



Helping Kids Speak Gracious Words God's Way

When Your Words Shape the Sound of Your Life

Lesson Aim

Kids will learn that their words carry power to encourage, bless, and bring life, just as Barnabas used his words to strengthen and include others in the early church.

Scripture Focus

- “But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. (Acts 9:27, *ESV*)
- “Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body” (Proverbs 16:24, *ESV*).

Connect

- **Connection Point:** Ask: “Has someone ever said something to you that made you feel stronger, happier, or more confident?”

Teach

- **Bible Story:** Read or retell the story of Barnabas the Encourager (Acts 4:36; Acts 9:26–27; Acts 11:22–24)

Barnabas was not his real name. His given name was Joseph, but the disciples gave him a nickname: Barnabas, which means “son of encouragement.” He was known for lifting others up with his words and actions.

When Paul (then called Saul) first believed in Jesus, the church was afraid of him. Paul had once been an enemy of Christians, and no one trusted that he had really changed. Most people kept their distance. But Barnabas saw what God was doing in Paul’s life. He stood beside him and spoke for him to the apostles, explaining how Paul had met Jesus.

Without Barnabas’s gracious words, Paul might never have been accepted by the church family.

Later, when new believers in Antioch needed guidance, the church leaders sent Barnabas. Instead of criticizing, he encouraged them to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. His words helped them grow strong in faith. Scripture says Barnabas was “a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord” (Acts 11:24).

Barnabas’s story shows us that gracious words can open doors, strengthen friendships, and help people follow God. Our words may not form stars or create light like God’s Word in Genesis 1:3, but they can create hope, peace, and courage in someone’s heart.

- **Discussion Questions:**
 - Why did the disciples call Joseph “Barnabas”?
 - How did Barnabas encourage Paul when others were afraid of him?
 - What happens when we use gracious words with others?
- **Explain:**
 - Barnabas shows us that words can build up or tear down.
 - Speaking gracious words is one way we reflect God’s heart to others.

Model

- **Teacher shares:** a personal example from your own life when someone’s gracious words encouraged you, lifted your confidence, or helped you keep going. Keep it simple and authentic so kids can see how this truth is real in everyday life.
- **Student activity:** Invite kids to act out short role-plays: one child feels nervous, left out, or sad, and another speaks gracious words to encourage them. Or play “Encouragement Charades,” where kids act out situations (a test, a sports game, a lonely lunch) and others speak words that would help.

Pray

- “Lord, thank You for the gift of words. Help us to use our voices like Barnabas—to bring hope, courage, and joy to others. Make our words sweet like honey and full of Your love.”

Craft/Activity

- Kids make a “**Gracious Words Honeycomb**” craft: draw or cut out hexagons to form a honeycomb. In each cell, kids write or draw a gracious word or phrase (e.g., “You’re special,” “God loves you,” “I’m glad you’re my friend”). Assemble the honeycomb on a poster board as a class.

Key Takeaway

- Kind words show others what God’s love sounds like.