

BEYOND BEYOND

Preschool Session : Barnabas, Son of Encouragement

Acts 4:32-37

by Willa Ruth Garlow

A message for leaders of preschoolers:

- The Bible emphasis of this third churchwide session is: Barnabas and the Jerusalem Christians, motivated by love and *working together*, shared their possessions so no one was in need.
- Also, this churchwide session's emphasis is present-day Christians *working together* through the Cooperative Program.
- The Cooperative Program is an ingenious missions program through which each cooperating church shares a percentage of its undesignated funds to take and send the gospel to people in North America and around the world.
- When you give your money at your church, your church sends a percentage of your money *through* the Cooperative Program. As a result, *your church* and *you* are *working together* with other churches, helping to send missionaries and supporting ministries for the purpose of sharing the gospel in your state, in your country and in countries all over the world.
- The Southern Baptist Convention, whose mission is the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), launched the Cooperative Program in 1925. It has proven to be an extremely effective method of *working together* toward the common goal of sharing the gospel with every person on the planet.
- Hopefully, your church is contributing through the Cooperative Program and each year works to raise its percentage of giving. *You* can be a real advocate for the work of world missions through the Cooperate Program. You and we and all of us can help the Lord's work by giving over and above our tithes.

Preschool Stewardship Session Three
(For threes, fours, fives and kindergartners)

Friends Work Together to Help Each Other and to Send Missionaries
(Acts 4:32-37)

During this session, preschoolers can learn that:

- The Bible has a true story about Barnabas and other church people in Jerusalem who worked together to help each other.
- The money we give at church is used to buy supplies for our rooms at church, pays the people

LESSONS
Preschool: Session

who work all day in our church, pays for our church heating system and for the electricity and water we use at church.

- Our church works together with other churches. We put some of our church's money with some of the money from other churches. Then the money is used to help people who are sick or hungry or need to hear about Jesus.
- Putting our church's money with other churches' money is called the Cooperative Program. It helps us send missionaries all around the world to help people and to tell people Jesus loves them.

Leader's preparation for this session:

- Be sure to plan for two teachers to be present at all times when preschoolers are in the room at church. And, for safety and protection, plan to keep the room's door closed when children are in the room.
- Read Acts 4:32-37. Think about the unselfishness and love of those Christians in Jerusalem who sold their possessions, put the money together and used it for their mutual support and for doing God's work.
- Read the Bible story and the present-day story and be ready to share them and the Bible phrases as you have opportunity in conversations during the teaching session. Recall the stories and phrases in large-group time.
- Pray that you can teach, in words preschoolers can understand, God's principles for giving. Examine your personal convictions about your love for God and His work, about your own tithe and even more.

Bible phrases:

- "We work together" (1 Corinthians 3:9).
- "Bring an offering to thank God" (1 Chronicles 16:29).
- "We are helpers" (2 Corinthians 1:24).
- "Help one another" (Galatians 5:13).

Bible story: Barnabas and the People Worked Together to Be Helpers (Acts 4:32-37)

Tell the Bible story as often as you have natural opportunities during the session.

In the city of Jerusalem, a man named Barnabas and other people who loved God knew everything belongs to God. They knew some of them were very poor. The people agreed they would sell all the things they owned and put all their money together for all of them to use. Then no one would be poor and need money.

So, they sold all they owned. They put all the money together and took it to one of their friends. They asked him to help by giving each person the money he needed to buy food and other necessary things.

After that, none of them were poor and each person had all he needed.

Barnabas and his friends were glad they worked together to be helpers.

Present-day story: Sammy and Layla Give Their Money at Church

Twins Sammy and Layla got in their car seats in the back seat of the car. It was Sunday morning, and they were going to church with their daddy and mother.

Layla asked, "Sammy, do you have your offering envelope we fixed yesterday?"

"Oh," Sammy said. "Daddy, I forgot to get my offering to take to church. Please, may I go back and get it?"

Daddy helped Sammy out of the car, unlocked the door into the house and told Sammy to hurry to his room and get his offering, his money, to give at church. Smiling, Sammy hurried and came back with his offering envelope in his hand.

"I am glad you remembered before we got to church," Mother said.

When they were at the door of their Sunday School room, Sammy and Layla waved goodbye. Daddy and Mother went to their Sunday School rooms.

Smiling, one of their teachers, Mrs. Todd said, "Good morning, Sammy and Layla. I see you brought your offering envelopes. You may put them in the offering basket."

"I nearly forgot mine," said Sammy. "But Layla reminded me, and Daddy let me go back and get it. Our offering envelopes have \$1 in them."

Layla said, "For our birthday we each got \$10 from our grandmother. We remembered Jesus said we were to give a tithe of our money. Mother helped us. She said a tithe, 10 percent of \$10, is \$1!"

"That is right!" Mrs. Todd said, "One of our Bible verses is "Bring an offering to thank God" (1 Chronicles 16:29). Another Bible verse is, "We work together" (1 Corinthians 3:9).

Mrs. Todd told them when people give their money at church, they are working together with lots of other people who love God and give their money. She said we work together in our church to buy things we need.

She asked, "What do you see in our room that our money helped pay for?"

Layla and Sammy looked around. They saw tables and chairs, a Bible, blocks, books and puzzles. The twins smiled, thinking their money had helped buy things needed at church!

"But remember," Mrs. Todd said, "The money we bring also helps our church buy food, clothes and medicine for people who need them. "But," Mrs. Todd said, as she clapped her hands, "one of the most exciting things is that we work together through the Cooperative Program!"

Sammy frowned. "The Cooperative Program? What is that?"

Mrs. Todd smiled and explained, "Our church works together, cooperates, and gives part of our church money through a missions program called the Cooperative Program. Other churches

LESSONS
Preschool: Session

cooperate and give part of their money through the Cooperative Program. The money all the churches share through the Cooperative Program helps pay for missionaries to go all around the world to tell other people, other boys and girls, about Jesus.”

Layla hugged her brother, Sammy, and said, “Aren’t you glad we brought our money to church today?”

Teaching Session

Greeting the children

So you can immediately begin teaching in conversations with the children, have the room and the learning activity centers ready when the first child arrives.

Learning Centers (45 minutes)

If the teaching session is scheduled for more than an hour, extend the time for the learning centers. Set up five learning centers as described below: art, blocks, books and puzzles, home living and music, and nature.

Art Center- Creating a sticky wall poster

Needed:

- Sheets of 8.5” × 11” white paper or light-colored construction paper, cut in half
- Varying colors of felt, water-based markers
- Sheet of contact paper four feet long for making the wall poster
- A sign that reads: THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM
- Transparent tape

Teaching:

- Using the transparent tape, tape the contact paper (sticky side out) to the wall (if taping things on the wall is forbidden, tape the contact paper to the front of a low cabinet or on two paint easels).
- Stick the sign at the top of the contact paper.
- Put the paper and the markers on a table or on the floor in an area where preschoolers can work.

Tell the preschoolers they can make a Cooperative Program poster to help other people know that the money your church shares through the Cooperative Program helps send missionaries to tell other mothers, daddies, boys and girls about Jesus and to buy the things missionaries need.

Give each child pieces of paper. Suggest some things they might draw (people, daddies and mothers, children, missionaries, computers, books, bicycles, cars, food, Bibles, church buildings, houses, chairs, coats)

When a child finishes a picture, let him stick it on the contact paper. Allow a child to draw as many pictures as he chooses to draw.

Near the end of the teaching session, tape the sticky poster on the wall outside the door of the

LESSONS
Preschool: Session

room. Remind the children to show the poster to their parents and tell them about the Cooperative Program.

Blocks Center- Build roads and walking paths

Needed:

- Wooden unit blocks
- Picture of a church building
- Two or three small cars
- Small bus
- Two small trucks

Teaching:

Mention that, in order to go to the villages or areas where people are, missionaries have to walk and drive on small dirt paths, narrow roads, wide highways, busy city streets and lonely country roads. Tell them missionaries drive all kinds of vehicles, many not new.

Give the children freedom to build.

Pray, "Thank you, God, for using our money to help missionaries have the things they need to go and tell people about Jesus."

Books and Puzzles Center- Reading and working puzzles about people

Needed:

- Three or four books about people (about missionaries, if available)
- Three or four puzzles with pictures of people

Teaching:

Allow the children to read and work. Interrupt only if there is difficulty.

Home Living and Music Center- Working like missionary families at home

Needed:

- The basic home living furniture and materials
- CD player and CD

Teaching:

Tell the children that missionary families have homes and families like we do. They work at home to clean dishes, sweep floors, cook and keep things neat and clean. They also work to help families who do not know about Jesus or about God's love for them. Often, in some countries, missionaries do not have television or radio. Those missionary families enjoy listening to CDs.

Nature Center- Planting seeds

Needed:

- Newspaper to cover the table
- Clear, 4-oz. plastic cups
- Soil
- Grass or flower seeds
- Plastic spoons for putting the soil in the cups
- Water in small watering can

Teaching:

Mention that some missionaries help farmers know how to grow better crops and raise farm animals. As they help farmers and their families, the missionaries tell them about God's love and care. Assist the children in putting soil in the cups and planting and watering the seeds in the cups.

Cleanup (5 minutes)

The nature center may require more cleanup than the other centers. Allow the children to take responsibility and feel good about being helpers, working together to keep "their" room and church building neat and clean. Happily assist.

Large-group learning (10 minutes)

Needed:

- Bible
- Five sheets of blank construction paper (red, green, blue, yellow, white) taped in a line on the floor
- A child's sock with the toe stuffed with a ball or a tight wad of newspaper and tied so the top of the sock is easily handled and pitched.

Greet the children as they come to the large-group time. When two or three have arrived, start singing a movement song to the tune, "Mary Had a Little Lamb." Sing quiet movements preschoolers can do: "Can you reach up to the sky, to the sky, reach up high, can you reach up to the sky on this happy day?"

Sing other stanzas, such as "Can you shake your head like this, hold your left foot up, slowly wiggle your fingers, touch your elbow, bend and touch the floor on this happy day?"

When all of the children have come to group time, point to and sing about each child (same tune), "Thank You, God, that Billy's here, Billy's here, Billy's here, on this happy day!"

Hold the Bible in your lap, and recall the Bible story. Say, "Here on this page in the Bible is the story about Barnabas and his friends who loved God. They were unselfish and worked together to help other people."

Recall and tell the Bible story written for this session.

Pray, thanking God for Barnabas and the people who, long ago, worked together to be helpers.

Ask, "What are some ways we can be helpers?" Allow time for the children to think and answer.

LESSONS
Preschool: Session

Say, "I know a story about a brother and a sister who learned about being helpers at church." Tell the present-day story for this session.

Play the "Gentle Sock-Pitch Game."

Directions: A child gently pitches (Avoid the word *throws*.) the sock to land on a colored sheet of construction paper. Each child gets two tries to land on a colored sheet.

When a sock lands on a colored sheet, share the Bible phrases as follows:

- Red- "Bring an offering to church."
- Green- "We work together."
- Blue- "Bring an offering to thank God."
- Yellow- "We are helpers."
- White - "Help one another."

Keep the children involved and having fun.

Until parents come

Continue the game until adults come for their children. Allow a child to leave only with *an authorized adult*.