

WEEK 4
LESSON GUIDE



BIG IDEA

Jesus shows us encouragement is worth repeating.

BIBLE

Mark 2:1–12; Hebrews 10:24–25;
1 Thessalonians 5:11

ABOUT THIS WEEK

Have you ever had a friend send you a song that was exactly what you needed to hear? This week, we'll hear a story about a group of friends who did everything possible to get their paralyzed friend in front of Jesus. They knew that Jesus had something their friend needed to hear, and we'll see how **Jesus shows us encouragement is worth repeating.**

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

ACTIVITY | Beat Shazam!

- It's our final week of *On Repeat!* We hope you've enjoyed exploring these stories of Jesus to see ways we can love each other that are worth repeating. And nothing says caring for each other like a good competition against a computer! I don't know what that means, but let's have fun.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this game, you'll need a playlist of music that works for the culture of your group's culture and a phone with the Shazam app. Split the room into two or more teams. Start to play a clip of the song while Shazam is listening. Each team must compete to correctly guess the song's name before the other team and before Shazam. The winning team scores a point. Play until a team earns five points.*
- Thanks to *Shazam*, we don't have to search for long to find a song we keep hearing on repeat. *Shazam* was created by two friends who were frustrated when they couldn't recognize a song and decided to work together to make an app to help figure out a song they couldn't get out of their heads.
- This is a simple example of a pretty minor problem, but what can happen if people encourage each other to help solve problems is incredible.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups. If you conduct this discussion, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
 - **What band or song do you love that the people who know you would find surprising?**
 - **What's the best piece of encouragement you have ever been given?**
 - ★ **What are some of the feelings you have when you have been encouraged?**
 - ★ **How do you feel when you need encouragement but don't get it?**

POLL | Whose Playlist?

- This month, we've been showing you some of the playlists of some of the people you know. Seeing you all

go up to people after you learned about a song you both loved and started talking about has been awesome. Let's do it again!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Before your weekly program, ask a volunteer, parent, friend, or someone familiar with your group to make a playlist of ten songs they've been playing on repeat that week. Have them send you a screenshot that you can show on the screen. They will try to guess who made the playlist. You can also give them a list of people to choose from.
- Our music tastes are sacred to us. There are bands and artists we love deeply. Maybe their music has helped us through a tough time and encouraged us when we felt like giving up. Sometimes, we want to help encourage and uplift others, but we may not know the words to say or feel awkward when we do. How can we learn to be someone who repeatedly encourages the people around us?
- What if we took this same level of encouragement into how we treat each other in every aspect of our lives? Offering encouragement to people can feel difficult sometimes. So, let's look at a story from Jesus' life that shows us what it looks like to encourage people around us.

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

SCRIPTURE | Mark 2:1–12

- In the story we're about to read, Jesus is well on his way to building his reputation as someone who listens, loves, and cares for people's needs. Pretty much everywhere he goes, there's a large crowd of people who are looking to hear him teach, witness the next spectacle, or petition him for help. This was the case in Capernaum, where a group of people had a friend who needed help. And nothing was going to stop them from getting him to Jesus.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Mark 2:1–12.
- This story has everything! It's got friends taking care of each other, a *Mission: Impossible*-style roof rappel, and Jesus healing someone. There's so much we could talk about in this story. We could talk about how, for Jesus, the forgiveness of sin is as important as someone's healing. We could talk about how Jesus went on to say and do something only God can do when he forgave his sins. All of that is worth talking about, but we're going to focus on something else, which is what these friends did to get their friend to Jesus.
 - They have a friend who is paralyzed. But when they try to get him to Jesus, this massive crowd immediately fills the house he's in, and there's no place for him to go. Instead of giving up, the friends have the brilliant idea of climbing onto the roof with their buddy and lowering him down to Jesus.
 - They were *determined* to help their friend make it to Jesus and wouldn't let him sit it out because the house was packed. So, they climbed the roof, got their friend up there too, pulled up the ceiling, and strapped their friend in for the most important ride of his life. They were committed to their friend and relentlessly tried to get him to Jesus, who they knew could help and change his life forever.
- Sometimes, we're the person on the mat. Other times, we're the ones carrying. In either place, there's always something we can do to uplift each other with words and actions to help get each other closer to Jesus.

OBJECT LESSON | Scratched CD

- Before playlists became the easiest way to share a mix with someone, there was another way to send people you cared about a playlist of songs you cared about—a mix CD.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** You will need an old scratched CD and a CD player for this object lesson. As you teach, play the scratched CD and how difficult it is to listen to. If you can't find a CD, you can show an image of a CD [like this](#) one on screen.

- As CDs were taking over music culture, another problem started to take over: the scratched CD. When a CD got scratched or if you hit too many bumps on the bus ride to school, your music would skip or repeat. The CD player's laser beam would read the pattern on the CD and translate it into audible sound. Any interruption in the laser's smooth scanning process can lead to song skipping or repeating.
- A scratched CD was a bummer! There was something that you loved and had listened to hundreds of times, and now it was damaged. Something would need to change if you wanted to listen to that mix again, something would need to change. The skip was the CD's way of telling you to fix it or make a new one.
- The paralytic's friends were like scratched CDs during Jesus' teaching. They interrupted it and said, "Hey, something isn't right here. We need to help heal something that has been damaged." So, they got their friend in front of Jesus. It wasn't only talk for them, but it was action, too. It was taking a risk, trying new things, and pressing on toward helping a friend together.
- Maybe an interruption in our lives is what we need to start showing up like Jesus did in the lives of others. Perhaps this story is an interruption in our lives, helping us realize that we need to show up for and encourage our friends to have an encounter with Jesus that could change their lives forever.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups. If you conduct this discussion, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
 - **Who do you relate with most in the story? The crowd? The friends who got on the roof? The paralyzed man? The disciples? What would you feel if you were in their position?**
 - **What might keep you from doing what the friends did to help their friend?**
 - ★ **What do you think is more challenging—to be the friend who needs help or the friend who does the helping?**

SCRIPTURE | Hebrews 10:24–25

- When I think about encouragement, I mainly think about using my words to say kind things to others. Sure, talking people up and using our words to inspire them to keep moving forward is a big part of what encouragement looks like, but the story in Mark shows us that it is not *the only way* we can encourage others.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Hebrews 10:24–25.*
- The book of Hebrews shows us that encouragement is about more than words. It's about helping people to move forward, connecting, and growing closer to Jesus. So, yes, encourage your friends with your words. Compliment them and help them see how awesome they are. But the Bible expands our definition of encouragement to include actions, too.
 - If you know your friends have a goal of growing closer to God, maybe you could start a Bible study to encourage them to keep growing.
 - If they want to learn to use their gifts, perhaps you can work with a leader to devise a few ways to serve in the community together.
 - If you see someone you know who wants to follow Jesus but is making decisions that drive them farther away from him, take them out to coffee and remind them who they are and to connect with God again.
- We can encourage our friends with words but spur them on with our actions and show our commitment, love, and care for them. Encouragement doesn't have to be something we only reserve for our words. We can use our actions and habits to encourage our friends towards what is good and loving. When we do

this, we help each other grow and connect with God because **Jesus shows us encouragement is worth repeating.**

NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

STORY | Being Encouraged And Becoming An Encourager

- Encouragement would be a playlist we'd want on repeat in our lives. Think of it as a list of hype songs as you're helping friends pursue their passions and God-given dreams with unwavering support and genuine enthusiasm. **Jesus shows us encouragement is worth repeating**, so instead of just talking about it, let's see what it looks like.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Choose a volunteer in your ministry that encourages people well with their words and actions. And, if they would receive it well, invite them up so you can share stories about the ways you see them serve and encourage others. What are ways you have seen them grow? How have you seen them choose what is good when life is difficult? How have you seen them overcome difficulties and change to be more like Jesus? What are some ways you have seen them prioritize their relationship with God? If you have the budget, get them a small gift they will enjoy. You could also prepare a few adult volunteers and teenagers to come and encourage them.*
- Encouragement doesn't have to be something that only happens at church. Here are a few ways we can do that this week. We encourage others when ...
 - **THEY'RE GROWING:** We all want to grow. We want to get better at what we love doing and build up our skills and character. We can call out the strengths we see in our friends and challenge them to keep moving forward, even if they make a mistake because we all fail as we grow. And we can make space for our friends to encourage us to grow. We're all in this together and need each other to help us become the people God hopes for us to be.
 - **THEY CHOOSE WHAT'S GOOD:** Sometimes, we need help remembering what it looks like to do good. Imagine everyone cheering each other on for doing good things. It would be like one big encouraging dance party with the ultimate playlist. When you see someone doing something extraordinary this week, tell them!
 - **THEY WANT TO CHANGE:** Consider how you can encourage your friends when they say they want to change. Choose uplifting, kind things to say to them and show them you are cheering them on.
 - **THEY WANT TO GROW CLOSER TO GOD:** Whether your friends attend church often or not, we can all encourage the people we love to keep growing closer to God. We can encourage each other to keep growing in our faith by *talking* about how we're growing and connecting with God. We can read the Bible together, pray together, and make space to have brand-new experiences with God together. Like the friends in the story, we can encourage each other to get in front of Jesus and have powerful, life-changing encounters with him.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups. If you conduct this discussion, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
 - **Read 1 Thessalonians 5:11. Has there been a time you felt built up by someone's encouragement? What happened? How can you do that for someone else?**
 - ★ **Who are some people in your life who encourage you well? What is one thing they do that you could begin doing?**

REFLECTION | My Encouraging Mix

- There are so many ways to love others that God has been inviting us to step into love each other this month, but what are some things we can start doing right now? Let's come up with some ideas together.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this reflection, you will need three big pieces of butcher paper boards, blank [CDs like these](#), and some permanent markers. Before your program, get three large pieces of butcher paper. On top of the first one, write, "There's something I want to say..." On top of the second, put, "There's something I want to do..." and on top of the third right, "There's something else..." Set up a few tables and put the blank CDs with the permanent markers on a few tables. Have your group reflect by writing down ideas on each piece of butcher paper. Tell them that one is for examples of things they can say, one is for coming up with an event or action they could do, and the last one is for any way they can encourage someone else. After sharing ideas, direct the group to write down ways to encourage others on their CDs to take home as a reminder of how they want to encourage and care for others this week. Consider playing some contemplative music as people write.*
- We've got some CDs we'll hand out to you to help you learn how to encourage people today. Write down one thing under each section to help remind you **Jesus shows us encouragement is worth repeating.**

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups. If you conduct this discussion, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
 - ✳ **What is something that holds you back from encouraging others? What would it look like to move past that this week?**
 - **Who is one person you can encourage this week, and what will you do to encourage them?**

RESPONSE | Our Community Playlist

- Throughout this series, we're creating a playlist as a community, where each of you picks a song to add to the playlist. This week, pick a song to add to the list that instantly encourages you, makes you want to dance, or helps you feel good in difficult moments.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For instructions on how to set up this community playlist, look at the instructions for the "Our Community Playlist" module in Week 1. Since this is the final week, share the completed playlist with your group so people can listen to it over the next few weeks.*
 - *NOTE: If you would like to filter the songs on the list before they are added, you could have an adult leader add teenagers' songs to the playlist or have them hand in an index card with their music on it that you can add later.*
- Encouragement can look so different for each of us. It might be a kind word to a friend or look like us complimenting one of their strengths.

ACTIVITY | Spiritual Gifts Assessment

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you haven't already done so, this would be a great series to encourage your group to complete the Spiritual Gifts assessment, which you can find in [your Discipleship folder](#). You can do it during your program or give it to leaders or teenagers to do later. However, you do it to create space to follow up about what they found and what it looks like to put what they learned into practice.*
- As you look to care for the people around you this week, remember **Jesus shows us encouragement is worth repeating.**