

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

Kids 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

Kids watch a video and discuss the Bible point.

Supplies

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



OBJECT LESSON

Kids 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.



OPENING

Kids share about a topic related to the lesson.

Supplies

- Bible*



DEEPER BIBLE

Kids make encouraging signs to hang around the church.

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!



CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

Kids sail to each other to give encouragement.

Supplies

- Bible
- hula hoops



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Kids play a rowing game.

Supplies

- hula hoops*



LOW-ENERGY GAME

Kids encourage each other on a balance beam.

Supplies

- pool noodles
- painter's tape

Easy Prep

- Make several "balance beams" on the floor.



CRAFT

Kids make boats to "sail" encouragement to others.

Supplies

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

Easy Prep

- Cut paper plates in half so each child has 2 halves.
- Make a sample craft to show kids.



LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Kids 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]

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!**



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.**

Ask: • **What do you think will happen when I put this in the water? Why do you think that?**

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.**



OPENING Welcome

[5 min]

Supplies

- Bible*

Welcome

- Thank kids for coming.
- Just for fun, have kids 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 kids 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 pairs, have kids share one kind or encouraging thing *they* would say to someone who is sad.
- After pairs have discussed, have a few kids share with the whole group what they talked about in their pairs.

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.



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 kids? 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 kids where you're putting their artwork, and let them know everyone will see it when they leave church. (If possible, let kids 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.**



CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

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

[20 min]

Supplies

- Bible
- hula hoops

Give Context

Say: **Today we're going to see how Christians encouraged each other in the Bible. When the church first began, things were scary. There were a lot of people trying to hurt Christians or put them in prison. It was a dangerous time to follow Jesus.**

Paul used to be one of the people hurting Christians. But then he met Jesus, and his life changed. He became a really important follower of Jesus, and he traveled all over to tell people about Jesus. He also encouraged Christians when he traveled—and they needed it!

A lot of Paul's travels were by boat, so today let's sail around our room encouraging people as we discover how God's family encourages each other!

Set Sail

Have kids stand in several clusters around the room. (If you have a small group of kids, they can stand individually.) Call one cluster at a time to get in hula hoops and "sail" around the room to all the other clusters of kids. For each sailor, give them a situation that the church in the Bible faced, and have them imagine that just happened to the kids in your class. Have them think of encouraging things to say in response and give encouragement to each cluster as they sail around the room. (If kids need help thinking of encouragement, give them the ideas in parentheses.)

- **People just accused some of the church leaders of being criminals.** (God is on our side.)
- **A crowd just grabbed a church leader and beat him in a courtroom. The governor didn't do anything to stop them.** (God is more powerful than the governor.)
- **Some of the church leaders got arrested.** (They can still share about Jesus in jail.)
- **There was a riot because business owners thought Christians were hurting their business.** (You can show Jesus' love to those business owners.)
- **Some church leaders were put on trial and told not to talk about Jesus anymore.** (Keep on sharing about Jesus!)
- **The Jewish people were mad because they thought Christians were lying about who Jesus is.** (The important thing is that we know who Jesus is!)
- **People were rounding up Christians to arrest them.** (God is in control, no matter what happens. Keep following Jesus)
- **People in the church were fighting.** (Focus on loving each other.)

Talk About It

After everyone has had a turn to sail and encourage everyone, have kids sit together for discussion.

Classroom: Adventure

Ask: • What do you think it would be like to face these kinds of situations for real?

Say: Let me read to you more about Paul's travels as the church faced these tough situations.

Read Acts 18:23 and 20:1-2.

Ask: • Why do you think it was important for Paul and his friends to go encourage Christians when all this was happening?

• What are some things you could say that would be encouraging to people in our church today?

Say: God's family encourages each other. In some parts of the world today, the same kinds of things are going on as what happened in the Bible. Here, we don't typically have those kinds of problems. But that doesn't mean we don't need encouragement! We can still encourage each other when we face struggles and hard times. And we can encourage each other to keep following Jesus even when we're tempted to do the wrong thing.

Let's try that now. Turn to someone near you and give them some encouragement! Allow time.

Say: Great job! You can be a big part of how God's family encourages each other. Adults often find encouraging words *extra* encouraging if they come from kids!



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Row, Row, Row

[10 min]

Supplies

- hula hoops*

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!**

Teach kids this song to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.”.

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

- Have kids take turns getting in hula hoops, either alone or in pairs, and trying to get all the way across the room in the time it takes for everyone to sing the song one time.
- Make the game more challenging by leading kids in singing the song at faster and faster tempos.

Talk About It

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

• **How did our singing encourage you when it was your turn to row?**

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.

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 need help, leaders or other kids can hold their hands as they walk.
- 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 it was your turn to try the balance beam?**
• **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 child)
- stapler
- crayons
- heart stickers
- jumbo craft sticks (1 per child)
- Glue Dots
- construction paper
- paper

Easy Prep

- Cut paper plates in half so each child has 2 halves.
- 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 kids make their own Encouragement Ships.

- Have kids each color the bottom of two paper plate halves.
- Kids can staple the plates together at the edges, with the bottoms facing out.
- Kids 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.

Classroom: Adventure

- Have kids decorate their boats and sails with heart stickers.
- Kids can each color a picture or write a note, 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 adults, that's a way to cheer them up and encourage them? You can use your boat to "sail" pictures you color or nice notes to other people. And your boat is covered in heart stickers to remind people that Jesus loves them!**

Ask: • **Tell about the picture you drew or the note you wrote.**

Encourage kids to take their crafts home and use them to sail pictures or notes to their friends and family.

**LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP**
See God's Love

[5 min]

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.**
- Have kids also give the same blessing to others in the room.
- 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.