

June 14 Lesson



Bible Passage: Acts 11:19–29; 14—15
(Paul and Barnabas)

God Is the Everlasting Father

Remember Verse

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8

Items to gather:

- Fabric (about 4')
- Whiteboard or posterboard
- Dry erase marker
- tags cutout out of paper
- Scissors (1 pair per child)
- String or yarn (about 1' per child)
- Colored pencils or pens
- Single-hole punch
- Suitcase
- Toy phone

LEADER PREP

Each week you'll find a list of resources along with encouraging articles that help you prepare your heart to present the lesson.

Inspire *Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives*

Growing up, my dad made a point of doing lots of activities with my brother and me—bike rides, farmers markets, musicals, sports, etc. When I was in high school, I played softball in the spring and soccer in the fall. Growing up in Minnesota and playing spring and fall sports meant we would often find ourselves in cold, rainy, or snowy weather. Yet my dad showed up at every game—he cheered us on and felt the pain of our defeats. Dad was always there.

But even though my dad was involved and I knew I could count on him, he also brought disappointments. My parents divorced, and he played a role in it. I felt frustrated with him at times and let down in certain ways. As I grew older, I began to see my parents as real people—people with faults and flaws and poor decisions. My dad was far from perfect.

I'm grateful that while growing up, I also knew God as my Everlasting Father. From a young age, I understood that no matter what might happen, I could trust Him and depend on His good character. Where my earthly father wasn't great, I was reminded of who God is. And where my earthly father failed, I knew that God never would. And what's amazing is that after so many years of walking under the care of my heavenly Father, He has stayed consistent and loving and true. From everlasting to everlasting.

Denise Snyder
Crossroads Church

Equip *Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage*

The book of Acts takes us through a variety of places in Israel and the nearby Greek world. As the message of Jesus begins to spread outside of Jerusalem, the apostles travel to new places to make the gospel known to both Jews and Gentiles. In Acts 11, Barnabas heads to Antioch after persecution in Jerusalem forces the followers of Jesus to flee. Antioch, located north of Israel in modern-day Turkey, was a major urban center during the first century. It was the third-largest city in the Roman Empire after Rome and Alexandria. It was also a major center of trade due to its port on the eastern side of the Orontes River. Of Antioch's half-million inhabitants, Jews made up about one-seventh of the population, making it a good spot for the apostles to begin sharing the good news about Jesus, first with the Jews in the city and then with the Gentiles. In Antioch the believers are first called Christians, the term's suffix suggesting the meaning "followers of Christ." In a sense, Antioch becomes Paul's home base, as he returns there after his first two missionary journeys. In Acts 14, Paul and Barnabas have moved on to Lystra, where, because of a miracle they perform, they're mistaken for Zeus and Hermes by the locals. The people there believed that both of these gods had visited a nearby farm a few centuries before but had been mostly ignored by the people. The residents of Lystra are determined not to make that mistake again, which is why Barnabas and Paul find the people eager to worship them. But the apostles quickly redirect their zeal, pointing out that the one true God, the Everlasting Father, has always provided for the people of Lystra.

Support *Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God's Word*

The Bible tells us that from everlasting to everlasting, He is God (Psalm 90:2). The concept of someone being eternal or everlasting is difficult for us to comprehend. It's also a comfort to know that our God—our Father—has always been and will always be. "He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together" (Colossians 1:17). Take a moment to reflect on our Father as the One who is everlasting. What does this tell you about His power and knowledge?

The Bible also tells us that God is our Father. Depending on how we grew up, this could bring up a variety of emotions as we remember someone who might have been loving, harsh, distant, or hardworking. However, God as our Father is the perfect representation of what a Father should be. He is kind. He disciplines us for our well-being. He provides, even for those who don't know Him, Barnabas and Paul share (vv. 15–17). Take a minute to reflect on what feelings well up in you as you process God as Father. Focus on replacing any negative images of a father with how the Scripture describes God's role as Father. Consider reading Hosea 11:1–4 for some beautiful images of God's fatherhood.

God is our Everlasting Father. As you prepare to lead your children this week, consider what their experiences might be with their fathers. Pray that God softens their hearts and helps them understand our good God as a loving Everlasting Father.

CONNECT//10 minutes



Creative Designers

In this CONNECT time, your kids will use their imaginations to create a fun purpose for a piece of fabric.

SUPPLIES

- Fabric (about 4')

RELATE

CONNECT QUESTION: Open your time by asking this question: **What unique talent do you have, such as the ability to touch your nose with your tongue?**

Give your family the chance to use their imaginations and devise a fun purpose for an ordinary piece of fabric. Begin by having everyone stand in a circle. Then take the fabric and show a unique way to wear or use it. For example, you could turn it into a scarf. Then pass the fabric to someone who should demonstrate a new purpose for the fabric. For example, she might put the fabric on her head and call it a hat. Continue around the circle and give each person the chance to make his own creation with the fabric.

GATHER//30 minutes



Remember Verse

Each week your family will spend time memorizing a portion of Scripture together. The Remember Verse focuses on a character trait of God that's highlighted in today's portion of The Big God Story.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in

Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8

Game: Sharing the Good News

SUPPLIES

- Whiteboard or posterboard
- Dry erase marker

SET UP

Write the Remember Verse on the whiteboard or poster board.

RELATE

Invite your family to use their acting skills to learn the Remember Verse. Have each child read the Remember Verse while saying it as creatively as she can. For example, one person might shout it loudly. Another person might choose to sing it. Another person might say it in a deep grown-up voice. Make sure each child takes a turn.

Storytelling

Bible Passage: Acts 11:19–29; 14—15

Storytelling Technique: Objects

God Is the Everlasting Father

RELATE

God is telling an amazing story about how He has been at work since the very beginning! Last week we learned about how God is the Lord who heals. God continues to work in our lives today, and we can trust Him because He is a good Father. Who here has a dad? Invite children to raise their hands. **Who here maybe wants to be a dad someday?** Invite boys to raise their hands. **The Bible calls God our Father. He is a good Father who has never done anything wrong and who loves us completely. And the best part of it all is that God is an Everlasting Father. What does *everlasting* mean?** Invite responses. **That's right—He is Father forever and ever! Let's take a minute to invite Him to teach us more about Himself today.** Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

Watch the storytelling video together.

God is our Everlasting Father. He has been working since the very beginning to bring us back to Him so that we can have a good relationship with Him and He can love us as our good Father. God wants everyone to know this, which is why the disciples went out and shared His message. God also invites us to share His message with people who need to hear it! God wants everyone to know about His Son, Jesus, and that He is our amazing Everlasting Father. Consider sharing a time when you recognized God as Father in your life.

Discussion Questions

- **What did Jesus ask His disciples to do?** Matthew 28:18–20
- **Where were believers in Jesus first called Christians?** Acts 11:26
- **Who didn't like Paul and Barnabas preaching about Jesus?** Acts 14:2
- **What did Paul and Barnabas tell people about God after healing a man?** Acts 14:15–17
- **How has God been your Everlasting Father?**

RESPOND//15 minutes



Craft: Praise Tags

Paul and Barnabas traveled from city to city. In this response time, kids will create a “travel tag” with words of praise to God.

SUPPLIES

- tags cutout out of paper
- Scissors (1 pair per child)
- String or yarn (about 1' per child)
- Colored pencils or pens
- Single-hole punch
- Suitcase

PREPARE AHEAD

Print enough copies of the Praise Tags cutouts so each child gets one tag. Cut out the tags. Also cut a one-foot piece of string or yarn for each child.

RELATE

Paul and Barnabas traveled from city to city to tell everyone the good news that God is the Everlasting Father. Read Acts 14:15–17 for your group. God was there in the beginning. He created the universe long ago, and He is here today taking care of our needs every day.

When you look at our world, where do you see God working? Invite responses. **Now think about God as your Everlasting Father. He sees you and is kind toward you. He gives you everything you need, including joy! Let’s spend a few moments talking with God. What do you want to say to Him today? Do you want to tell Him about something you need? Maybe you want to thank Him for caring for you.** Allow children a few moments of silence to talk with God.

Give a tag to each child. **You each have a tag, kind of like the tags used on suitcases. On it you can write words of praise and thanks to God for His love and care in your life as your Everlasting Father.** Once the kids finish, help them punch a hole in each tag, thread a piece of yarn or string through it, and hang it on the handle of the suitcase as a way to remember that God is their Everlasting Father.

Game: Run, Paul, Run

Invite your kids to play a chasing game similar to the traditional Cat and Mouse game.

SUPPLIES

- None

RELATE

Have the children sit together. **When Paul and Barnabas traveled to a city to share the gospel, they would eventually be chased out of town. Today, we’re going to play a chasing game similar to the traditional Cat and Mouse game.**

To play, choose one player to be the runner and another to be Paul. Have the rest of the players stand, form a circle, and hold hands. “Paul” will stand inside the circle and the runner will stand outside the circle. The goal of the game is for Paul to get outside the circle and then avoid being caught by the runner. The runner can never enter the circle but can try to reach through the circle to grab Paul. Paul can run in and out of the circle but cannot stay in the circle for longer than 10 seconds. The players in the circle must try to help Paul escape from the runner by holding up their hands and letting Paul back in the circle. If Paul gets caught, he becomes the new runner, and another player gets to be the new Paul.

BLESS//5 minutes



SUPPLIES

- Toy phone

RELATE

Invite your family to stand together as you read the blessing from Isaiah 40:28:

Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.

Then invite children to spend time blessing each other. Give one child the toy phone and encourage her to bless another child by saying, “(Child’s name), **have you heard that the Lord is the Everlasting God? May you know how much He cares for you.**” Then that child can take the phone and choose another child to bless. Continue until each child has been blessed by another.

Finally, have everyone stand together as you bless the entire family.

May you know God as your Everlasting Father. May you rest in His care and unfailing love.