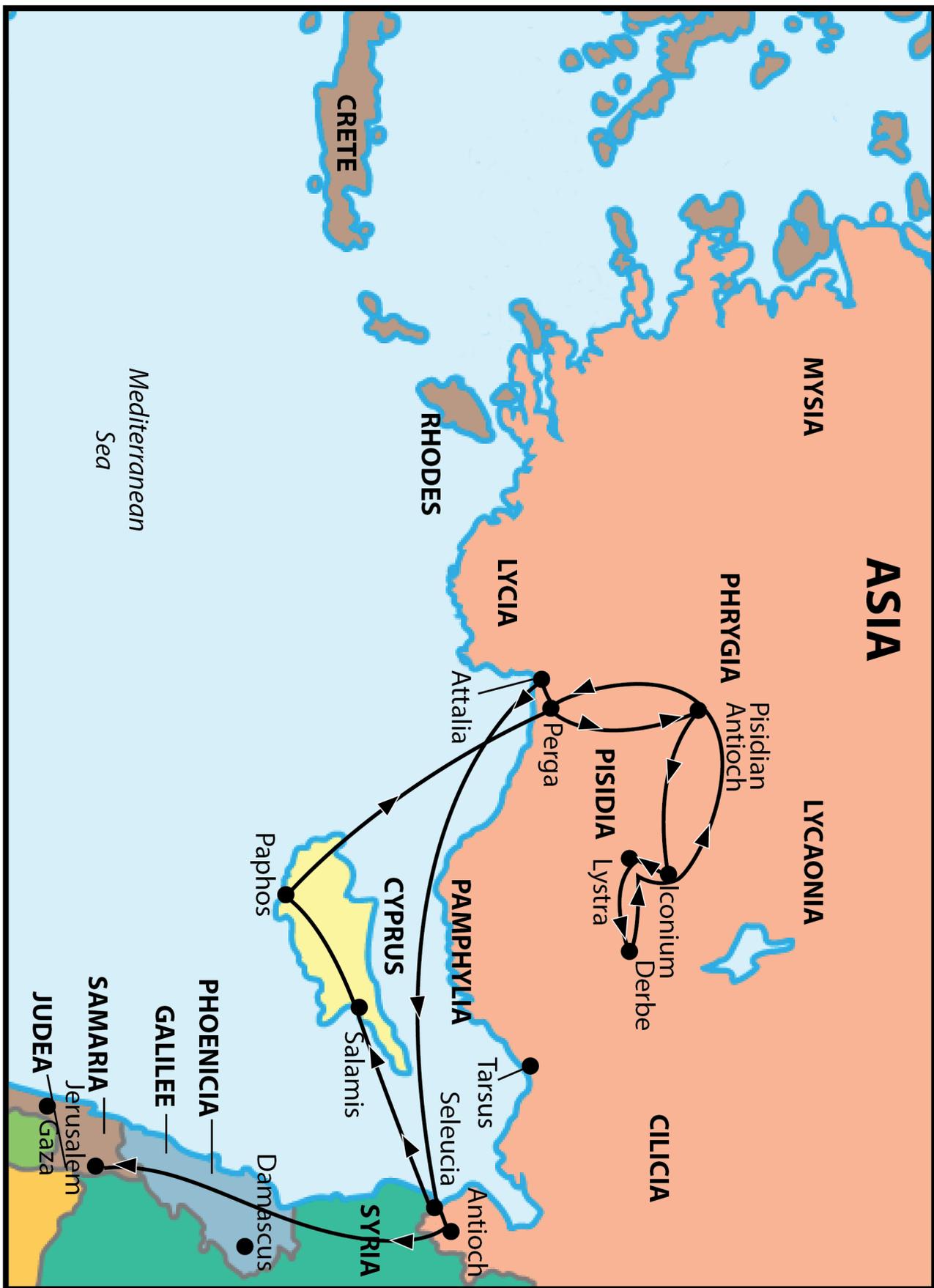
Have students pray with partners, or have the whole group pray together.



**FINAL FIVE MINUTES** When only 5 minutes remain, begin this segment.

Give each student Action Card #11 and Journal Entry #11. **Take home today's Action Card as a reminder of how we can join in what God is doing. Use the Journal Entry as your personal devotional study. Complete your Journal Entries at home and keep them together in a notebook or in your Bible.** Optional: Provide parent or guardian with Family Discussion Card #11.

# PAUL'S FIRST JOURNEY



# PROPHETS & PROMISES

## JOURNAL ENTRY #11

**Barnabas Encourages the Church**  
**Acts 9:26-28; 11:22-26; 14:19-28**

### WHAT DOES IT SAY?

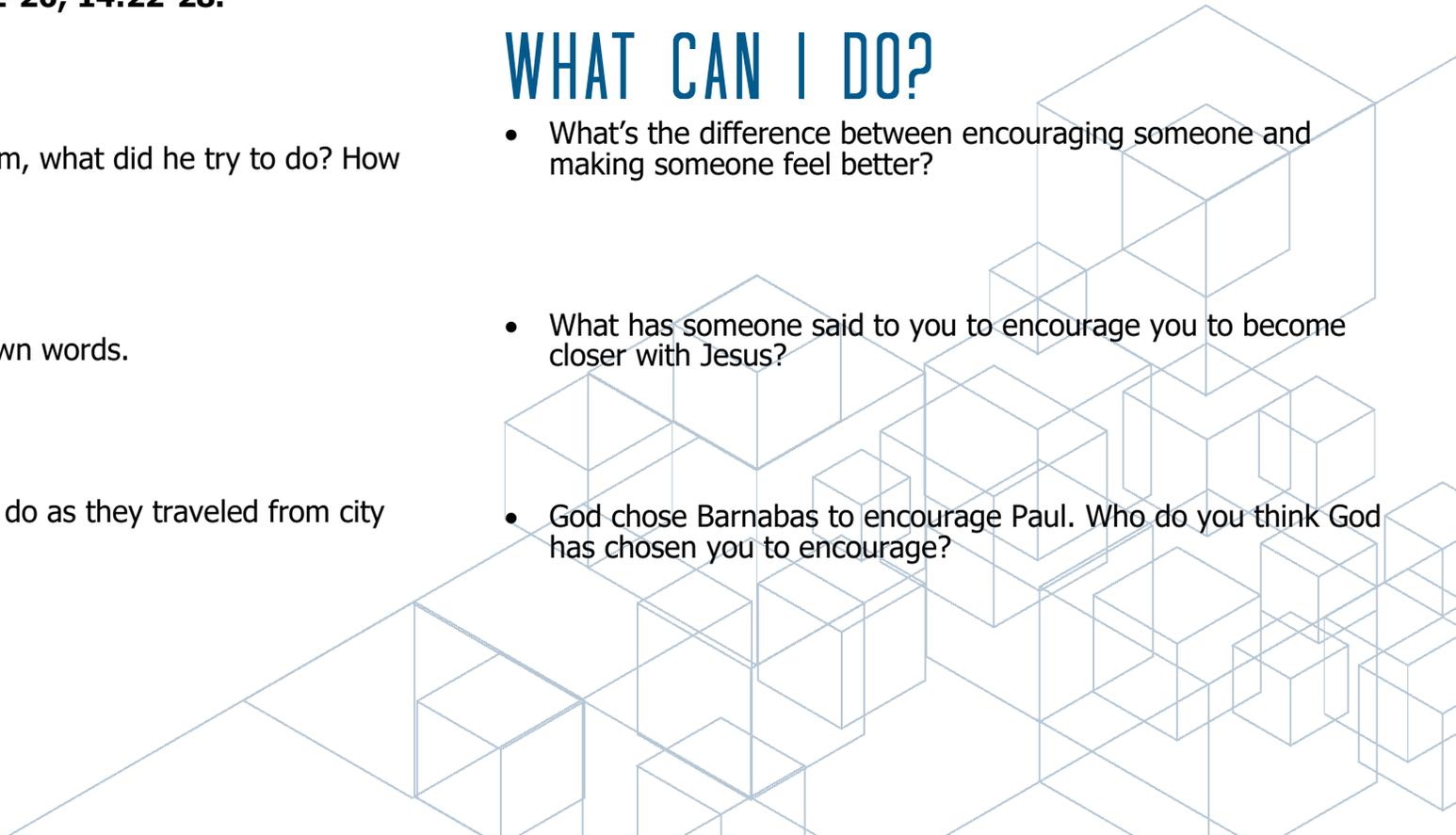
- **Pray!!!** Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what He wants you to learn from this passage.
- **Read Acts 9:26-28; 11:22-26; 14:22-28.**
- When Saul came to Jerusalem, what did he try to do? How did the disciples react?
- Describe Barnabas in your own words.
- What did Barnabas and Paul do as they traveled from city to city?

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- In Antioch, Barnabas encouraged new believers there to stay true to Jesus. What does “staying true to Jesus” mean to you?
- Why is it significant that Barnabas spoke up for Paul and later pursued him to preach the gospel with him?
- Why was it important that Barnabas encouraged the church?

### WHAT CAN I DO?

- What’s the difference between encouraging someone and making someone feel better?
- What has someone said to you to encourage you to become closer with Jesus?
- God chose Barnabas to encourage Paul. Who do you think God has chosen you to encourage?



Action Card #11/P&P

## **BARNABAS ENCOURAGES THE CHURCH**

**ACTS 9:26-28; 11:22-26; 14:19-28**

**GOD LED BARNABAS TO *ENCOURAGE* THE CHURCH AND ITS LEADERS.**

**WE ARE CALLED TO *ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER.***

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WHO HAS *ENCOURAGED* YOU TO FOLLOW JESUS?

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