

Joshua Becomes Leader of Israel

Joshua 1:1-11



Worship Theme:



God encourages us.

Weaving Faith Into Life:




Children will turn to God for encouragement and praise him for the encouragement he gives.

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
1 Let's Praise God! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i>	Sing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "His Great Love" (Romans 5:8) • "Wherever You Go" (Joshua 1:9) • "All Creatures of Our God and King" • "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah" • "My God Is" • "No Greater Gift" • "I'm All In" 	KidsOwn Worship Kit: <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD</i> Classroom Supplies: Video equipment, Bible

Preschool

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
2 Let's Learn the Point! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i>	Hug-o-War Race against time to give encouraging hugs.	Classroom Supplies: Timer
	You Can Do It! Complete difficult tasks, and tell each other "You can do it!" just as God said to Joshua.	
	* Colorful Encouragement Watch how encouraging words make a pan of milk beautiful.	Classroom Supplies: Cake pan, 2 percent milk, 3 squeeze bottles of food coloring, liquid dish soap

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
2 Let's Learn the Point! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i>	* Winning Encouragement Compete by thinking of encouraging things to say.	Classroom Supplies: Chalkboard or whiteboard
	Shopping With God Shop for the right encouragement for specific problems.	Classroom Supplies: Bibles, 1 copy of "God Encourages Us" handout (at the end of this session) per child, card stock, scissors, marker, 10 bags with store names
	* Learning to Encourage Read Joshua 1:1-11, and give someone encouragement.	Classroom Supplies: Bibles

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
3 Let's Pray! <i>(up to 10 minutes)</i>	The Offering Receive a promise from God, and offer their gifts.	Classroom Supplies: Offering bowls, copies of "God Encourages Us" handout (at the end of this session), scissors, basket
	Wherever You Go Pray as they place cords on poster board, and watch "God's encouragement" make a beautiful picture.	KidsOwn Worship Kit: Smiley Face Stampers Classroom Supplies: Bible, paper towels, scissors, spray bottle, water, black plastic
	Praise Concert Offer God a concert of praise.	

* Starred activities can be used successfully with preschool and elementary children together.

Customize your session to fit your needs. You can separate preschoolers and elementary children for Section 2.

Or, if you keep the children all together for the entire worship session, we suggest you choose from the starred activities.

Joshua Becomes Leader of Israel

Joshua 1:1-11

As we begin this passage, Moses had died and Joshua had taken over the leadership of the Israelites, as had been arranged in advance (Deuteronomy 31:1-8). Verse 5 tells us that God was going to be with Joshua in the same way he had been with Moses, so we can assume that God's communication with both men was in some way similar. This message from God must have been reassuring to Joshua and the Israelites—Joshua was the right person for the job and God would use him to lead the Israelites as he had used Moses.

The question may arise: Why was it OK for the Israelites to kill other people and take away their land? This is a complicated question. However, one point seems apparent: God was using Israel to judge the immoral people who lived in the land at the time. Just as Israel was later defeated and their land taken away because of sin, so God was using Israel as an instrument of punishment, taking away the land of the Canaanites because of their sin.

In this passage God gave Joshua a command of encouragement ("be strong and courageous"), a condition for success ("obey all the law my servant Moses gave you"), and a promise of his presence ("the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go"). God had a plan for Israel, and Joshua was the instrument through which he was going to accomplish that plan.

What more could Joshua ask for? All he had to do was to follow what God laid out for him, and God would be there to assure success. However unsure or discouraged Joshua might have been at the death of Moses, this visit from

God rejuvenated him. The first thing recorded after God's message to him is Joshua's ordering the leaders to get the people ready to cross the Jordan. The Israelites were ready to move into the Promised Land, and God was going to give them the land.

Devotion for Leaders

When we commit our lives to Christ, we give our lives to Jesus and he uses us to accomplish his mission.

Weaving Faith Into Your Life: Our plans and God's plans don't always match. In today's culture of "seizing the day," it's easy to slip into a mentality of entitlement: "I'm a good person, and I deserve to be happy. I deserve to be successful. I deserve to be comfortable."

The truth is, we deserve death and serious consequences for our sin. But God doesn't give us what we deserve. Christians surrender their lives to God's service because of what God has given us and what he has to offer through us. How has this message gotten lost or distorted in your life? What is keeping you from truly surrendering your life for the sake of others? Make a list of people and situations that need your greater service. Go through the list, and serve in these areas this week.

Why We Worship for Leaders

Imagine having to take the place of someone like Moses! God gave that job to Joshua. The Bible doesn't say Joshua felt overwhelmed or scared, but chances are good that he did because God showered encouragement on him! God's words to Joshua have echoed down through the ages, from generation to generation of people who seek to love God and do his will. Use this session to teach children that we worship a God who lavishes his encouragement on his children. He sees us through scary times, times we have big tasks to do, and times we're unsure of ourselves. His confidence in us gives us the courage we need to move ahead with his plans for our lives, just as it did for Joshua. This is reason to worship!

Easy Prep for Leaders

Let's Praise God!—Make sure your video equipment is ready.

Winning Encouragement—Make sure a chalkboard or whiteboard is set up in the elementary meeting area.

Shopping With God

- Make photocopies of the "God Encourages Us" handout at the end of this session, one per child.
- Use a marker to write each of the handout questions on a separate piece of card stock. Write the corresponding Scripture reference on the back of each.
- Place the cards in shopping bags that have a store name, one card per bag.
- Put the shopping bags around your elementary meeting area. Put the bag with the question "Do you have doubts and fears?" in an easily accessible place.

The Offering—Make additional copies of the "God Encourages Us" handout, and cut apart the individual promises so that you have one promise per child. Fold each promise in half, and put all the promises in a basket near the offering bowl.

Wherever You Go—Cut the Tie-Dye Cords into pieces so that every child can have one small piece of the cord.

Preschool Activities—Refer to the preschool pages for preparations.


1 Let's Praise God!

Play the music videos on the *KidsOwn Worship DVD* as children arrive. Designate greeters to welcome children by name at the entrance to the room. Have greeters encourage each child with words such as "God loves you!" or "You're awesome!" or "I'm glad you came today." Tell greeters to think of something someone could say to them that would make them feel good.

When everyone has arrived and been encouraged, begin worship.

Say Welcome to children's church, everyone! I'm so glad you're

here today. God loves you and wants to encourage you today. Did you know that God has special plans for your life? Did you know that he thinks about you all the time? Did you know he goes with you wherever you go? He does! Let's stand and be encouraged by his love today as we sing our first song.

 Sing "His Great Love" (Romans 5:8).

Say ▶ I'm so glad God's love reaches out to us. That encourages me! Today we're worshipping God because he encourages us.


Ask ▶ • What does it mean to encourage someone? (To make someone feel better; to give someone confidence; to give them courage.)

Say ▶ When we encourage people, we give them courage, hope, or confidence. After Moses died, God told Moses' helper, a young man named Joshua, that he was to be the new leader. Imagine taking the place of someone like Moses—Moses, who led the Israelites out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, and across the desert! Imagine if you suddenly had to be pastor of our church!

Ask ▶ • How do you think Joshua felt? (Scared; nervous; intimidated.)

Say ▶ Joshua probably felt scared because the job was so big. He probably wondered how he could ever lead the Israelites as well as Moses did. Let's hear how God encouraged Joshua. Have one volunteer read Joshua 1:2-3 and have another volunteer read Joshua 1:5-7 from an easy-to-understand version of the Bible.


Those are strong and encouraging words God spoke to Joshua. God's words and actions gave Joshua confidence and courage. God does the same thing for us. That's why we have the Bible, which has his words to us. As we sing our next song, let God's encouraging words to Joshua encourage you.

 Sing "Wherever You Go" (Joshua 1:9).

Say ▶ God is so good to us! Even though he's the King of kings and creator of the universe, he's never too busy to encourage us. Let's praise him.

 Sing "All Creatures of Our God and King."

Say ▶ God has a purpose for each us, just as he had a purpose for Joshua. And you don't have to wait until you're grown up. God has things for you to do right now—loving others, doing well in school, and obeying your parents, for example. Sometimes it's very hard to love others or obey our parents or do our homework every night. God wants to help you and encourage you when those things seem too hard to do. God is on our side to guide and encourage us today the way he did for Joshua long ago. Let's sing a song about how God guides us.

 Sing "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah."

Say ▶ Those are great words! It's good to know that God is mighty and that he will be our strength and shield. God encourages us with his words, whether we read them in the Bible or sing them in songs.

Ask ▶ • **What are other ways that God encourages us?** (Gives us friends who encourage us; he gives us strength.)

Say ▶ God uses people to encourage us, too.

Ask for two volunteers to stand with you. Think up two scenarios for each, something the kids in your group can relate to. Give them fictitious names, and introduce them and their situations to the group. For example, you might say, "This is Stephen. He has to give a report in school in front of the whole class. He doesn't think he can write it, much less stand up in front of everyone and say it." Or, "This is Cara. Her parents are divorced. After living with her mother for three years, Cara is going to live with her father in a different city. She knows both her parents love her, but she's scared about the move."

- Ask** ▶ • **How do you think God would encourage these two?** (He'd give Cara new friends when she moves; Stephen's teacher would encourage him before he presented his report.)
- **How could you encourage them if they were your friends?** (I'd give Cara a hug; I'd tell Stephen how great I know he'd do.)
- **What are some ways you've been encouraged?** (Someone sent me an encouraging card once; my parents always tell me how proud they are of me.)
- **What are some ways you've encouraged others?** (I give my friends hugs; I tell my family I love them.)

Say ▶ God often encourages us through other people. This week look for ways to encourage someone. You'll be doing God's work—encouraging people! Let's stand and worship God for being our creator, master, and the friend who always encourages us!

▶ Sing "My God Is."

Say ▶ It's good to know that we don't have to be perfect to please God. Jesus is the perfect one. That's why he's our Savior. And that's why he's a wonderful friend. God knows when we do something, and he knows when we fail. He knows when we're good and when we're not. In spite of all he knows about us, he keeps loving us. Let's thank God for the gift of his great love.

▶ Sing "No Greater Gift."

Say ▶ Let's say "yes" to God as Joshua did. Let's live our lives for God. He'll encourage us every step of the way! As we worship God with our last song, give your life to him the way the song says to do. He'll encourage you and use you to do great things for him!

▶ Sing "I'm All In."

Worship Leader Tip

Include preschoolers in the example of giving courage. Have one of the scenarios be a preschool scenario, such as starting kindergarten. Then talk about what would make that child feel better about something big like that.

Pray Lord, thank you for loving us so much. Thank you because you know everything we do and you want to encourage us. Help us to live our lives for you and to love others the way you love us. Thank you for your encouragement today. In Jesus' name, amen.

2 Let's Learn the Point!

Preschool Activities, pages 129-130

At this time, have the preschool leader invite the preschoolers to go to their own room for this section of activities. Tear out the Preschool Activities page, and give it to the preschool leader. Have the preschool leader bring the preschoolers back to participate in Let's Pray! with the older children. If you prefer to keep all the children together, do the starred (*) activities. They will work well with both elementary and preschool children.

Elementary Activities

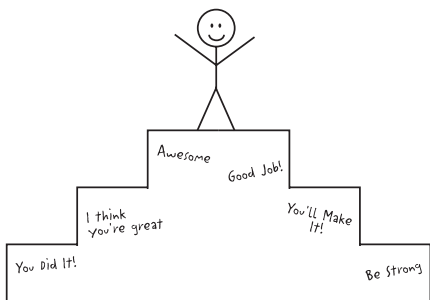
* *Winning Encouragement*

Have the children form two teams, and have the teams sit on opposite sides of the room. Make sure everyone can see the chalkboard.

Say We're going to have an encouragement challenge! Think of something encouraging to say, such as "You're awesome!" or "Be strong!" or "You can do it." When it's your team's turn, the first person to stand gets to say something encouraging. The other team will decide if what you said really is encouraging or not. If it is, I'll draw one stair step beginning in the lower corner of the chalkboard. Draw one step as an example. You can say things that mean the same as something someone else said, but you must use different words each time. If two people stand at the same time, I'll quickly pick one of you.

Erase the first stair step you drew for demonstration purposes. As each team says an encouraging statement, draw a stair step, starting in the lower corners of the board (one corner for each team) and moving toward the upper center. You'll need to estimate the size of the stairs based on one stair per child. If you have a large group or limited time, base your estimate on the number of representative statements you will accept.

While kids give their encouraging statements, quickly write down as many of the words as you can within the stair steps. (See the diagram.) When the stairs both reach the top center of the board, draw a line to join them, and a little stick figure standing on the top.



Say Look how many encouraging things you thought of to say! We are reminded in 1 Thessalonians 5:11 to "encourage one another

and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.” I feel encouraged just by reading all these words. By offering these encouragements, you were able to build something solid for our little guy to stand on. And you’re all winners, because now you know lots of ways you can give encouragement to others.

Ask

- **Why do you think the Bible asks us to encourage each other?** (Because sometimes we feel down; we need help to stand up for God.)
- **When have you needed encouragement?** (When something bad has happened to me; when someone made me feel bad.)
- **Who can you encourage?** (Everyone; my friends; my brother and sister; my parents.)
- **Who can you turn to for encouragement?** (My friends; my family; you.)

Say

Sometimes it’s hard to find a person who is willing to build us up. But being an encourager is part of God’s nature. God is always ready to help us feel strong and courageous. Let’s look at some ways God offers encouragement through his Word.

Shopping With God

Say

How many of you like to go shopping when you have money to spend? Most of us do! If you want a toy, you go to a toy store. If you need clothes, you go to a clothing store. God’s Word is like that. It’s like a giant mall full of great places that contain hundreds of promises for us. When you need encouragement in your life, you can shop for God’s message to you.

There are shopping bags all around the room. In each one is a message from God for someone in a particular situation. Shop around, and find a situation that describes you or someone you know about. When you find your situation, sit down by that bag. More than one person may be shopping for the same message, and that’s OK.

Let’s say you’ve been struggling with doubts and fears.

Anybody here ever feel that way? Let’s “shop around” and see what God has for us. Walk to the bag containing that question.

Show the question; then show the side that says Isaiah 41:10. Open the Bible to the verse, and have a child read it aloud.

That’s a great word of encouragement when you’re afraid or doubting! Now let’s go shopping!

Give the kids three minutes to choose shopping bags. If some are having trouble deciding which situation fits them or someone they know, they can choose to be “window shoppers” and sit in the center of the room. At the end of three minutes, give each group a Bible, and let each group share the situation and the verse with the whole group.

- Ask** • **How is looking for encouragement in God’s Word like shopping at the mall?** (We have to look for it like we have to look for what we want to buy; it’s exciting to find encouragement like it’s exciting to find new clothes.)
- **How is it different?** (We don’t have to pay for encouragement; we don’t have to go anywhere to find encouragement, just look in our Bibles.)

Say **Every word of the Bible is true, and we don’t pick and choose which parts we want to believe. But when you need special encouragement, you can go to God’s Word and shop around until you find just what you need to hear. Then do what his Word says. If it says to pray, pray. If it says to believe, believe. If it tells you to have courage, then have courage. God’s Word is better than the mall—it has everything you need, it’s never closed, and best of all, everything’s free! You can shop till you drop!**

Give copies of the “God Encourages Us” handout to everyone who wants one. Tell kids to keep the handout in their Bibles or next to their beds for easy reference when they need encouragement.

* *Learning to Encourage*

Say **When God told Joshua he was to be the leader of Israel after Moses, Joshua needed lots of encouragement. God knew that. Let’s find out how God encouraged Joshua.**

Have children form discussion groups of two or three. Make sure older children are placed with younger children. If you have adults who can help lead, you can have children form groups of up to five. Have one child in each group read Joshua 1:1-11 aloud to the rest of the group. Then have them discuss these questions.

- Ask** • **How did God encourage Joshua?** (God told him to be strong; God said he’d be with Joshua; God said no one would be able to stand up against the Israelites.)
- **What does this teach us about God? about us?** (God is always with us; God wants to encourage us.)

Say **God encourages us just as he encouraged Joshua. Some of you here today need encouragement in your lives. I’d like someone in each group who feels brave to share something you’re struggling with. It might be something you’re afraid of or something you’re discouraged or sad about.** Have the willing people share in their groups. Allow about a minute.

Say **Thank you, sharers. Let’s think of ways to encourage the sharer so your group can shower that person with encouragement the way God showered Joshua. You might say, “God loves you and will help you,” or “You’re awesome and brave, and you can do**

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Worship Leader Tip

Make sure there is at least one reader and one Bible in each group. Have extra Bibles on hand in case you need them. You can write Joshua 1:1-11 on the chalkboard if your kids don’t bring Bibles to children’s church.

Joshua Becomes Leader of Israel

Session 10

Joshua 1:1-11

Worship Theme:



God encourages us.

Easy Prep for Leaders

Colorful Encouragement—Pour 2 percent milk (whole or 1 percent will not work as well) in the bottom of a jellyroll or cake pan. Set this on a table with several colors of food coloring and liquid dish soap.

Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo set the timer for Hug-o-War.
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today's worship session.



Hug-o-War

Say Encourage is a big word that means someone makes you feel brave or strong or that you can do something hard. God gives us our parents and friends to encourage us.

- Ask**
- What are some ways your mom or dad encourages you?
 - What are some ways you can encourage others?

Say We can tell people we love them as God does. He tells us in the Bible again and again that he loves us. Another great way to encourage people is to give hugs. Hugs are like saying, "I love you," or "You're great!" Let's encourage each other with God's love and hugs. Let's play a game called

Hug-o-War. If everyone gets a hug before the timer goes off, we win the Hug-o-War!

Have children stand in a line. Set the timer for enough minutes to complete the activity, depending on the size of your group. Have a child at one end begin by going down the row and giving everyone a gentle hug. When the hugger reaches the last child in line, he or she should join the line. Continue until each child has had a chance to hug everyone. As the children hug down the line, have everyone else cheer them on to be fast and to beat the timer. If you don't beat the timer the first time, set it for a little longer, and try again.

Say What good huggers you are! We won our Hug-o-War! You encouraged each other with hugs and by cheering for each other. God encourages us, too.

You Can Do It!

Gather children around you on the floor.

Say God chose Joshua to take Moses' place as the leader of God's people. Joshua probably was a little worried, maybe even scared. How could he ever do all the wonderful things Moses did?

Ask • What amazing things do you remember about Moses?

Say Moses was brave, and he obeyed God. Even though Joshua might have been scared about taking Moses' place, God wanted him to be strong and full of courage. God said to Joshua, "You can do it!" And Joshua did it! Let's do some things that might be hard for us. I'm

going to tell you three things to do. The rest of us will call out, "You can do it!" to cheer you on.

Instruct each child to do three things. For very young preschoolers, you may want to limit the instructions to two things. If you have a large group, have two or three children follow the instructions at the same time. Have the children who are watching call out, "You can do it!" to encourage each "doer" and "You did it!" after each child completes the task.

Here are some examples of three-part instructions.

- Walk to the table, pat the table, and then walk back to us.
- Jump to the light switch, turn off the lights, and crawl back.
- Crawl to the light switch, turn on the lights, and then jump back.

- Hop to the bookshelf, pick up a book, and bring it to me.
- Put the book on the bookshelf, knock on the door, and wave at us.
- Touch the wall on the other side of the room, blow kisses to the group, and then come back.

Say ➤ **What good listeners and doers you are!**

- Ask** ➤
- **Was it easy or hard to follow the instructions?**
 - **How did you feel when everyone cheered you on?**

- **What are some hard things you have to do at home?**

Say ➤ **When we're at home, we have to obey. We have to follow our family rules. We have to do our chores. Sometimes those are hard things to do. But God says, "You can do it!" God encourages us. Pat your neighbor on the back, and say, "You can do it!"**

* *Colorful Encouragement*

Gather the children around the table of supplies you prepared before the session.

Ask ➤ • **What are some nice things you could say to someone?**

Say ➤ **When we say nice things to someone, that's called encouragement. We can say, "I love you," or "Do you want a hug?" or "You can play with my toys," or "You can do it!" Those things make people feel loved and special. That's how we feel when God encourages us. Think of an encouraging thing to say. When it's your turn, tell us your encouraging words, and then put a drop of food coloring into the milk. I'll start first.**

Say something encouraging, and squeeze a drop of food coloring anywhere in the pan of milk. Give each child a chance to say something encouraging and gently squeeze the bottle of food coloring to add a drop in the pan. Caution the children

not to get the food coloring on their clothing. Encourage the children to put their drops of food coloring where no one else has placed a drop. It's OK if children repeat encouraging words someone else has already said.

Say ➤ **Our pan of milk looks pretty with all those nice things you said! And when God encourages us—WOW! That's extra special! Here's what God says to you. He says, "I love you." (Put a drop of dish soap anywhere in the pan.) And he says "You can do it!" (add another drop somewhere else in the pan) and "I'll always be with you," (add another drop) and "Don't be afraid." (Add another drop.) Watch as the colors begin to swirl and mix together.**

When God encourages us, we feel special, just like our pan of milk looks really special. Let's clap and thank God for all the special ways he encourages us. Thank you, God.

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it," or "Don't be afraid; be strong and courageous." Have the kids shower the sharer with encouragement.

Ask • **How did it feel to hear all the encouraging words being said?**

(Great; it made me feel better.)

• **How did it feel to do the encouraging?** (I liked encouraging someone; it was hard to think of things to say.)

Say **After God encouraged Joshua, Joshua went out and did everything God told him to do. God's encouragement gives us confidence and the courage we need to move ahead with his plans for us. So when we're discouraged, let's remind each other that God encourages us.**

3 **Let's Pray!**

The Offering

Say **Today we talked about how God encourages us. When you come up to the offering bowl today, take one of the pieces of paper from the basket. Each has a word of encouragement from God for you. Then you can place your offering in the bowl if you brought one.**

Take the offering.

Wherever You Go

Lay an absorbent paper towel in the center of the children. Put plenty of black plastic or newspapers under the paper towel. Hand out a Smiley Face Stamper to each child.

Say **Close your eyes for a moment, and think about an area of your life where you need encouragement. Maybe there's something scary you have to do. Maybe you have a big job to accomplish and you're not sure you can do it. Maybe you feel discouraged because things aren't going well in your life right now. Or maybe you or someone you love needs help and you don't know what to do. (Pause.) Now listen to these words that God says to you.** Read Joshua 1:9 aloud.

Let's take turns stamping a smiley face on this paper towel. As you put a stamp on the paper towel, say a one-word prayer that represents your area of need. For example, you might say, "family" or "friends" or "school." After each person says his or her word, the rest of us will answer, "The Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." Give every child a chance to pray and stamp the paper towel.

Say **Sometimes we have troubles and worries in our lives. But God wants to encourage us. He showers us with encouragement just as he showered Joshua with encouraging words. Wonderful things happen when God encourages us. He says, "I love you."**



Extra Impact

Kids love to pretend to be superheroes! Try this "Instant Hero" activity for extra impact. Have kids make name tags indicating which superheroes they are. Give kids supplies to make capes and other equipment superheroes need. Then talk about the courage superheroes need and compare it to how God gives us courage to make a difference.

Spray a few squirts of water over the stamps on the paper towel. **He says, "You can do it!"** (spray again), **"I'll always be with you,"** (spray again) **and "Don't be afraid."** (Spray again.)

Ask

- **What do you notice happening as the showers of encouragement rain down on the smiley face stamps?** (The paper towel is changing colors; it's making a pretty design; it's bringing the color out of the stamps and onto the paper towel.)
- **What can God's encouragement bring out of you?** (Love; strength; courage.)

Say

Just as the water brings colors together to make a beautiful design, God's encouragement brings out the best in us. Then we can encourage others, too! Quickly spray a few squirts of water over the kids.

God wants to shower you with encouragement today!

Pray

Lord God, you are the source of all encouragement. We put our hopes in you and ask you to make our lives beautiful creations of your design. In Jesus' name, amen.

Allow the paper towel to dry before hanging it up.

Praise Concert

Have children form small groups. Have each group decide on someone to be the conductor.

Say

Let's praise God in a fun way and thank him for encouraging us. Think of something to say to praise God. You can thank him, praise him for what he's done or for who he is, or you can simply tell him you love him. When the conductor in your group points to you, begin praising God or thanking him. Don't stop until the conductor gives you the stop signal. Show the conductors this signal, which is to circle their hands in the air while closing their hands into fists.

When you get the stop signal, stop praising God immediately, even if it's in the middle of a word or sentence. Then the conductor will point to someone else. When the conductor points to you again, begin right where you left off, even if it's in the middle of a word or sentence. Conductors, you can point to one person, or even two or three at the same time, or the whole group. This means many people will be talking and praising God at the same time. Remember to watch for the signal to stop and start. Let's warm up our praises now before we begin our concert.

Have the groups practice for a minute; then stop and offer assistance and encouragement to any groups who seem shy or unsure about what to do.

Say ▶ That was a good warm-up. Now we're ready to begin our praise concert to thank God for encouraging us. We'll all be praising God at the same time but with different words! Don't listen to others, just think about what you're saying to God.

Have children perform the concert of praise for a few minutes. If you have time, give several children a chance to be conductors.

Pray ▶ Thank you, Lord, for loving us and encouraging us. We praise you today and thank you for being the God of encouragement. Help us to encourage others as we learn to be more like you. We love you. In Jesus' name, amen.

God Encourages Us

Do you have doubts and fears? "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10).

Are you lonely? "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5b).

Are you unhappy? "Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10c).

Are you sad about something? "I, even I, am he who comforts you" (Isaiah 51:12a).

Do you need protection? "I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go" (Genesis 28:15a).

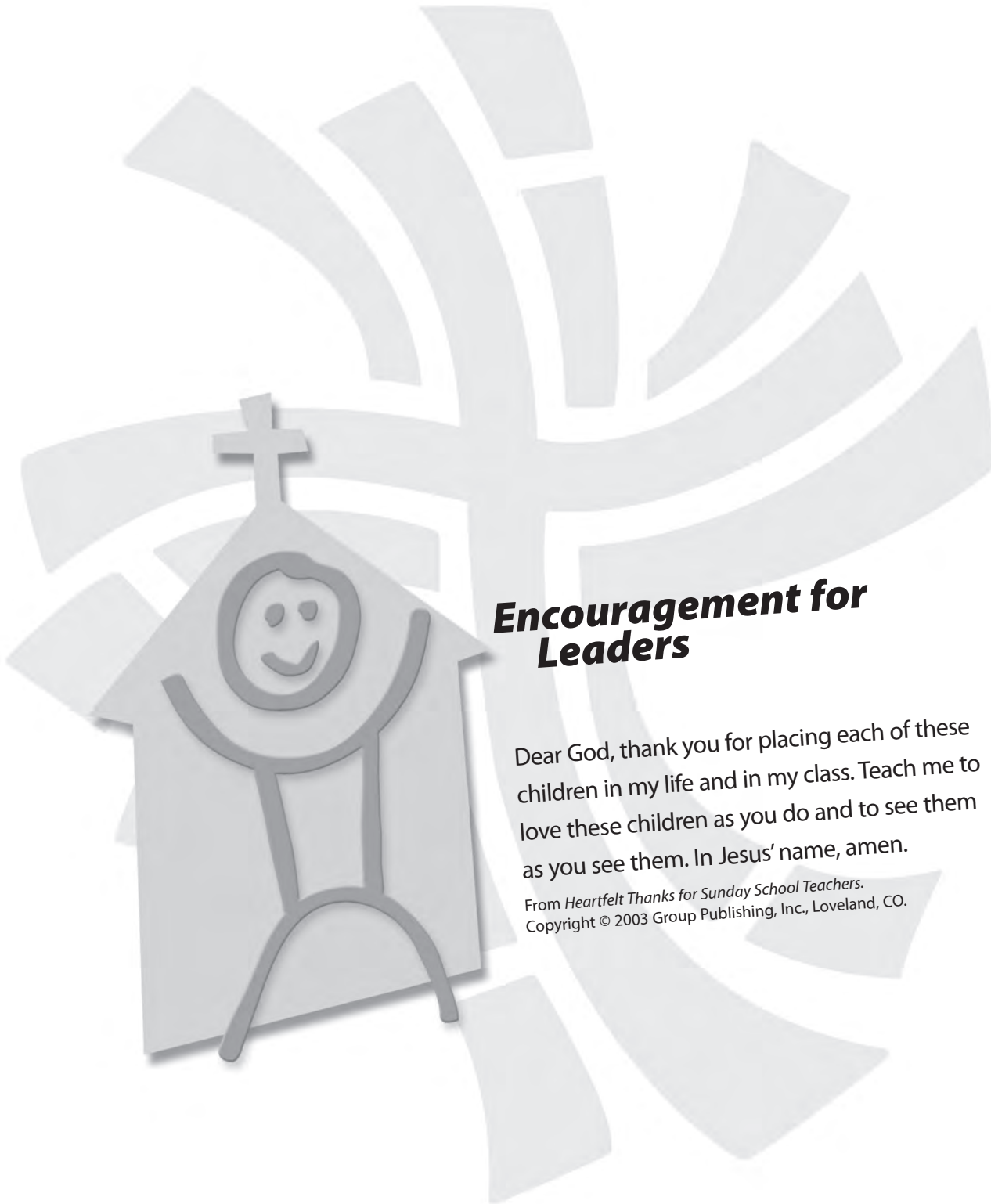
Do you need peace of mind? "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7).

Is sickness a problem? "I am the Lord, who heals you" (Exodus 15:26b).

What about your friends? "He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm" (Proverbs 13:20).

Do you often feel insecure? "I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13).

Are you often tempted? "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Romans 8:37).



Encouragement for Leaders

Dear God, thank you for placing each of these children in my life and in my class. Teach me to love these children as you do and to see them as you see them. In Jesus' name, amen.

From Heartfelt Thanks for Sunday School Teachers.
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