



Date: _____

Series: Giving to God
Winter Year 2, Lesson 30

Give a Gift of Words— Encouragement

Take Home Point: *Give a gift of words—give encouragement
*Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson.

Bible Event: Acts 4:36-37, 11:23-24

Key Verses: 1 Thessalonians 5:10-11, "...Our Lord Jesus Christ...died for us so that, whether we are awake in this life or asleep in death, we will live together with him. Therefore, encourage each other and strengthen one another as you are doing."

We will help kids know:

- The Bible event of Barnabus' life as an encourager.
- We can give the spiritual gift of encouraging words that can be more meaningful than material, physical gifts.
- We can encourage others because Jesus is alive with us now and forever.

We will help kids feel:

- Encouraged by others' words of kindness.
- Encouraged by the presence of Jesus in their life.

We will help kids do:

- Make a Barnabus scroll.
- Make a card to encourage someone.

THIS LESSON'S ROADMAP

DESTINATION	PAGE #	DISCOVERIES ON YOUR JOURNEY	SUPPLIES NEEDED
Small Group Warm-Up 	3	Kids will think about words of encouragement from others and from God that build their confidence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • none
Large Group 	3 7 8 11	<p>Overview</p> <p>Dramatic Presentation: General (Gen) R. Osity discusses giving the gift of words and how they can encourage someone.</p> <p>Kids hear about Barnabus in Acts 4:36-37 and how his kind words encouraged the Apostle Paul in his ministry.</p> <p>Appendix</p>	<p><i>Costume:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presenter is dressed as a storefront holiday bell ringer for charity <p><i>Props:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pot with lid hanging from a pole • half sized sheets of paper • pencils • Barnabus scroll for the Apostle Paul (See appendix.)
Small Group Application 	4	Kids will make a Barnabus scroll as a way to practice encouraging others. They will also decorate a card to give to encourage another.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scroll handouts • pencils • markers • cardstock paper for cards • other materials for card decorations

Small Group Warm-Up: 15 minutes



Purpose: *Get pointed in the right direction! Build relationships and help guests feel at ease. Do the learning readiness activity that will point your group in the right direction for the lesson.*

As kids gather: *Listen to memory verses from last week and give coupons for memory verses, remembering to bring your Bible, and bringing a guest.*

Take time to discuss with each student the people in their life who have given them encouragement. No objects are needed to help this discussion along.

Today we will talk about encouragement. When someone encourages another, he or she says or does things that help another person feel more confident. This might help them believe in themselves and have the courage to keep on going.

Tell about a person who encourages you and builds you up. For example, in my life I can think of... (finish this phrase). Listen as others share how they are encouraged.

Now that we have talked about people who encourage us, what one thought about God really encourages you? For example, it encourages me when I think about how God.... (complete this phrase). Listen to kids share how God encourages them.

Today we will learn how we can give gifts of words to people that can be more helpful and beneficial than things we buy. These are words of encouragement. One of the reasons Christians can do this better than anyone else is because we have the encouragement that Jesus is alive and with us no matter what. This truth is so alive and encouraging that it gives us power to help encourage others.

****Give the gift of words – give encouragement.***

Large Group Overview: 20-30 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids observe what the Bible says. Present the Bible event in creative fashion. Help kids begin to interpret what it means.*

Dramatic Presentation: General (Gen) R. Osity discusses giving the gift of words and how they can encourage someone. Kids hear about Barnabus in Acts 4:36-37 and how his kind words encouraged the Apostle Paul in his ministry.

Small Group Application: 20-25 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids map out the meaning of the Bible event in their lives. Use the questions to stimulate discussion, but don't feel tied to them. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. Include personal examples from your own faith journey. The example of Christ at work in your life will leave lasting impressions of how Christ can work in the children's lives.*

Use your Bibles! Children need to learn how to look up references and follow along when scripture is read aloud. Allow for quality time of prayer at the close of the lesson.

Observation Questions: What happened?/Interpretation Questions: What does this mean?

Have kids look up Acts 4:36-37.

Why did the apostles give Joseph the new name Barnabus? *(Acts 4:36. Because he was so encouraging and his new name meant "son of encouragement.")*

How did Barnabus encourage the apostles? *(Acts 4:37. He sold some land and gave the money to the apostles.)*

How do you think this gift brought encouragement to the apostles? *(They would have been encouraged because someone gave so much to support them and their ministry. It would give them affirmation of what they were doing. Someone believed in them and their cause.)*

Read Acts 9:26-28.

Why were the disciples afraid of Saul? *(Acts 9:1. They knew that Saul had tried to kill Jesus' disciples.)*

How did Barnabus use his influence with the disciples to help Saul in his ministry? *(Barnabus told the disciples about Saul's conversion and how he now spoke boldly about Jesus. The disciples probably really trusted Barnabus. Because Barnabus showed an interest in Saul and introduced him to the other disciples, Saul had even more confidence to speak boldly with power and authority.)*

Read Acts 11:23-24.

How is Barnabus described in verse 24? *(He was a dependable man, and he was full of the Holy Spirit and faith.)*

How do you think he encouraged the new believers in Antioch? *(Acts 11:23. Because of his godly example, they trusted him when he told them to remain solidly committed to the Lord.)*

Application Questions: What does this mean to me?

The key verse from 1 Thessalonians 5:10-11 says, “...Our Lord Jesus Christ...died for us so that, whether we are awake in this life or asleep in death, we will live together with him. Therefore, encourage each other and strengthen one another as you are doing.”

What are specific ways can we strengthen and encourage each other?

Like Barnabus’ encouragement dramatically impacted Paul’s life and ministry, how might our words of encouragement change others’ lives? Accept any answer.

Encouraging Each Other:

Supplies: Barnabus Scroll handout from appendix and pencils

To practice encouragement, have students make a Barnabus Scroll.

- Pass out a copy of the pre-marked handout from the appendix to each student.
- Have them write their name on the bottom of the sheet where space is provided, then pass their sheets clockwise to the person sitting next to them.
- That person then writes a word or short phrase of encouragement in the top space to the person whose name is on the bottom.
- Give examples of a word or phrase of encouragement. You might even write something about each student to use as an example.
- Allow about 45-60 seconds for writing.
- Have each student fold their portion of the paper backwards and make a crease on the line to keep their words somewhat private.
- Have everyone pass papers clockwise again at the same time.
- Continue the activity until the scrolls return to the person whose name is at the bottom.

Optional activity if time allows:

Encouragement cards:

Supplies needed: markers, cardstock paper, glue, and materials for decorating cards.

Have students make and decorate a card of encouragement for a significant person who has encouraged them. Or they can make a card for someone they know who may feel discouraged, sad, or alone. Have them write words that will build up this person and make him/her feel good. Tell kids to decorate it with things this person likes or likes to do.

Further discussion questions:

How has Jesus’ encouragement changed your life? (Refer to 1 Thessalonians 5:10.)

When we need encouragement and don't seem to be getting it from anyone, whom can we count on to give it to us? (*Jesus.*)

Today we learned that because Jesus gave us encouragement through his life, death and resurrection, we can **give the gift of words – give encouragement* to others. Jesus is alive and with us no matter what. This truth is so alive and encouraging that it gives us power to help encourage others.

Closing Prayer:

Thank God for the encouragement we receive through his Son, Jesus. Let kids pray to have power to be encouragers of others. Pray for them to see how their encouragement brings noticeable results in the lives of others.

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Large Group Presentation

Give a Gift of Words – Encouragement Dramatic Presentation

Costume:

- *presenter is dressed as a storefront holiday bell ringer for charity*

Props:

- *pot with lid hanging from a pole serves as a collection place for gifts*
- *half sized sheets of paper*
- *pencils*
- *Barnabus scroll for the Apostle Paul (See appendix)*

Introduction:

Ladies and gentlemen, my name is General Robert Osity. Maybe you've heard people call me General Osity or Gen R. Osity. Today I'm ringing my bell for charity to invite you to give, give, give. Give until it helps someone. Today we will talk about the gift of words and how they can encourage someone.

Before we do that, I'd like to collect something from you to demonstrate the opposite of giving charity. I'd like to collect some "put-downs." These are phrases people say to each other that target something bad or unattractive about that person that might not even be true. Nevertheless, they are phrases that can make people feel sad.

Pass out paper and pencils and ask that kids write a "put-down" on the paper, wad it up and toss it toward the charity bucket. When finished, have the kids return their pencils to you to avoid distractions.

Some of you might be pretty good at "put-downs" and might say these things without even knowing that it hurts another person. So write down your best shots, wad the paper and toss away.

Open some of the wads and read the things kids say to each other that can be hurtful.

Wow, if words like this were spoken to you, can you imagine how you might feel? You might lose your confidence and courage. You might feel self-conscious and generally lousy about yourself. Well, none of these are going to get into my charity bucket, that's for sure.

Introducing Barnabus: Acts 4:36-37

Option: Use a costumed character to present Barnabus.

Here's what WILL get into my bucket. It's called a Barnabus scroll.

Hold up an example.

There was a man in the Bible named Joseph. He was an early Christian who came to know Jesus as his Savior. He got to know how powerful God's love was and how it could change lives. It changed his life so much that he gave away almost all of his possessions to the poor and began to help other people. He was quick to speak kind words and help people believe in themselves. His words were so encouraging that the apostles gave him a whole new name. They named him Barnabus, which means, "son of encouragement." (Acts 4:36.) Barnabus even had some land that he sold and gave the money he earned from it to the apostles. (Acts 4:37.) This example shows how much he encouraged and thought of others.

Barnabus scroll:

What other things did Barnabus do and say? We don't know exactly, but we do know that he traveled with the apostle Paul, who faced many trials and hardships.

What are some of the things he might have said? Let me read from this Barnabus scroll.

Unroll the scroll prop. Invite a student who likes to read out loud to come forward and help. Let the student continue to read.

At the bottom of this Barnabus scroll is printed Paul's name. From the top down are statements that Barnabus might have said to Paul.

- **You're not afraid to stand up for God's truth.**
- **You really want people, even your enemies, to meet Jesus.**
- **You're willing to give without expecting money.**
- **God is using you to reach Gentiles, or non-Jewish people.**
- **You're not afraid to follow God and get criticized for it.**
- **You're joyful even when persecuted.**

Roll the scroll back up and put it into the charity kettle.

These are the kind of words that build up and encourage others.

More Barnabus explanation:

In Acts 9:27, we discover that Saul, later named Paul, one of the greatest apostles, may not have ever had a ministry if it hadn't been for Barnabus.

Barnabus, the encourager, took an interest in Saul after Saul's conversion to Christianity. Many of the Christians didn't trust Saul because he had formerly persecuted and killed Christians. But, it was Barnabus who met Saul in Jerusalem and introduced him to the other church leaders. He became a traveling companion with Saul and helped Saul have the courage to continue his bold ministry that ended up changing the world.

Barnabus was later sent to a new church in Antioch to encourage them to be strong. Here's what it says in Acts 11:23-24, *"When he arrived there, he was pleased to see what God had done for them out of kindness. So he encouraged all the people to remain solidly committed to the Lord. Barnabus was a dependable man and he was full of the Holy Spirit and faith. A large crowd believed in the Lord."*

Invitation to encourage us:

Sometimes it's easier to think of put downs than encouraging words. Let's change that! Every person needs someone in his or her life to encourage. A few simple words can be a gift that people remember for a lifetime.

Ask kids to give examples of encouraging words. Write a phrase or more on paper, roll it up and put it in the kettle to illustrate that such words can be given as a gift.

Key verse explained:

Paul, who was encouraged by Barnabus, wrote these words in his letter to the Thessalonians. He said,

"Therefore, encourage each other and strengthen one another as you are doing." (1 Thessalonians 5:11.)

In other words, it's our job to encourage one another. He said the reason you can encourage other people is this: *He (Jesus) died for us so that, whether we are awake in this life or asleep in death, we will live together with him." (1 Thessalonians 5:10.)*

Think about this. The most encouraging thing you can ever know is that Jesus is alive right now. He has given his life for you. Because of this, all of your sin and failure is removed from his sight. He can

live with you now and live with you forever. That is encouraging. Because you are so encouraged, you can encourage others. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for encouraging us by giving us your Son, Jesus. Let us give gifts of words to others. These gifts cost us nothing to buy, don't need to be wrapped or aren't found in a store. These gifts to others are words of encouragement. You've put a lot of people around us and some of them may feel discouraged, sad, or alone. Help us to look for and see their needs. Once we see these needs, help us to say kind things that can encourage them. Help us to remind them of what you've done for them through your Son, Jesus. In his name, we pray. Amen.

