**1. Motivate**

How have you seen someone grow as a person over time?

* our children
* our grandchildren from babies to adults, making decisions, getting education
* former students – taking my class, finishing a degree plan, excelling at a job
* people who started out learning to read and eventually end up writing books
* played with Legos, then Lego robot kits, then work as engineers
* someone who started plunking notes on the piano, then took lessons, then becomes the church pianist
* kid who enjoyed helping plant the garden, now runs a landscaping business

**2. Transition**

Today we look at the progression in the mentoring relationship between Barnabas and Paul.

* We realize that mentoring relationships to change over time

A video introduction to the lesson is available. View it at <https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1_bkisuqlo> . If you have no wi-fi where you teach, best to download to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/mpcea45f>

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 Encourage A New Believer

Listen for someone needing acceptance.

Acts 9:26-28 (NIV) When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. 28 So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord.

What is the setting in which Saul came to Jerusalem after his conversion?

* tried to join up with the disciples
* they were afraid of him – he had been one who harassed and persecuted followers of Jesus
* they couldn’t believe he really was a disciple

What emotions or feelings may he have felt at their rejection?

* angry
* discouraged
* misunderstood
* frustrated

What difference did Barnabas make to Saul personally and to the fellowship in general?

* Barnabas assured the local believers, he related Saul’s conversion experience
* he testified to his courageous preaching in Damascus, as a result, Saul was openly received
* he had many opportunities to preach and did so boldly

What did Barnabas risk in standing up for Saul?

* at least embarrassment, at worst his own safety (if Saul was involved in an undercover operation)
* the safety and lives of the apostles and other believers in Jerusalem
* the continued growth of the fledgling church

What might we risk by investing in others? What risks do you take when you put yourself on the line for an outsider?

* time and energy
* embarrassment if the person turns out to be a fake or gives up
* we might make the wrong choice and waste our effort
* in a country that opposes Christianity, one could literally risk his/her life

What would be the benefits of investing in Saul if he turned out to be genuine?

* it was known that Saul was a mover and a shaker, he could help them grow
* would be a reversal for those who opposed the growth of the church
* would bring Saul into a new and expanded role of ministry
* would be an infusion of dynamic leadership into the church

Saul/Paul became one of the world’s premier missionaries. How would history be different if Barnabas had not taken the risk to involve Saul?

* much of New Testament might have read differently
* growth of the early church might have gone in a different direction
* inclusion of Gentiles into the church might have been slower

How could a person like Barnabas help heal wounds in a church group?

* see the good in people
* be willing to befriend them
* be ready to bring folks together
* promote forgiveness and understanding

3.2 Encourage Others to Serve

Listen for Barnabas’ travels.

Acts 11:21-26 (NIV) The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people [in Antioch] believed and turned to the Lord. 24 News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. 23 When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. 24 He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord. 25 Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, 26 and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

What was taking place in Antioch that caught the attention of the church in Jerusalem?

* great numbers of people becoming believers in Jesus
* lives were being changed
* it was a genuine spiritual awakening

What was Barnabas’ assessment of what he saw?

* saw evidence of the grace of God
* he was glad
* he encouraged them
* admonished, exhorted them to remain true to the Lord
* encouraged them to pursue their faith with all their hearts

What words and phrases in these verses support the choice of Barnabas as the right person to go to Antioch?

* he was an encourager
* he was known as a “good man”
* he was “full of the Holy Spirit”
* a man of faith

As we noted, Barnabas was an encourager. How is *encouragement* like a set of *jumper cables*?

* gives a zap of power when needed
* we may be feeling down, worn out spiritually
* encouragement helps raise your spiritual energy level

Why do you think Barnabas went looking for *Saul* (it had been about 10 years since their acquaintance in Jerusalem)?

* needed help due to the growth of the church
* knew that Saul was a dynamic speaker/teacher
* this would get Saul involved in a church growth situation
* Barnabas’ goal was church growth – saw the opportunity to get good help
* may have been thinking ahead to opportunities for future ministries together

What was the primary scope of their ministry together in Antioch?

* meet with the church, taught them spiritual Truth
* shared the gospel message of faith in Jesus to forgive sins
* taught great numbers of people

How can we actively encourage God’s larger work in our church?

* involvement in the programs that God is blessing
* look for ways to help augment the efforts of church leaders
* strong prayer support
* faithful financial support of the church’s ministries
* pray against negative influences

3.3 Follow God’s Given Paths

Listen for the reason for a disagreement.

Acts 15:36-40 (NIV) Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." 37 Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, 38 but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. 39 They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, 40 but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord.

What did Paul suggest to Barnabas?

* let’s go back and visit the towns where we preached
* we’ll see how they are doing
* we would call that “discipling”

Why didn’t Paul want Mark to accompany the apostles on their trip?

* didn’t think it was wise
* Mark had deserted them in Pamphylia, he hadn’t gone on with them for the rest of their trip
* figured Mark wasn’t dedicated enough before and would act the same this time

What did the apostles do about their difference of opinion?

* sharp disagreement, parted company
* Barnabas took Mark, headed for Cyprus
* Paul chose Silas to revisit the churches
* they were blessed by the local church to go on their way with God’s blessing

How do you think the disagreement between Paul and Barnabas impacted their relationship and their ministry?

* motivated a doubling of the evangelistic effort
* realize that it’s not an “either-or” decision – it’s not a matter of Paul being right and Barnabas being wrong (or vice-versa)
* it’s a “both-and” situation
* Barnabas was right in giving John Mark another chance and involving him in ministry
* Paul was right in needing someone steady and faithful
* Both were right in dividing up the evangelistic effort to create two teams

How can disagreements be beneficial in some cases?

* God gives each believer spiritual gifts, we’re not all the same
* those differing spiritual gifts may sometimes be in different directions and cause personal disagreements
* God can take each of those personalities and use them in different directions
* both can end up being good things for advancement of the Kingdom of God

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

Application

Reconcile.

* Prayerfully evaluate your relationships to determine anyone with whom you are at odds.
* Ask God to open a way for you to reconcile with that person.

Consider.

* Take time to evaluate your relationship with the person you are mentoring or
* are being mentored by.
* What areas might become a source of friction?
* What steps are needed to avoid conflict?
* Prayerfully consider taking those steps.

Divide.

* Speak with the other person in your mentoring relationship about a plan to multiply your relationship with each of you choosing someone else to mentor.
* Thus, two will become four and you will double your impact for Christ!

Cryptogram Puzzle

The Landscaping Attaché at our Banasintdotral embassy received this coded message hidden in a load of mulch. Spiros the Spy is on a secret mission, so he has passed the decrypting duty to your class. Use the key at the bottom to match the symbols to the letters. Note the example with the “HELLO WORLD” on the left. When you finish the decode, pass the message on to your class secretary. Technical help and further Family Activities are found at <https://tinyurl.com/mpcea45f>