

Adventures with GOD!

THE FIRST MISSIONARIES (C.2.SPRING.7)

Biblical Reference	Acts 12:25-13:5
Key Verse	Acts 13:3
Key Concept	God has invited the church to participate in God's mission. I am a part of this mission.
Educational Objectives	At the end of the class today, the children will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain how Paul and Barnabas were sent as missionaries. 2. Show on a map the missionary journey Paul took. 3. Talk about the different ways that missionaries share God's love.

LIFE APPLICATION

After praying and seeking direction from God, the church in Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas to preach the message of Jesus Christ. They were the first missionaries that the church sent to share the good news of Jesus outside of Israel. The church sent them and promised to support them. Today the church still sends missionaries to participate in God's mission around the world. There are many people who need to hear the message of God's kingdom and Jesus' love. Missionaries share God's love in many different ways in many different countries. The church is called to send missionaries and support them in the mission. Even the children have been called to support those who have been sent by the church with their prayers and offerings.

Possible Activities and Class Plan

Activity	Materials	Time
My GROW Adventure	GROW Adventure w/God materials	5 minutes
Opening Prayer	Candle	1 minute
Bible Reading	Bible	5 minutes
Introduction	Drawing or photos	5 minutes
Interview	Guest or video	15 minutes
Bible exploration	Bible, map, illustrations	10 minutes
Activity		15 minutes
My GROW Adventure	Review	5 minutes
Closing Prayer	Candle	1 minute



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INSTRUCTIONS

My GROW Adventure with God Weekly Review: As children enter take time to have them reflect on their adventure with God booklets and either discuss or use art materials to express their journey during the past week. You may wish to add any art work, written poems, prayers or songs to a GROW wall in the room. You can find my GROW Adventure with God materials on the Covchurch.org website in the same place as the Adventures with God sessions.

Opening Prayer: Gather children around a candle. Light the candle and explain that we are entering into a special time with God. Encourage the children to hold their hands out in front of them palms up as a sign they are ready to receive what God has for them today.

Prayer Example: Lord God, thank you for making us, for loving us, for forgiving us, and guiding us. We know you are here with us right now. As we enter into your word, the Bible, help us draw close to you, to understand and to listen to what you have to say to us. Amen (For safety sake, you may wish to extinguish the candle after the prayer)

Bible Reading: Explain that as we read the Bible we do that first to spend time with God. Children can remain with hands out stretched palms up to receive the word as it's being read. Alternatively they can be invited to draw what they hear. Read Acts 12:25-13:5 twice and ask children to respond.

Question examples: What did you notice in this passage? How does it make you feel? Was there anything you would ask God about that you didn't understand or was confusing? Is God saying anything to you though the story?

Introduction: Look at the map that you have been filling out this trimester. Point out the places that the gospel of Jesus Christ has been preached by the disciples up until this point in Acts. Show that it extended from Jerusalem and Judea to Samaria and it will keep spreading, as the apostles visit new cities and places to preach the good news. That is the focus of the story today.

Ask the children what images come to mind when they hear the word, "missionary." Do they know anyone that is a missionary? What does a missionary do? It would be great to have pictures of missionaries that your congregation supports and introduce them to the children. Include their names and where they serve.

Interview: If it's possible, invite a missionary from your congregation who is visiting, or a retired missionary that is able to visit and ask them to share a little bit about what life is like



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for a missionary. Have a few questions for them to answer and let the children contribute questions as well.

- Why did you decide to become a missionary?
- What are some difficulties you've had in becoming a missionary?
- What do you do as a missionary?
- How did you choose the place where you would go?
- What is daily life like where you live?
- Share a story of someone who's life was touched by the good news of Jesus.

If you can't have a person in your class sharing, ask a missionary ahead of time to send in a video, or write out answers to your questions and you can share them with the class.

Bible exploration: Use the Bible, illustrations, maps, etc. Today's story speaks of two disciples that were sent by the church as missionaries to share the good news of Jesus in other cities.

Together as a class, define "missionary." Remind them that we are all invited to be a part of God's mission, but that some people have accepted the invitation to be "cross-cultural missionaries" where they go and live in a different country and spend time learning from people in that country, and sharing God's love with them. Write this somewhere if possible.

Review what happened after Saul escaped Damascus (Acts 9:26-30, preaching in Jerusalem and then Tarsus, Acts 11:19-26, Saul and Barnabas in Antioch for a year).

It was then that the church prayed and decided to send Saul and Barnabas as missionaries to continue sharing the good news in other places. Have one of the children read Acts 12:23-13:5. Ask questions:

- Who was it that spoke and called Saul and Barnabas for a special task? (Holy Spirit)
- What was the response of the church? (after praying and fasting they laid hands on them and commissioned them).

This was not just Saul and Barnabas going off by themselves. They were called by God and supported and sent by the church. Missionaries are sent by the church. How do we send missionaries today? How do we support missionaries? Have the children come up with a list of ideas.

Activity: There are several activities. One is a review questionnaire. Have them work on it individually and then share their answers with each other. Then, for the next part of the activity you will need to have copies of a world map (one for each child). Provide art

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supplies so they can decorate it. Have stickers available for them to mark where the missionaries from your congregation are serving.

NOTE: ASK THEM TO BRING A SMALL PICTURE OF THEMSELVES WITH FOR NEXT WEEK.

Today's GROW Adventure with God Review:

G: God's Word: What is the story? (Give children an opportunity to express their understanding of the story)

R: Relationships: Is there anything in today's Bible story that shows us how we should or shouldn't share God's love with others? (Remind children that sometimes God uses the stories of the bible to show us how we shouldn't act toward God or others and give them a chance to consider how we might show God's love instead)

O: Outward Action: Is there anything in the Bible story that shows us how we should help or serve God or others? (Explore concrete ways the children could live this out in the coming week)

W: Worship: Is there anything in the Bible story that shows us how we should accept God's love for us and others? Ask: How do you feel about God? How would you like to respond to God? What would you like to say to God?

Closing Prayer: Gather children around the candle again. As you light the candle explain that the flame is something that is present in the light and the darkness. In the same way, it reminds us that God is always with us. Is there anything anyone wishes to say to God? After children have responded, close the prayer time.

Prayer Example: Lord God, we thank you that you are always with us, and always love us. It's good to be with you. Thank you for what we have learned today. Thank you for being with us and for teaching us through the Bible. Help us to remember what you have taught us today and to live it out when we leave. Amen



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QUESTIONNAIRE

Select one answer for each question below.

1. After Saul was baptized, how long did he spend with the disciples?
 - a. 1 year
 - b. a few days
 - c. a few months

2. After Saul's conversion, the disciples
 - a. were still scared of him
 - b. hated him for what he'd done
 - c. accepted him like a brother

3. Saul put all his energy into
 - a. eating
 - b. preaching
 - c. finding old friends

4. Saul began preaching
 - a. only to Christians
 - b. but quietly so no one knew
 - c. in the synagogues

5. In his sermons Paul emphasized that
 - a. Jesus was a saint
 - b. Jesus was a good man
 - c. Jesus was the son of God

6. Before returning to Jerusalem Saul spent time in
 - a. Tarsus
 - b. Rome
 - c. Samaria

7. What was the response of the Jews towards Saul?
 - a. They tried to convince him that what he was doing was wrong
 - b. They put him in jail.
 - c. They planned to kill him.

8. Saul escaped the Jews by being let down through an opening in the wall with a
 - a. ladder
 - b. rope
 - c. basket

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9. Why did the Christians in Jerusalem finally trust Saul?
 - a. God told them in a vision
 - b. Barnabas told them what God had done in Saul's life
 - c. Saul convinced them

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ACTIVITY

WORLD MAP

Here is just one example of a world map. You can find a different one if you choose. Give each child a copy and have art supplies available so they can color them and decorate them and indicate with stickers or some other form where the missionaries are serving that they know.

