

Do you need some

ENCOURAGEMENT?

Leader Version



In Christ Alone

Leader's Introduction to the Theme of this Study

*This study is designed to be done shortly before leaving for New Orleans, or perhaps on the road.

We've all been encouraged. At one time or another, for one purpose or another, someone has said or done something to build us up and inspire us. They have encouraged us to practice more, study harder, or be a better friend.

We've also encouraged others. Through our words and actions, we've supported and emboldened others in positive and meaningful ways.

You might say that, more than anything else, the LCMS Youth Gathering is all about encouragement. Not so much about the things mentioned above, although those are certainly part of it, but the Gathering is more about encouragement in the faith. We are encouragement to trust in Christ, grow in knowledge and faith, and live out the redemption we have received through Jesus in every part of our existence. The Gathering is about encouragement...for you.

In many ways, that's what Paul was writing about with his letter to the Philippians. It was (and is!) a letter of encouragement.

How about Some Encouragement?



The Real Apostle Paul

@therealpaul

If there is any encouragement in Christ...complete my joy!
Phil 2:1-2. #NYG2016

Opening

Discuss with your group the following questions:

- Think of a time when you received encouragement. Who encouraged you? What was it for? How did they encourage you? How did it make you feel?

Group leader, if possible, should think of and share a memory of encouragement.

- Why do you think the person encouraged you?
- What about encouragement you've given...Whom have you encouraged?
- Why did you encourage someone else?

Gathering

You are (or soon will be) on your way to New Orleans, Louisiana for the 2016 LCMS Youth Gathering. The fundraising is over, the hotels have been booked, plans have been made (and changed, perhaps repeatedly). Much work has been done to make this trip possible. Sacrifice and effort has been made by a lot of different people for YOU to come to New Orleans. Some you're aware of...others you probably aren't.

- Share stories among your group about how your group and individuals prepared for this trip. Reminisce. Tell your own stories.

Especially encourage your group to share any funny stories that happened during the preparations.

- Take a minute to discuss all the individuals (that you know about) that have helped you (personally or your group) make this trip.
- If some of them are present with you: Thank them. If they aren't, tell them "Thank you" by sending them a picture, a text, a snap, or even a postcard about your time at the Gathering.
- Ask those who are present: Why did you help us?



2016 Bible Study @NYG2016

Packing checklist: Phone, sunglasses, deodorant, extra socks, deodorant...did I mention deodorant?...PLEASE bring the deodorant!!!! #NYG2016

An Encouraging Letter



The Real Apostle Paul

@therealpaul

It is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and discernment.
Phil. 1:9 #NYG2016

The letter of Philippians is written by the Apostle Paul to a group of Jesus followers in the town of Philippi. But throughout this Gathering (and leading up to it), we're trying to help you read this letter in a new way--as if it is directed particularly at you and your group.

Read Philippians 1

What verses in this section of Paul's letter encourage you? In what way?

These specific passages could fit the 'encouragement theme': 1:6, 1:9-11, 1:27. Point the students to these, ask: How do these passages specifically encourage you?

Read Philippians 2:6-11

This passage proclaims the most encouraging words in the entire letter. How do these verses encourage you?

They proclaim that Jesus--the Son of God Himself!--was willing to humble Himself to the point of death for our life and salvation. Ask them why these are the most encouraging words in the letter.

Take turns reading the following passages and discuss how the verses are encouraging to you in your own life.

If you have a big group, you might divide into three smaller groups and consider each passage.

- Phil 3:20–4:1
- Phil 4:4–9
- Phil 4:23

The Gathering will be a fun experience...speakers, concerts, activities, games, projects, Mass Events, Worship, and experiences unlike anything you've seen or done before.



2016 Bible Study @NYG2016
It's going to be a blast!
#NYG2016

But why are you going?

Ask them to give this question some honest consideration.

Why is your church sending you?

Encourage them to think from the perspective of adults and leaders in the congregation.

Why are the Adult Leaders coming with you?

Ask the leaders who are present to share why they are going on this trip. (You might give them the heads-up ahead of time so that they can prepare.)

Why does our church body go through the planning, the expense of time and money to make sure this event happens?

You might tell your group that more than 250 people have been working to plan this event for the last 2 ½ years, and that hundreds more are volunteering to attend the Gathering to serve them!

Encouragement to Receive and to Give



The Real Apostle Paul
@therealpaul
Therefore, my brothers and sisters, stand firm in the Lord!
Phil. 4:1 #NYG2016

At the Gathering you'll be together with thousands of youth like yourself. Trust us: When you all sing and pray, worship and serve together... It will be very encouraging! You will be reminded that you are not alone in your faith; you are part of a much bigger community. You could imagine all of them saying collectively to you: "Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love, stand firm in the Lord!" (Phil. 4:1)

But the Gathering is not just about the encouragement you will receive. It is also about the encouragement you will give.

Read Philippians 2:1–2

How did Paul ask the Philippians to encourage him?

He asked them to complete his joy by being of the same mind, and loving each other.

- In what ways do you expect to have the opportunity to encourage others at the Gathering?
- How might your participation in the Gathering be an encouragement to the members of your congregation at home?

Thanksgiving



2016 Bible Study @NYG2016

Post pics from your trip down to New Orleans. Don't forget to tag #NYG2016

Your church cares about your individual faith life. Your leader cares, your pastor cares, and your parents care. We all want you to experience “joy in the faith.” So let’s turn it around. Together, in unison, read aloud Phil 1:3-7a, 9-11. But as you do so, direct your statements specifically to your youth leader, your parents, and whomever else made it possible for you to come to the Gathering.

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, the he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about your all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace... And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.