

Lesson 13 / February 28, 2010

That's Encouraging!

for use as

STEP 1

Lesson 13 Focus:

Jesus can help when I
am discouraged.

Lesson 13 Bible Basis:

John 5:1-15

Students will learn that they can use encouraging words to build up other people.

Everyone has felt discouraged at one time or another, but some of your students may be embarrassed to talk about the problems they've faced when answering the following questions. If this is the case, be prepared to share your own story about a time you felt discouraged.

Discuss:

- ▶ **When was the last time you felt discouraged?** (*ask for volunteers to answer*)
- ▶ **What made you feel that way?**

Being discouraged can have a negative effect on us. It can make us feel poorly about ourselves. It can make us want to stop trying new things. It can even make us lose hope.

But encouragement is even more powerful. Sometimes just a few positive words can make us feel good about ourselves. Sometimes, it can even change our lives.

Discuss:

- ▶ **Can you share about a time when someone encouraged you?** (*ask for volunteers to answer*)
- ▶ **How did that make you feel?**

About 55 years ago, a boy named Lou played football for his high school in East Liverpool, Ohio. He wasn't a very good student and he wasn't a very good football player. As he liked to tell people later, he made up for his lack of size by being slow and weak.

But he worked hard and listened well. He also showed lots of initiative by helping his teammates improve their skills during practice.

Lesson 13
Memory Verse

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

—Romans 15:13

One day in his junior year, Lou's coach called his parents in for a conference. Lou was worried. He couldn't imagine what he had done wrong.

As it turned out, he hadn't done anything wrong. His coach simply wanted to tell his parents that their son should go to college and become a football coach.

Their son did. And today Lou Holtz is considered one of the most successful college football coaches ever, winning national championships for both Ohio State and Notre Dame.

Discuss:

- 1 How do you think Lou felt when the coach told him he should become a football coach?
- 2 Do you think he would have pursued that job if no one had ever encouraged him? Explain.

God has an important job for each of you, not just when you grow up, but right now. He wants you to obey His will. Sometimes we can feel overwhelmed, thinking ourselves unworthy or incapable of doing what God wants us to do. Whenever we feel this way, we can trust Jesus to give us the encouragement we need.

Today we'll learn about a time when Jesus encouraged someone to do something that seemed impossible, and then gave him the power to do it.

Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your *Upper Elementary Teacher's Guide*; your step 4 appears below.

To read more about Lou Holtz' life, go to:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lou_Holtz

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STEP 4 
Lesson 13
Focus:

Jesus can help when I
am discouraged.

Lesson 13
Bible Basis:

John 5:1-15

Students will practice giving encouragement to others.

Supplies needed:

- whiteboard
- marker
- index cards (two for each student)
- pencils

We've learned how important it is to be encouraged and to encourage others, But sometimes it can be hard to think of encouraging words to say. What are some encouraging things people have told you?




Take time to write the students' answers on the whiteboard. Help them to think of specific statements such as "You're a good artist" or "You're a great friend" rather than more general ones like "Good job" or "You can do it."

Great work, everyone! Now let's try encouraging each other by doing a short activity.

Have your students sit on the floor in a circle. Pass out two index cards and a pencil to each student. Tell the students that you would like them to write something encouraging about the people on their right and left. They should use a separate index card for each person. To help guide the students, have them fill in the blanks in the following sentences about the people next to them. "You're a good _____. I think God could use you to _____." Some students might not know the people next to them very well so you may need to prompt them with things they have been able to observe about the other student in class.

Once students are done writing, have them give the index cards to the people on their right and left. Give the students a moment to read the cards they received and then ask them the following questions.

Discuss:

-  **How did you feel when you read the cards from the people next to you?** (*ask for volunteers to answer*)
-  **How did you feel when you encouraged someone else?**
-  **Why should we encourage others?**

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Memory Verse

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- ▶ **Who do you know that is feeling discouraged right now? How could you encourage them this week?**

It's not only important to encourage others, it's also important for us to be encouraged daily through God's Word. When we make mistakes, we can be hard on ourselves and make ourselves feel bad. At times like these, God's Word can be our greatest encouragement, filling us with hope and peace in the knowledge that God will always love us, no matter what.

- ▶ **In what ways do you need God's encouragement today?**

Close in prayer, asking God to encourage your students and to help them encourage others.

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