

WEEK THREE

## BARNABAS, THE ENCOURAGER

### BIG IDEA

We all need to be

ENCOURAGED TO KEEP FOLLOWING JESUS

ENCOURAGERS HELP PEOPLE TO HAVE COURAGE TO TRY AGAIN

### PREP

- Find some coins.
- Buy multicoloured lollies like M&Ms, Jellybeans or Fruit Bursts.
- A few seeds (out of the pantry is fine).
- For optional bridge activity: packet of straws, selotape and a newspaper.

### WHAT GOES IN THE BOX?

- Coins.
- M&Ms or other sweets.
- Seeds.



### GAME

- Each family member tries to do as many push ups as they can.
- Now ask them to do three more than they thought they could!
- Everyone else must cheer them on.
- See how many more they can do when everyone is encouraging them.

### OUT OF THE BOX

#### Second chances

- Take the lid of your Faith Box and set it at one end of the room.
- Give everyone one coin.
- Choose someone wearing something blue (or any colour you choose) to start. Let everyone have one turn at tossing the coin into the lid.
- Now ask if they would like a second chance. They probably will!

*Just because we don't succeed at something straight away, it doesn't mean we will never be able to do it.*

- Give everyone more chances so they can succeed. (You may want to let them keep the coin once they have got it in.)

## INTRO

Today we are going to read a story about second chances and a person who kept on encouraging others and giving them second chances. His name was Barnabas.

## READ

- Give everyone an M&M to eat. Give them another one every time they notice Barnabas doing or saying something encouraging.



“ Barnabas was a really special person because he was known as an encourager. These days we need a lot more people like Barnabas, because lots of people want to be top dog, but not many people are the sort that lift others up. Well, Barnabas was one of those people. He was a follower of Jesus who was filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and he became a much-loved leader of the church.

Barnabas was generous and loved God with all his heart. He sold his land and gave the money to the apostles to share with those in need. And he stood up for lots of people.

He stood up for Saul (who became Paul). Many of the believers didn't

want to accept Saul because he had done many cruel things to Christians. It was Barnabas who encouraged the disciples to include Saul, and to believe that God had changed him, and to understand that now he was a Christian. Saul wanted to be part of the church. One of the other people Barnabas stood up for was a young man named John Mark. John Mark had failed and done the wrong thing. He had run away and left his friends when things got difficult. But Barnabas stood by John Mark and argued that he should be given another chance. In fact Barnabas even gave up travelling with his friend Paul, who did not want to give John Mark a second chance.

This must have been hard. You see Paul and Barnabas had gone together on many missionary journeys, preaching the gospel and seeing lots of miracles. The Holy Spirit's power was with them and they were very bold for God. They were often in danger; stoned by people who hated them talking about Jesus, and suffering many hardships as they encouraged the Christians they met on their travels.

When Barnabas stood up for John Mark, it meant he had to take a different course from his old friend Paul. But God used Barnabas' faithful heart to restore their friendship later on. ”

*Excerpts from Acts Chapters 4-15*



## WEEK THREE

### OUT OF THE BOX

Barnabas means “Son of Encouragement”. It was the name given to him by the other apostles, as recognition of who he was.

It must have been really scary on board that boat – what do you think would have been the worst part?

- Let everyone choose an M&M from the packet.
- Tell everyone that each colour represents a group we are part of. e.g. blue = family, green = school, yellow = friends, brown = sports team, red = church.
- Now everyone share how the people in the group of their colour would describe them.

### FAMILY TALK TIME

- What would you like to be described?
- Can you think of names for each other that describe your special gifts?

Whatever our different gifts are, we are all called to be encouragers. Encouraging others is a special way we reflect the character of God who is called the God of steadfastness and encouragement. (Romans 15:5)

Barnabas knew that people sometimes need a second chance. He gave a second chance to Mark when things had gone wrong for him. He didn't write him off as a failure or stop trusting him and working with him. He kept on encouraging him to try again. And it worked.

Some years later Mark was a very good friend to Paul when he was in jail, (2 Timothy 4:11). Later still Mark travelled and founded the church in Egypt.

There are times when we all need second chances. Encouraging people helps them gain courage – to keep

going when it's hard, to do what's right, to change their course, to make a difference.

- Is there someone you know who needs your encouragement?

### OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

#### Build a Bridge

Barnabas was like a bridge for Paul to be accepted by the early Christians in Jerusalem. Being a bridge involves bringing people together, taking people to new places, or back to old places.

- Take the packet of straws, roll of sellotape and newspaper. Everyone works together to make a bridge. (Hint: triangles make the strongest bridges)
- As you work on the bridge talk about what kind of bridge you think you are, and why. Ask each person to think of a bridge they have seen or travelled across.

#### Questions

- What other kinds of bridges are there?
- What do bridges do?
- What would it be like without bridges?
- In what way can you be like a bridge?
- Are there people you know who might be feeling left out, someone you know who you could draw in to be a part of a group?



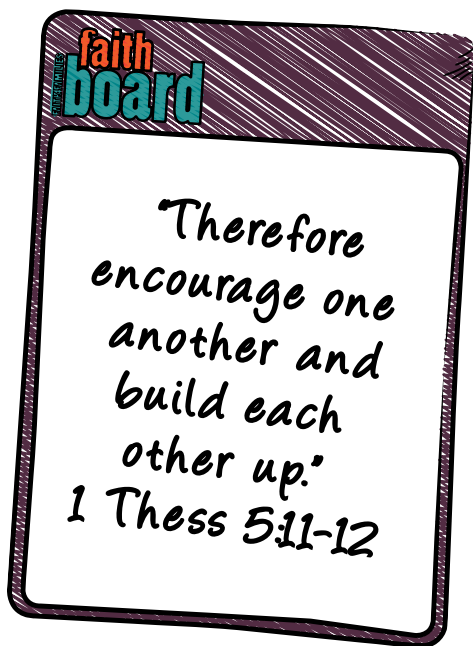
“A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT DURING A FAILURE IS WORTH MORE THAN AN HOUR OF PRAISE AFTER SUCCESS.”

### PRAY

Invite everyone to hold a seed. Imagine the potential that seed holds! But it is still all hidden away, and you can't see it at all. You are like that seed – full of potential. “Dear God we pray that you will help us notice other people who need encouragement and that you will encourage us so that the potential you have put in us will grow into something strong and beautiful.”

### LIVE

This week, as a family, decide on one action that you will do to encourage someone.



### OTHER IDEAS

- Hand out paper and pencils. Each person writes their name at the top of the piece of paper, then passes it to the person on their left. Each person then writes one positive characteristic about the one whose name is at the top of the paper. The papers are passed around until you have all written on each other's papers. A parent reads out all the wonderful characteristics of each person. Parents may like to add their own sentence i.e. "You are really good at \_\_\_\_." and "I can imagine God using you to \_\_\_\_."
- Have fun with an animal chant to help children recognize what they are good at. The children can chant, "If I were an animal, I would be a (children choose here), because it's good at (another choice here), just like me." E.g. a child could say: "If I were an animal, I would be a hare, because it's good at running, just like me." Each child can take turns acting out the animal's movement to demonstrate the chosen verb.
- For smaller children, try making a simple tunnel bridge by putting a cardboard tube between two books. This can be used with small cars – it is even more fun if one pile of books is higher than the other so the car zooms downhill. See whose car can go the furthest. You may want to decorate the tube with pens, paints or stickers.

CHECK OUT WHAT YOU  
NEED FOR NEXT WEEK...

