

**OPENING**: We have been learning that after Jesus died and came back to life, He went to Heaven to be with God. Even though we cannot see Him, Jesus is always with us. Shout this with me:  
“1,2,3,4,5,6,7 – Jesus, Jesus is in Heaven!”   
“ABCDEFG – Jesus, Jesus is with me!”

**BIBLE VERSE/SONG:**  *Sing* ***“The B-I-B-L-E”***

*The B-I-B-L-E   
Yes, that’s the book for me!  
I stand alone on the Word of God,  
The B-I-B-L-E*

*(Open Bible to 1 Thessalonians 5:11)* The Holy Bible is God’s book; His words are written there. And when I turn each page to look, I handle it with care.Our verse is found in the book called First Thessalonians. Chapter 5, verse 11 says this: “Encourage one another and build each other up.” “Encourage” is a pretty big word. It means to help cheer someone up or to help make someone feel good. We should use our words to encourage others and build them up, not to discourage and tear them down!

*(Take* ***5 sheets of paper****. On one page, write “Encourage.” On the next write “one another.” On the next “and build”, then “each other”, then “up.” These will be placed on the floor like a staircase with “Encourage” being the bottom step, “one another” as the next step, and so on with “up” being the top step.)*

Let’s learn this verse by placing the words in the correct order on the floor to form a staircase. Then we’ll practice saying the verse.

**BIBLE STORY:** It is time to hear our Bible story. Listen carefully because when the story is finished, I will ask you some questions. Before we begin our story, let’s pray: Our hands we fold, our heads we bow, so we can talk to God right now.

Dear God, thank You for Your true words in the Bible. Help us to listen carefully so we can learn about You today. Amen.

*Open Bible to Acts 11 and show children. Keep it open while telling the story so children understand this story comes from the Bible.*

Today’s Bible story is about “Barnabas the Encourager.” *(Show* ***picture******of Barnabas****)* He was called that because Barnabas loved to cheer people up and make them feel good. The book of Acts is full of stories about how Barnabas encouraged others.

*(Show* ***picture of mouth****)* One way Barnabas encouraged others was by speaking kind words.

One time there was a man named Paul. Remember him? His name used to be Saul. We learned about him a couple weeks ago. At first, no one liked Paul because Paul used to be mean to people who loved Jesus. Jesus spoke to Paul, and Paul changed, but people still didn’t trust him. Barnabas spoke kind words to Paul, and Barnabas also told the people that Paul had changed and now Paul wanted to tell others about Jesus. After Barnabas encouraged Paul and the people with kind words, everyone was nice to Paul.

*(Show* ***picture of clock****)* Another way Barnabas encouraged others was by spending time with them.

In the Bible we read that Paul needed to travel to far away places to tell people about Jesus’ love, but it is lonely going someplace all alone. So Barnabas encouraged Paul by traveling with him and spending time with him. Another time, Barnabas was going on another voyage to tell people about Jesus but Paul couldn’t go with him, so Barnabas asked his cousin, Mark, to go along. Mark was so excited and encouraged that cousin Barnabas wanted to travel and spend time with him.

*(Show the* ***money picture****)* Barnabas also encouraged others by giving.

There were some poor people in the church who didn’t have enough money to buy food or clothes or a place to live. They were worried about how they would get enough food to eat. The Bible tells us that Barnabas sold some of his things and gave the money to the church, and the church gave the money to the poor people so they could buy food and clothes. They didn’t have to worry any more because Barnabas encouraged them by giving.

So far we’ve learned three different ways Barnabas encouraged people. What are they? *(Speaking kind words, spending time with people, giving)*

*(Show* ***picture of heart****)* The best way Barnabas encouraged others was by telling them about Jesus’ love. Some people were sad and lonely. Others didn’t feel loved. Barnabas knew that Jesus loves everyone and wants to be our friend. First Barnabas told the people in his town that Jesus loves them and, when they heard it, they weren’t sad anymore. Barnabas cheered them up!

Let’s practice telling people ‘Jesus loves you’. I’ll count to three, and you tell me “Jesus loves you!” Ready? 1-2-3!

Barnabas heard that people far, far away didn’t know about Jesus, so he got on a ship and traveled there. Barnabas encouraged the people in far away places by telling them, “Jesus loves you!”

Let’s practice again. 1-2-3! Jesus loves you!

Barnabas traveled to many places and encouraged many people by telling them about Jesus’ love. Does the story of Barnabas the Encourager make you want to be a good encourager, too? I agree!

**QUESTIONS: What does the word ”encourage” mean?** *To cheer people up, to make people feel good*

**Who did we learn was good at encouraging others?** *Barnabas*

**In what ways did Barnabas encourage others?** *Speaking kind words, spending time with people, giving, telling them about Jesus’ love*

**KEY CONCEPT:** **God** *(point up)* **wants us** *(hold arms out)* **to encourage others** *(give a high five)* *. Repeat several times with motions, beginning with a whisper and getting a little louder each time, or repeat with different voices.*

**PLAY ACTING ACTIVITY:** Who wants us to be good encouragers? God does. Let’s practice different ways we can encourage other people. I will pretend to be someone and you act out a way to encourage that person.

**(A grandma in a rocking chair)** I am a grandma and I feel lonely because I live all by myself. What could you do to encourage me? *(Make a card, visit, tell a Bible story, etc.)*

**(Sick child in bed)** I am a child who is very sick. I cannot go anywhere or even play. What could you do to encourage me? *(Pray with her to get better, talk to her, draw her a picture, etc.)*

**(Child in Haiti)** I am a child who lives in a poor village in Haiti. I only have a few clothes to wear, no food to eat, and no home to live in. My favorite thing to do is go to school and learn. What could you do to encourage me? *(Send clothes, give money, tell about Jesus, give school supplies, etc.)*

**(Sad boy playing ball)** I am a boy who played in a baseball game. I did not do well; I struck out. Everyone is mad at me. What could you do to encourage me? *(Tell him, “Way to go for trying,” tell him Jesus loves* *him, play baseball at home with him so he can practice, etc.)*

**(Garbage man)** I am the garbage man. Every day I pick up smelly, stinky garbage. What could you do to encourage me? *(Tell him “thank you”, smile at him and wave, etc.)*

**(Child with broken toy)** I feel really bad because I just broke your toy by mistake. I am crying because I feel so bad. What could you do to encourage me? *(Hug her, tell her it’s ok, keep playing with her, etc.)*

**PRAYER:** Let’s ask God to help us encourage others. You can repeat these words to God:  **Dear God,/ I am so thankful/ for the people who encourage me./ Please help me/ to be like Barnabas./ Help me to be/ an encourager./Amen.**













