

Encourage One Another

UPPER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

Theme: Encouraging others

Scripture: Thessalonians 5:11

Memory Verse: Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. - 1 Thessalonians 5:11

The Children's Sermon

How many of you have ever heard someone say, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me"? (Children raise hands accordingly). Now, how many of you believe that - believe that words can't hurt people? (Children raise hands accordingly again).

You know, that saying isn't entirely true. Words can hurt, can't they? Sometimes, when someone says something mean or unkind, it can make us feel really bad inside. But today, I want to talk about something really special - something called encouragement. Encouragement is when we use our words to make someone feel good, to help them believe in themselves, and to cheer them up when they're feeling down.

Encouragement is like a magical tool that we all have. It doesn't cost anything to use it, but it can make a big difference in someone's day. Imagine you're trying to learn how to ride a bike, and you keep falling off. But then, someone comes along and says, "You can do it! I believe in you!" Suddenly, you feel a little stronger, a little braver, and you want to try again. That's the power of encouragement.

But encouragement isn't just for when we're learning to ride bikes. It's for all kinds of situations. Maybe your friend is nervous about a test at school. You can encourage them by saying, "You've studied hard. You're going to do great!" Or maybe your brother is sad because he didn't make the soccer team. You can encourage him by saying, "I'm sorry you're sad. I know you're an amazing player, and there will be other chances."

Encouragement is also about noticing the good things in others and telling them. It's like being a treasure hunter, but instead of looking for gold or jewels, you're looking for the good in people. When you find it, you tell them! Maybe your friend is really good at drawing. You can encourage them by saying, "Your drawings are so cool! You're really talented."

Sometimes, we forget how powerful our words can be. We might say something without thinking, and it can hurt someone's feelings. But just like words can hurt, they can also heal and lift someone up. That's why it's so important to choose our words carefully and use them to encourage others.

Encouragement doesn't just make the other person feel good; it makes us feel good too. When you encourage someone, it's like giving a gift. And giving feels great, doesn't it? It's like when you make a card for your mom or dad, and you see them smile. That smile makes you happy too.

Now, I want you to think of someone who has encouraged you. Maybe it was a teacher, a friend, or a family member. How did their encouragement make you feel? (Allow time for children to think or share). It felt good, right? It probably made you feel loved, valued, and confident. We all need encouragement like that.

But here's a secret: everyone, even adults, needs encouragement. Your parents, your teachers, even your bus driver - they all need to hear encouraging words. So, I challenge you, this week, to be an encourager. Look for ways to use your words to make someone feel good. Maybe you can write a note, give a compliment, or just say something kind.

Remember, encouragement is a gift that keeps on giving. When you encourage someone, they're more likely to encourage someone else. It's like a chain reaction of kindness and positivity. And who knows? Your words of encouragement might be exactly what someone needs to hear to have a better day, to try something new, or to keep going when things are tough.

So, let's be encouragers. Let's use our words to build each other up, to cheer each other on, and to spread kindness wherever we go. Because in a world where you can be anything, be kind, be encouraging. And watch how your words can change the world around you, one encouraging word at a time.

Bible Memory Verse

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. - 1 Thessalonians 5:11

You Will Need:

- Construction paper
- Markers or crayons
- Stickers with encouraging words or images

Get Ready:

- Cut the construction paper into heart shapes, one for each child plus a few extras.
- Write '1 Thessalonians 5:11' on the board or a large piece of paper where all the children can see it.

Do This:

1. Give each child a heart-shaped piece of construction paper and access to markers or crayons and stickers.
2. Ask the children to think of someone they would like to encourage, such as a friend, family member, or teacher. Then, have them write a message of encouragement on the heart, using the verse from 1 Thessalonians 5:11 as inspiration. They can decorate their hearts with stickers.
3. Once everyone is done, encourage the children to share who they are giving their heart to and why. Conclude by discussing how encouraging others helps us to build each other up, just like the Bible says.

Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- Index cards or sticky notes
- Pens or markers
- A large poster board
- Tape or pins
- Bibles

Get Ready:

- Write Thessalonians 5:11 on the poster board and display it prominently.
- Distribute index cards or sticky notes and pens/markers to each student.

Do this:

1. Begin by reading Thessalonians 5:11 together as a class. Discuss what it means to encourage one another and build each other up.
2. Ask each student to think of someone they would like to encourage. It could be another student, a family member, or a friend.
3. On an index card or sticky note, have each student write a message of encouragement to that person, inspired by Thessalonians 5:11. Encourage them to be specific about the qualities they admire in that person or ways they have seen them demonstrate faith or kindness.
4. Once everyone has written their message, invite students to come up one by one to pin or tape their messages onto the poster board. As they do, they can share briefly who their message is for (if they feel comfortable doing so) and why they chose to encourage that person.
5. Conclude with a group prayer, asking God to help the students use their words and actions to build up those around them, just as Thessalonians 5:11 instructs.

Snack Activity: Encouragement Fruit Pizzas

You'll Need:

- Whole wheat English muffins
- Cream cheese (softened)
- Assorted fresh fruits (strawberries, blueberries, kiwi, grapes)
- Plastic knives
- Paper plates
- Napkins

Get Ready: Wash and slice the fresh fruits into small pieces suitable for topping. Split the English muffins in half.

Do this:

1. Spread a layer of softened cream cheese on each English muffin half using a plastic knife. This represents the foundation of encouragement we have in Christ.
2. Decorate the cream cheese-covered muffins with assorted fruit pieces. Encourage the children to create smiley faces or patterns that make them happy. As they work, discuss how Thessalonians 5:11 teaches us to 'encourage one another and build each other up,' just as they are building their fruit pizzas.
3. Once everyone has finished decorating their fruit pizzas, have them share their creations with the group, explaining how their design represents encouragement. Then, enjoy eating the snacks together, reinforcing the idea that encouragement is both given and received, nourishing us like food.

Game Activity: Encouragement Hopscotch

You'll Need:

- Sidewalk chalk
- A small stone or bean bag
- A list of encouraging phrases based on Thessalonians 5:11

Get Ready: Use the sidewalk chalk to draw a hopscotch grid on the pavement. Instead of numbers in each square, write an encouraging phrase or word that reflects the message of Thessalonians 5:11 (e.g., 'Build Up', 'Encourage', 'Hope', 'Love').

Do this:

1. Players take turns tossing their stone or bean bag onto a square.

2. The player must hop through the hopscotch grid, skipping the square their stone landed on. Before they pick up their stone on the way back, they must say an encouraging word or phrase that relates to the one written in the square.
3. After each round, players must come up with a new encouraging phrase to say for their next turn, inspired by Thessalonians 5:11. The game continues until all players have had multiple turns and feel uplifted and encouraged.

Craft Activity: Encouragement Stones

You'll Need:

- Smooth stones (1 per child)
- Paint and paintbrushes
- Permanent markers
- Mod Podge or clear sealant
- Paper and pens

Get Ready: Collect enough smooth stones so each child has one. Set up a painting area with newspapers or tablecloths to protect surfaces. Organize paint, brushes, markers, and sealant for easy access.

Do this:

1. Start by discussing Thessalonians 5:11, emphasizing the importance of encouraging one another and building each other up. Explain how words of encouragement can be like 'stones' of support we carry with us.
2. Have each child select a stone. Encourage them to paint their stone in bright colors or designs that represent joy and encouragement. Allow the paint to dry.

3. Once the paint is dry, help the children write encouraging words or short phrases on their stones with permanent markers. They can use words like 'Hope,' 'Joy,' 'You're loved,' or any positive message they think of.
4. While the stones are being finished, have each child write a short note to someone they want to encourage, explaining why they chose that person and how they hope their 'Encouragement Stone' will bring them joy.
5. Apply a coat of Mod Podge or clear sealant over the stones to protect the designs and let them dry.
6. Conclude by sharing the stones and notes within the class or planning a way to deliver them to the intended recipients, reinforcing the lesson of building each other up in faith and love.

Prayer Activity: Encouragement Garden

You'll Need:

- A large poster board or paper
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- Sticky notes or small pieces of paper

Get Ready: Write 'Encouragement Garden' at the top of the poster board and draw a simple garden scene (flowers, grass, sun, etc.). Leave plenty of blank space for the 'flowers' (encouraging notes) to be added.

Do this:

1. Begin with a discussion on Thessalonians 5:11, focusing on how we can encourage one another and build each other up. Explain how just like plants need water and sunlight to grow, people need encouragement to grow in faith and confidence.

2. Ask each child to think of someone they would like to encourage. It could be another student, a family member, or someone in their community.
3. Have them write a short, encouraging note to that person on a sticky note or piece of paper. Encourage them to think about what they appreciate about that person or a positive message based on what they know the person might need to hear.
4. Once they have written their note, have them stick it onto the poster board in the 'garden.' Explain that each note is like planting a seed of encouragement that can grow into something beautiful.
5. Conclude with a prayer, asking God to help the seeds of encouragement planted today to grow and flourish in the hearts of those who receive them and to remind the children to be encouragers in their daily lives.