



WEEK
FOUR
JULY 2023

LARGE GROUP
PRETEEN

PRELUDE SOCIAL STORY WORSHIP GROUPS HOME

Sermon Outline

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

We Belong Together The Church Hebrews 10:23-25

WEEK 4

Key Question: Who has encouraged you? One of the biggest reasons we should hang out with other followers of Jesus is because they can build us up when we're feeling down. We want preteens to discover the people in their life who will do that for them. When we hang around with people who encourage us, it can change our whole outlook on life. We pray that preteens will be inspired to encourage others and point them to Jesus.

For week 4, we head to Hebrews 10:23-25 and discover something about the importance of meeting with other followers of Jesus. The writer of this passage wanted to remind the early believers that Jesus is more important than anyone or anything else—EVER. The writer challenged the believers to hold onto their faith in Jesus, to keep meeting together, and to encourage others in the church to do the same.

Bottom Line: Our faith is stronger together. God created us for relationships. Whether it's with a mom or dad, a family member, or a friend or two, life is better when we have someone to share it with. This can be especially true when it comes to our faith. When we surround ourselves with others who follow Jesus, our own faith in Jesus can grow stronger. We pray that the kids in your church will find all sorts of great friends that can encourage them as they follow Jesus.

Use this page as a guide to create your sermon or feel free to pull from the script.

This message should be 15- 20 mi"

Landing:

"Who has encouraged you? When you think about other followers of Jesus, how have they helped you experience hope or encouraged you to love others well? Before you head out, let's pray and ask God to make us the kind of people who also encourage others well. Let's pray!"

BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what.

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

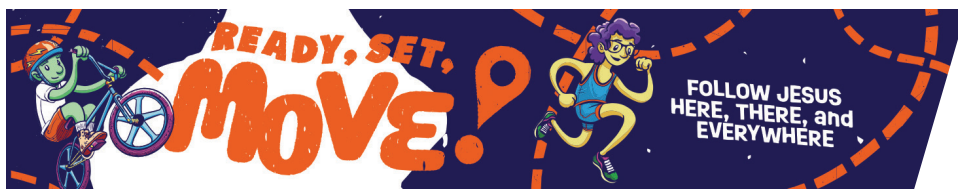
Who has encouraged you?

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Our faith is stronger together.

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

"God's grace has saved you because of your faith in Christ. Your salvation doesn't come from anything you do. It is God's gift." Ephesians 2:8, NIV



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COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Communicator enters as Worship Leaders exit. Bring a whiteboard on stage if it is not already preset.

INTRODUCTION

COMMUNICATOR: "Hello, everyone! I'm pretty excited to be back with you, learning, teaching, and getting wisdom and knowledge from the Bible—and today is about to be full of big ideas. Are you ready?"

Move over to the whiteboard.

"Quick question before we get started. When I say the word 'church,' what word or words come to mind? Call them out and I'll write them down.

Take answers from the kids and fill one half of the whiteboard, leaving the other half blank for the upcoming story.

Affirm each answer positively.

"This is a great list! For me personally, when I hear the word 'church,' I think of . . .

Add a few words of your own to the list, explaining each one.

TENSION

COMMUNICATOR: "For a lot of people, church is a building—like this one. For some, it might be something that you're dragged to, and for others, it might be the best place in the whole world. For some, it's a place to see friends, to pray, to sing fantastic songs.

"But is the church just a building? Can people be a church? I've heard people say that we have to be the church. What does that mean? What's the difference between being the church and going to church? Aren't they the same thing?"

"A fair question, honestly. Sometimes around here you hear phrases and you're not sure really what they mean. Thankfully we've got some pretty good information on all things church right here. *(hold up Bible)* This is chock full of wisdom, and I can't wait to start digging into these questions about church, the people of the church, and what it all means."

TRUTH

COMMUNICATOR: "Today we're in the New Testament again; only this time, we're looking at a book called Hebrews. Before we head there, you might remember how we've been looking at God's Big Story.

If you're using a Bible timeline on your wall, you can reference it here as you recap.

"We've seen how God created everything in the whole world, including people. God had a plan to bless the world through the family of Abraham. And at the right time, God sent Jesus to be our Savior. Jesus died on the cross for our sins and then came back to life.



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“Of course, that’s not all that happened! Before Jesus returned to heaven, He gave His disciples a big job: to tell the world about Him. Sure enough, the followers of Jesus worked together to spread the word about Jesus and what He did for us.

“With the help of the Holy Spirit, the early believers started new churches and helped more and more people become Jesus-followers. But as the early church grew, some of the believers got distracted from the message of Jesus.

“And it’s here where we pick up God’s Big Story in the book of Hebrews. People who study the Bible aren’t sure who actually wrote the book of Hebrews, but it was most likely written by a close friend or follower of Paul—the guy we’ve been talking about a lot lately. The writer of this letter wanted to remind believers that Jesus is more important than anyone or anything else, ever. He challenged them to hold onto their faith in Jesus and to encourage others in the church to do the same.

“It’s really inspiring. Listen.

Open the Bible to Hebrews 10:23-25 (NIRV) and read.

“Let us hold firmly to the hope we claim to have. The God who promised is faithful. Let us consider how we can stir up one another to love. Let us help one another to do good works. And let us not give up meeting together. Some are in the habit of doing this. Instead, let us encourage one another with words of hope. Let us do this even more as you see Christ’s return approaching.”

SLIDE: HEBREWS 10:23-25

“Now, did you see all the salad in that passage?

Communicator waits while everyone is confused.

“You don’t see all the salad? There is so much!

Communicator waits while everyone is still confused. If somebody figures it out, call them out.

“Lettuce do this . . . Lettuce not do that . . . Lettuce do this . . . okay that was a terrible dad-joke. BUT it does draw your attention to something I want to highlight with you.

Move over to the whiteboard from the Introduction—it has the list of words from the introduction on one half.

“There are several statements that all start with ‘let us.’ Read them out for me and I’ll write them down!

Write a big “LET US” at the top of the white board, and then underneath write the rest of the phrases as the kids call them out.

Leave room in between each line, and only write the first word or phrase after the ‘let us’ in the Scripture.



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“(Writing) Let us hold firmly . . .

“(Writing) Let us consider . . .

“(Writing) Let us help one another . . .

“(Writing) Let us not give up . . .

“(Writing) Let us encourage one another . . .

“(Writing) Let us do this even more . . .

“Oh, yeah. Salad for days. Lettuce take each one individually—sorry I couldn’t resist—and see what the text probably meant to those early followers of Jesus in the church and how it might help us understand what this passage means for us in church today.

“(Pointing to board and reading) ‘Let us hold firmly . . .’ to what? What are they being encouraged to hold firmly to? (Wait for responses) Yes! ‘To the hope we claim to have.’ Remember, these were followers of Jesus that this letter was talking to—so the hope they claimed to have was hope in Jesus. To save them, to forgive them from their sins, to show them how to have an amazing life here on earth, and an even more amazing life eternally with God.

“Let’s add that part to finish out the sentence.

Use a different color marker and write ‘to the hope we claim to have.’ under ‘Let us hold firmly.’

“And our hope is the same today, for us, as it was for them back then. We still claim to have hope in Jesus to help us through hard times, to hear our prayers, to send the Holy Spirit to help us make hard decisions. Just as it was for these people thousands of years ago, those are true for us today!

“Next. *(Reading board) ‘Let us consider . . .’* What does it mean to ‘consider’ something? What’s a good way to define the word ‘consider’?

Choose someone to respond.

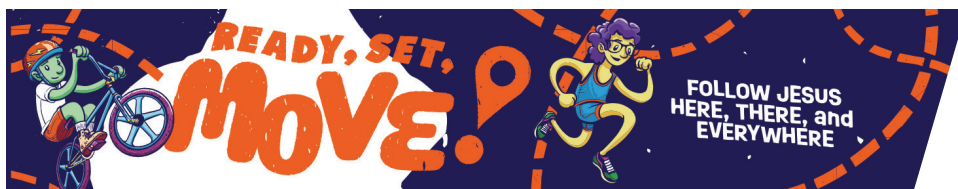
“Not bad. Making a decision. Thinking about it. You’re making a choice. ‘Let us consider’ what? What does the rest of the verse say?

Wait for responses.

“. . . how we can stir up one another to love.

Use another color marker and write ‘how we can stir up one another to love.’ below ‘Let us consider.’

“Stir up love. With a spoon? Yeah, probably not. Think of it like cheering someone on. Motivating them. Getting them hyped up. Think like a huge speech by a coach with a clipboard standing on the sideline before you’re about



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to go into the championship game—that kind of stirred up! Only instead of plowing headfirst onto the field, you’re being stirred up, inspired, motivated, to love other people. To do good things, acts of kindness, to show love to other people!

“In other words, let’s consider, or think, or choose ways, to stir people, to motivate people, to get people hyped up, to love one another. Pretty awesome advice, I’d say.

“LET US keep going. *(Reading)* ‘Let us help one another . . .’ Now this one is similar to the last but a little more specific. ‘Let us help one another . . .’ with their homework? Cross a busy street? To learn to shoot free throws? What does it say after? *(Wait for responses)* ‘To do good works.’

Use another color marker and write ‘to do good works.’ below ‘Let us help one another.’

“Just like motivating others to love, here the author of Hebrews was saying we need the same motivation to help others. Sometimes it’s easier just to focus on ourselves. After all, we’ve got a ton of things to deal with, right? We have our own issues, our own problems, and we need others to help us once in a while.

“But here’s the secret—helping others do good things also can help *you* in the long run. I can speak from experience . . . there’s nothing better than helping someone else do something good.

Talk about a time when you personally helped someone else do something good or worked together with a team to accomplish something good, maybe through the church or in the community.

“There is still some salad left in the bowl! Lettuce keep going!

“‘Let us not give up.’ This one is a little different, telling us not to do something instead of telling us to do something. It seems like a finished sentence already. *(Reciting with passion)* ‘Let us not give up!’ But there is actually more to it. What does it say after?

Allow for responses.

“‘Let us not give up meeting together.’

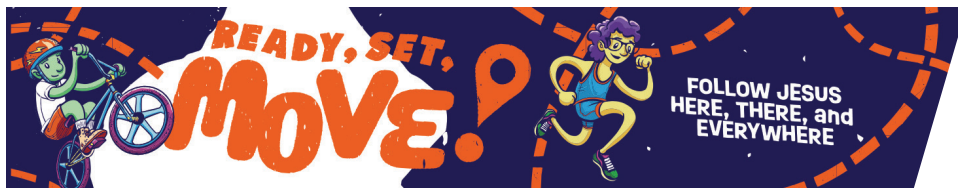
Use a different color marker and write ‘meeting together.’ underneath ‘Let us not give up.’

“Interesting . . . so this is about being together with other people who follow Jesus. When is a time you are with other followers of Jesus?

Allow for responses.

“Yep. Church would definitely be one of those times. Or maybe a Bible study. Or maybe you have some friends at school who also follow Jesus and you’re able to hang out with each other.

“I think a point that the author was trying to make here is that it’s not good for believers to be alone—trying to



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figure things out by themselves. Sometimes it's hard to be a follower of Jesus. It's even harder to be a follower of Jesus all by yourself. We need to be reminded that there are others around us who are walking the same path we are. The 'meeting together' is an important way of reminding us of this.

"Two more! 'Let us encourage one another . . .'

Wait for responses.

"Exactly. 'Let us encourage one another with words of hope.'

Use a different color marker and finish the sentence as you did the others.

"We've seen that word hope before in another 'Let Us' statement. Which one was it?

Wait for responses.

"'Let us hold firmly to the hope we have in Jesus,' that's right. Pairing it with this last one, we can encourage others with words of hope because we are holding firmly to the hope we have in Jesus. The two go hand-in-hand.

"If we have a grasp on hope in Jesus, it will be pretty easy to encourage others to do the same. Because we believe that Jesus is there for us, no matter what, we can inspire others to have the same hope.

"And actually, the very last 'Let Us' statement is connected as well. 'Let us do this even more . . .' Do what even more? How does that verse end?

Wait for responses.

"'Let us do this even more as you see Christ's return approaching.' That's it.

Use a different color marker and finish the sentence as you did the others.

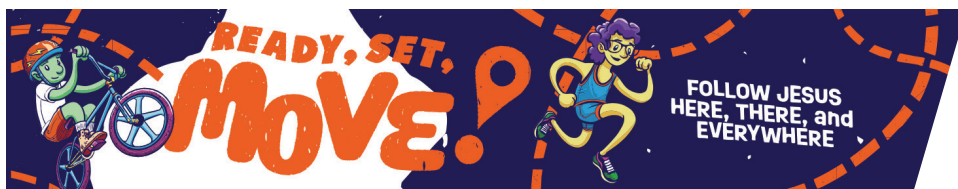
"For the original readers of this letter, the author knew they were going through some pretty difficult times. The Roman Empire was becoming a really difficult place to live for the followers of Jesus. The emperors were not always so kind.

"When you start to get discouraged and start to wonder if it's all worth it, the first thing you lose . . . is hope.

"This letter was inspiring the readers, and us, to hold onto that hope, to hold on to that faith, to gather people around you, to do good things, to make a difference. You need others to encourage you with reminders of why it's all worth it. And one of the greatest encouragements is that God is still working in the world."

APPLICATION

COMMUNICATOR: "When the church first started in the early days—specifically for the followers of Jesus—they didn't really have large church buildings like we do. Oh, there were synagogues, and temples, and a lot of times they met in houses. But there weren't huge church buildings.



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“What they did have, though, was each other. They had people. People who would come together and talk, discuss, pray, and lift up the name of Jesus. And even though our churches often meet together in buildings today, we can’t lose sight of the fact that we don’t just go to church . . . we are the church.

“I told you salad is important. It’s let us. Not let I. It’s a ‘we,’ not just a ‘you.’ Following Jesus together is important because we are a part of something bigger than ourselves.

SLIDE: GOD’S BIG STORY TIMELINE
SLIDE: WEEK 4 TIMELINE IMAGE

If you’re making a timeline of printed images on your wall, take this moment to place today’s timeline image on the clothesline.

“Friends, we need others to remind us that our hope is truly in Jesus. We need others to motivate us to love others when it’s hard to love others. We need others to remind us that it’s worth the time to stop and serve others. We need to intentionally gather with other followers of Jesus so we can encourage them and be encouraged by them. We need to share words of hope with those who are discouraged.

“As we look back over these words we wrote down earlier about the church on the whiteboard, I’m wondering how our answers might change if we were to think more about the people of the church and less about the building the people meet in. We are the church!”

LANDING

COMMUNICATOR: “Today as you go to groups, think about this:

SLIDE: KEY QUESTION

“Who has encouraged you?” When you think about other followers of Jesus, how have they helped you experience hope or encouraged you to love others well? Before you head out, let’s pray and ask God to make us the kind of people who also encourage others well. Let’s pray!”

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Communicator leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard. After prayer, Communicator dismisses kids to Small Group.

AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS THE KIDS EXIT.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP