

Acts 13:1-12

October 19, 2025



CONVERSATION STARTERS

- What are some highs or lows you experienced this past week?
- What Scripture has been shaping you recently?
- Where have you seen God moving in your life this week?
- What did you hear in today's sermon OR read in today's passage that you would like to discuss?
- What did you learn about yourself in today's sermon/passage?
- What did you learn about God in today's sermon/passage?
- What convicted you as you listened to today's sermon OR read in today's passage?

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Kingdom Building

Work together to build a Lego® creation!

What you'll need:

- One small Lego® set for each group of students (with instructions included)
- A flat surface for each group to build

How to play:

- Group students into small teams.
- Take one volunteer from each group to be the leader. Give each leader the Lego® set and instructions (they are the only one in the group allowed to look at the box and instructions!).
- The leader will verbally walk the other students through how to build the Lego® creation while they take turns applying new pieces. Leaders can't touch the pieces! They can only explain what to do.
- Keep building until the creation is made!

Teaching Moment:

Today, our team leaders guided us on how to build our Lego® creations. Not everyone could see the instructions, they could only take steps as guided by the leader. Today in our study, we'll read a story about the Holy Spirit guiding Barnabas and Paul in a missionary journey. When the Holy Spirit guides us, it is kind of like our activity today. We don't always get to see the full picture; we just take little steps of obedience, working toward God's big plan for our lives.

DISCUSSION

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ ACTS 13:1-12.

What stands out to you in verses 1-3? What was the church doing? What descriptors do we receive of the body?

How did Saul and Barnabas and the other believers respond to God's call to send them out?

How might they have responded otherwise?

What significant events took place in Cyprus?

Where do you note the apostles speaking with boldness and authority?

What enabled them to do so? How are we enabled to do the same today?

How do you see God at work in this passage?

GOING DEEPER

What does our reading today teach us about God and the ways we hear from Him?

What makes it challenging for you to show immediate obedience to God?

APPLICATION

Where do you need to make room to listen for the voice of God this week?

How can we support missionaries that the Holy Spirit has chosen for kingdom work today?

What does the story of Barnabas and Saul's calling teach us about surrendering to God's will for our lives? How does this type of surrender give us opportunity to share the gospel with others?

PRAYER

Thank God for desiring to use us and the gifts He has given us! Ask Him to reveal the gifts He has given to the members of your group and the ways that He desires you to use them. Ask for His help as you reflect on how you can more actively serve the body of Christ with the unique gifts He has given.

LOOKING AHEAD

Encourage your group to look ahead as we continue the series on Acts next week.

October 26, 2025 --- Acts 13:13-41

COMMENTARY

13:1 Prophets and teachers apparently refer to functions and (possibly) offices within the early church. The teachers continued the apostolic function of transmitting Jesus's message (see note at 6:2–4), while prophets conveyed divine revelation via interpreting the OT or giving new insights (11:27). This is the only reference in Acts to teachers, although the function of teacher is described elsewhere in the NT (1Co 12:28–29; Eph 4:11; 1Tm 1:7; 2:7; 3:2; 2Tm 1:11; 2:24). The group of prophets and teachers was diverse, including people from Africa and Cyrene, and at least one person (Manaen) who was connected to Herod's household.

13:2–3 The routine of the prophets and teachers included worshiping the Lord and fasting. This helps to account for their openness to the Holy Spirit, who directed them to set aside Barnabas and Saul for a work to which the Spirit had called them. Barnabas and Saul were confirmed in their calling after a process of fasting, praying, and laying on of hands. This commissioning marks an important turning point in the history of the church, as Saul and Barnabas were selected to extend the gospel message beyond Judea and surrounding regions.

13:4 This verse describes the beginning of the first of Paul's three missionary journeys. This journey included the island of Cyprus and a part of Asia Minor. The first two journeys began and ended in Antioch, which had become a center for world Christianity, committed to evangelizing Gentiles. Paul's third journey ended in Jerusalem because he was arrested there before he could make his way to Antioch (see chap. 21).

13:5 Paul began his preaching efforts at local synagogues, continuing his early pattern (see note at 9:19–20). John (“John ... Mark,” 12:25) was with them for now (but see 13:13 and note).

13:6 Just as Peter had a confrontation with a magician (Simon; see note at 8:9), so Paul confronted a sorcerer on Cyprus. Parallels in Acts between the lives of Peter and Paul have been noted by scholars. These include healing a lame man (3:2–8; 14:8–10; cp. 5:15; 19:12), exorcism (5:16; 16:18), being miraculously freed from prison (12:6–11; 16:25–26), receipt of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands (8:17; 19:6), and raising the dead (9:36–41; 20:9–12).

13:7 A proconsul governed a Roman province. Archaeology has turned up evidence for many of the proconsuls of Cyprus. At least one inscription bears the name “Paulus,” but he is too late to be Sergius Paulus.

13:8 The sorcerer Bar-Jesus (v. 6) is here called Elymas. Possibly Elymas is a Semitic word, as is Bar-Jesus, and “sorcerer” is its translation. In any case, true to his demonic influence, Elymas tried to keep Sergius Paulus from embracing the gospel.

13:9 From this point on in the book of Acts, Saul is referred to as Paul (except when here counted his conversion experience in chaps. 22 and 26). Perhaps the switch in preference is because his missionary ventures moved him outside of a more distinctly Jewish context and into the larger Greco-Roman world. Paul was the Roman version of his name.

13:10–11 Paul called down a punishment of blindness on Elymas for a time. Hence the judgment was not permanent, giving Elymas the chance to repent and believe.

13:12 The signs normally associated with conversion in Acts (baptism, reception of the Spirit) do not appear in this account of Sergius Paulus’s conversion. Possibly Luke just abbreviated his account, but it is also possible that Paulus’s belief amounted to nothing more than his being astonished at the teaching and the blindness that befell Elymas.

13:13 John Mark (son of Mary, 12:12) left them at Perga and went back to Jerusalem. No reason is given for his leaving, but it must have seemed unwarranted to Paul, for on the second missionary journey Barnabas suggested that they take John along, but Paul refused, pointing out that John had previously abandoned them (15:37–38).