

## Teachers Dig In

### Dig In to the Bible

- Read: Acts 18:18-23; 20:1-6
- In This Passage: Paul travels to many places to encourage God's family. He stays in Corinth for a while, travels to Cenchrea, and brings some friends to Syria. In Ephesus, some people want him to stay longer, but he continues on to more places, visiting and strengthening the Christians. After a riot, they need more encouragement, which he gives before continuing on to new places.
- Bible Point: God's family encourages each other.
- Summary Verse: "And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near" (Hebrews 10:25).

### Dig Deeper

- You'll Be Teaching: *God's family encourages each other.* Kids probably receive encouragement more often than adults, but they may not always think to *give* encouragement. On the contrary, kids' words can often be quite cruel. This lesson will help them practice encouraging others and show them the important role they have to play in God's family.
- Think About: What encouragement do you need as you serve in children's ministry?

### Dig In to Prayer

- Pray for kids to speak only words that encourage others, not tear others down.

### Quick Tip

- An easy way to create a culture that's the *opposite* of encouraging is with sarcasm. As leaders, it can be tempting to make sarcastic comments to seem "cool," but keep in mind that you don't know when you might be pushing the wrong buttons. Set an example of a no-sarcasm zone in your ministry, and put a stop to sarcasm when you see kids using it.

## This Lesson at a Glance



### MUSIC VIDEO

Preschoolers sing songs of praise to God.

#### Supplies

- “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee” (watch or download [here](#))
- “Good in Every Way” (watch or download [here](#))
- “He Comforts Us” (watch or download [here](#))



### TALK-ABOUT VIDEO

Recommended for elementary kids.

#### Supplies

- “Analiz’s Story” teaching video (watch or download [here](#))



### OPENING

Preschoolers share about a topic related to the lesson.

#### Supplies

- Bible\*



### OBJECT LESSON

Preschoolers see how an orange can sink or float.

#### Supplies

- oranges or clementines
- clear basin (small storage tub)
- water
- paper towels

#### Easy Prep

- Fill the bowls or bins  $\frac{3}{4}$  full of water.



### CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

Preschoolers travel to different “people” to give them encouragement.

#### Supplies

- Bible
- 6 baby dolls
- tissues

#### Easy Prep

- Set the baby dolls around the room, with one facing a corner.



### DEEPER BIBLE

Preschoolers make encouraging signs to hang around the church.

#### Supplies

- bulletin board paper (butcher paper)
- washable markers

Classroom: Monkeys

- crayons
- painter's tape

### Easy Prep

- Tear 3 banner-size sheets of bulletin board paper, and use washable markers to write one of the following phrases on each one. Leave plenty of room for kids to draw around the words.
  - God is for you!
  - Things will get better!
  - You're not alone!



### HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Preschoolers play a rowing game.



### LOW-ENERGY GAME

Preschoolers encourage each other on a balance beam.

#### Supplies

- pool noodles
- painter's tape

### Easy Prep

- Make several "balance beams" on the floor. Some can be simple tape lines, and others can be pool noodles taped to the floor for a bigger challenge.



### CRAFT

Preschoolers make boats to "sail" encouragement to others.

#### Supplies

- paper plates (1 per preschooler)
- stapler
- crayons
- heart stickers
- jumbo craft sticks (1 per preschooler)
- Glue Dots
- construction paper
- paper

### Easy Prep

- Cut paper plates in half so each preschooler has 2 halves.
- Cut a small triangle of construction paper for each preschooler.
- Make a sample craft to show kids.



### LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Preschoolers receive encouraging blessings.

*\*Marked supplies can be reused from Core Bible Discovery*

Let's keep kids safe! You can help by using supplies as instructed for only ages 3+, purchasing child-safe items, and being aware of allergy concerns.



## MUSIC VIDEO

### Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

[10 min]

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#### Supplies

- “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee” (watch or download [here](#))
- “Good in Every Way” (watch or download [here](#))
- “He Comforts Us” (watch or download [here](#))

#### Tip

- Don't have internet in your classroom? That's okay! You can choose your own worship songs from our Best Of Dig In Music DVD [here](#).

#### **Sing Songs to God**

Sing the three songs in any order.



## TALK-ABOUT VIDEO Analiz's Story

[10 min]

### Supplies

- “Analiz’s Story” teaching video (watch or download [here](#))

### Tip

- Don’t have internet in your classroom? That’s okay! You can download the videos before class using the “download” button at the link provided, or purchase DVDs [here](#).

### Discuss and Watch “Analiz’s Story”

Say: **We’re learning that God’s family encourages each other. Let’s see how one girl used her musical talents to encourage other people.**

Watch “Analiz’s Story.”

Ask: • **Why was Analiz’s accordion so encouraging?**

- **What did Analiz say that encouraged you?**
- **What’s a talent you can use to encourage other people?**

Say: **God’s family encourages each other. Analiz used her musical skills to play her grandma’s favorite song. That brought her grandma hope and encouragement during a hard time. You can do things just like that to encourage other people!**



## OPENING Welcome

[5 min]

### Supplies

- Bible\*

### Welcome

- Thank kids for coming.
- Just for fun, have preschoolers give someone a “round” of applause by clapping in a circle in front of a friend.
- Make announcements.
- Introduce new kids.
- Celebrate birthdays by teaching preschoolers to do a “happy birthday” wave.
- Collect the offering.

### Introduce the Lesson

Say: **Today we’ll learn God’s family encourages each other. That means we say kind things to other people and cheer people up. So let’s start by talking about encouraging things we can say.**

### Share

- Share one encouraging thing *you* would say to someone who is sad.
- In leader-led small groups, have preschoolers share one kind or encouraging thing *they* would say to someone who is sad.
- After small groups have discussed, have adult or teen helpers share with the whole group what they talked about in their small groups.

### Summarize

Open a Bible, and say: **Kind words like those really cheer people up! In the Bible, people needed to hear kind and encouraging words. Let’s find out what happened!**

Pray, asking God for help encouraging each other today.



## OBJECT LESSON Ups and Downs

[10 min]

### Supplies

- oranges or clementines
- clear basin (small storage tub)
- water
- paper towels

### Easy Prep

- Fill the bowls or bins  $\frac{3}{4}$  full of water.

### Watch an Orange Sink

Say: **We've been learning that God's family encourages each other.**

**Let's see what happens when we *don't* have someone encouraging us.**

Begin to peel an orange. As you peel, say: **Imagine the peel is encouragement. It's the words people say and the things people do to cheer us up.**

Hold up the peeled orange. Say: **This orange doesn't have any encouragement.**

Put the orange in a basin of water. It will sink.

Say: **Now let's see what happens when an orange *does* have encouragement.** Put an orange with the peel in the basin of water. It should float. Have kids say encouraging things like "Good job!" to the orange.

Allow time for kids to experiment by pulling the floating orange out of the basin and putting it back in. You may also want to peel a few more oranges and let kids try dropping those into the basin.

Provide paper towels for cleanup.

### Talk About It

Ask: • **Who encourages you?**

Say: **When people encourage us, we can be like the orange with the peel still on. Their encouragement cheers us up! God's family encourages each other.**



## CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

Paul Encourages Christians (Acts 18:18-23; 20:1-6)

[20 min]

### Supplies

- Bible
- 6 baby dolls
- tissues

### Easy Prep

- Set the baby dolls around the room, with one facing a corner.

### Help Someone Who's Sad

Say: **Today's Bible story is about a man named Paul. Paul traveled to a lot of places to help encourage people. *Encourage* means cheer up or help someone feel better.**

**Let's travel like Paul. Paul rode in a boat!**

Lead kids in pretending to row a boat to one of the baby dolls.

Say: **Paul strengthened and encouraged Christians. Let's pretend this doll feels sad. How can you cheer the doll up?** Lead kids in cheering up the doll and giving it tissues.

### Help Someone Who's Worried

Say: **Paul went to more places, so let's do the same! Let's skip to the next place.** Lead kids in skipping to the next doll.

Say: **Let's pretend this doll is worried. She thinks she will get lost! What can we do to encourage this doll?** Lead kids in cheering up the doll.

Say: **Paul encouraged people who were worried bad things would happen to them. God's family encourages each other.**

### Help Someone Who's Scared

Lead kids in hopping to the next doll.

Say: **Let's pretend this doll is scared. He saw a big, dark storm cloud...and then thunder started! How can you encourage this doll?** Lead kids in cheering up the doll.

Say: **Paul encouraged people who were scared of bullies. God's family encourages each other.**

### Help Someone Who Feels Like Giving Up

Lead kids in "swimming" to the next doll.

Say: **Let's pretend this doll feels like giving up. She tried to do something hard and couldn't do it. Now she thinks she's not good enough! How can you encourage this doll?** Lead kids in cheering up the doll.

Say: **Paul encouraged people not to give up on following Jesus. God's family encourages each other.**

### Encourage Someone Who Feels Angry

Lead kids in crawling to the next doll.

Say: **Let's pretend this doll feels angry. She didn't get her way! How can you encourage this angry doll?** Lead kids in encouraging the doll.

Say: **Paul encouraged people when things weren't going their way. God's family encourages each other.**

### Encourage Someone Who's in a Timeout



Classroom: Monkeys

Lead kids in tiptoeing to the doll who is facing the corner. Say: **Let's pretend this doll is in a timeout. She got in trouble for doing something wrong—but she didn't really do it! How can you encourage this doll?** Lead kids in cheering up the doll.

Say: **In the Bible, a lot of Christians were getting in trouble for things they didn't do. But Paul encouraged them to keep going! God's family encourages each other.**

**You did a great job encouraging all our dolls! I think they feel much better now! And Paul encouraged God's family in the Bible. We can keep encouraging people!**

### **Encourage Each Other**

Say: **Let's practice saying some encouraging things to each other. I'll say something encouraging, and then you turn and say it to someone near you.**

Lead kids in saying the following encouraging phrases to each other:

- **You can do it!**
- **God will help you!**
- **God is for you!**
- **God loves you no matter what!**
- **Things will get better!**
- **You're not alone!**

Say: **Great job! I feel encouraged hearing you all say those things! God's family encourages each other.**



## DEEPER BIBLE

God Is for You!

[15 min]

### Supplies

- bulletin board paper (butcher paper)
- washable markers
- crayons
- painter's tape

### Easy Prep

- Tear 3 banner-size sheets of bulletin board paper, and use washable markers to write one of the following phrases on each one. Leave plenty of room for kids to draw around the words.
  - God is for you!
  - Things will get better!
  - You're not alone!

### Tip

- Got a lot of preschoolers? Make more than three banners so there's room for everyone to color.

### Make Encouraging Banners

Say: **God's family encourages each other. Let's make signs to encourage the other people in God's family here at our church.**

Spread out the banners you prepared, and set out crayons to share. Have kids gather around the banners and draw or color happy pictures on them.

When kids have finished coloring, have an adult or teen helper hang the banners in a common area where people gather, such as a lobby or foyer. Tell preschoolers where you're putting their artwork, and let them know grown-ups will see it when they leave church. (If possible, let preschoolers come with you to see their signs get hung!)

Ask: • **What's something that cheers you up when you see it?**

Say: **Your banners will cheer people up and encourage them! God's family encourages each other.**

**HIGH-ENERGY GAME****Row, Row, Row****[10 min]****Play a “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” Game**

Say: **In our Bible story, Paul traveled by boat from one place to another, encouraging Christians everywhere he went. Let’s play a boat game!**

Lead kids in singing this song to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” and rowing around the room as they sing.

**Row, row, row your boat,  
Rowing as we sing!  
We can help God’s family  
By saying happy things.**

Add to the game by challenging kids to get to certain spots in the room in the time it takes to sing the song one time.

**Talk About It**

Ask: • **What happy things do people say to cheer you up?**

Say: **Paul traveled by boat, but we can encourage people no matter how we travel! Wherever we go, we can say happy things to cheer people up. God’s family encourages each other.**



## LOW-ENERGY GAME

### Don't Fall!

[10 min]

#### Supplies

- pool noodles
- painter's tape

#### Easy Prep

- Make several "balance beams" on the floor. Some can be simple tape lines, and others can be pool noodles taped to the floor for a bigger challenge.

#### Balance

Say: **We're going to play a challenging game. But I know you can do it! And since God's family encourages each other, let's encourage each other as we play!**

- Kids will take turns on the balance beams.
- If kids try the harder pool noodle beams, leaders or other kids can hold their hands to help them.
- Any kids who are waiting for their turn will encourage those who are going by saying things like "You can do it!" or "Good job!"

#### Talk About It

Ask: • **How did you feel when people encouraged you?**

Say: **When we're doing hard things, we can feel discouraged. That means we might not think we can do it or we're worried we'll get hurt. But it's a lot easier when people encourage us and cheer us on! God's family encourages each other.**



## CRAFT Encouragement Ships

[20 min]

### Supplies

- paper plates (1 per preschooler)
- stapler
- crayons
- heart stickers
- jumbo craft sticks (1 per preschooler)
- Glue Dots
- construction paper
- paper

### Easy Prep

- Cut paper plates in half so each preschooler has 2 halves.
- Cut a small triangle of construction paper for each preschooler.
- Make a sample craft to show kids.



### Make Encouragement Ships

Say: **God's family encourages each other. Paul used a boat to travel so he could encourage people. Let's make boats we can use to encourage other people.**

Show kids your sample craft. Then follow these directions to help preschoolers make their own Encouragement Ships.

- Have preschoolers each color the bottom of two paper plate halves.
- Adult and teen helpers can help kids staple the plates together at the edges, with the bottoms facing out.

Classroom: Monkeys

- Preschoolers can use Glue Dots to attach a craft stick coming up out of the boat and a construction paper triangle coming off the stick like a sail.
- Have preschoolers decorate their boats and sails with heart stickers.
- Preschoolers can each color a picture, fold it up, and put it in the boat.

### **Talk About It**

Say: **God's family encourages each other. Did you know that when you color pictures for grown-ups, that's a way to cheer them up and encourage them? You can use your boat to "sail" pictures you color to grown-ups. And your boat is covered in heart stickers to remind people that Jesus loves them!**

Ask: • **Tell about the picture you drew.**

Encourage preschoolers to take their crafts home and use them to sail pictures to their friends and family.



## LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

See God's Love

[5 min]

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### Receive a Blessing

Say: **Today we learned that God's family encourages each other. You've done a great job of encouraging people today! Now it's our turn to encourage you.**

- With the help of adult or teen helpers, give this blessing to each child, placing your hands on the child's head or shoulder as you say: [Name of child], **may you see God's love with you all week. In Jesus' name amen.**
- Pray: **God, thank you that your family encourages each other. Help us say encouraging things! In Jesus' name, amen.**
- Thank kids for coming to church, and tell them you hope to see them next week.