

for use as  
**STEP 1**

**Lesson 11****Focus:**

Our faith in God can encourage us.

**Lesson 11****Bible Basis:**

Acts 27:1—28:16

**Lesson 11****Memory Verse:**

Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.  
—Psalm 55:22

**Students will consider ways their faith can encourage others just as the faith of others can encourage them.**

**Materials:**

- Internet access

For some, sports come easy. For others—because of physical challenges or a lack of skill in athletics—sports come harder. When someone decides to participate in a sport, like running in a marathon, that person usually dedicates months to practice running long distances. Even then, race day can be a challenge. For one young man named Matthew, even the challenge of cerebral palsy didn't stop him from becoming a record-setting runner on race day. Let's take a look.

Share this video with your students [3:19; atop at 2:33]:

Littleton runner with cerebral palsy defies odds, breaks record

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6fJ9m58taHw>

You might expect Matthew to see his cerebral palsy as a barrier to his love of running, but even with the added requirement of daily stretching routine to maintain mobility, he's continued running and even become a record-breaking athlete. Matthew's determination might encourage other athletes to keep going or to come alongside those who need help to keep going. It might encourage others with physical challenges to reach for their dreams. His example might even touch the lives of other people in ways he could not imagine.

We don't know much about Matthew's early days of running, but we can imagine he—like any young athlete—might have had some discouraging days when he felt like giving up his sport.

- What experiences discourage you? (Answers will vary.)
- What thoughts or feelings do you have when you are discouraged? (Answers will vary.)

➤ **Matthew had the support and encouragement of his mom as he pursued his dream of running. He probably also had the support of a coach and teammates along the way. Who do you know who reaches out and supports others when they need encouragement—perhaps someone who has inspired you or those close to you? Share an example.** (Answers will vary but might include a teacher, minister, or friend.)

**What happens when we don't find encouragement from those around us—when we feel alone, or think others don't understand what we're going through, or when others are discouraged, too? Examples from the life of the apostle Paul will help us find and give encouragement even in the most difficult experiences. Let's find out where Paul found his encouragement.**

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

Lesson 11 / February 11, 2024

# Pressing On

for use as  
**STEP 4** 

**Lesson 11****Focus:**

Our faith in God can encourage us.

**Lesson 11****Bible Basis:**

Acts 27:1—28:16

**Lesson 11****Memory Verse:**

Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.  
—Psalm 55:22

**Materials:**

- Index cards (2 per student)
- Pens/pencils (1 per student)

If your class is meeting online, invite your students to bring supplies with them to class.

**Paul sure had some tough times, but being shipwrecked did not wreck Paul's spirit. He relied on God and trusted in God's promises. His faith in God helped him persevere. God's faithfulness encouraged Paul, and Paul's faith encouraged others.**

- **During what experiences do you wish you had someone who understood, someone who stayed close and helped you? Or, in what possible future situations would you like someone to be there to encourage you?** (Answers will vary.)
- **When and why do you give encouragement to your friends?** (Answers will vary but may include when we agree with them; when they did something great; when they tried their best but did not succeed at something, when they are feeling discouraged, etc.)

**We are going to make a card with encouragement for ourselves and an encouragement card to give away to encourage someone else.**

Distribute supplies (or invite students to have them ready at home). **At the top of one of your index cards, write "God is always..." Then, write the following as a list below "God is always...":**

- **with me**
- **in control**
- **on time**
- **loving me**
- **my strength**

Instruct them to write the following verse on the back of the card: "Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall" (Psalm 55:22).

Have your students copy the text and scripture onto their second index cards.

**As you go through the week and challenges come your way, rather than being negative or giving in to feelings of discouragement, take out your encouragement card. Read the words over and over. Ask God to encourage you with those truths. Thank God for giving you encouragement.** Challenge your students to be on the lookout during the week for someone who can use encouragement; urge them to give that person the spare card they created.

Close in prayer: **Thank You, God, that You are always with us, that You are always in control, that You are always on time, that You are always loving us, and that You are always our strength. Help us to know these truths deep within our hearts and to be encouraged by them. Help others to be encouraged by our faith in You. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

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