PWOC

Protestant Women of the Chapel

Materials

Wilted Flower
White Board
Markers
Bookmark
or Index card

WORKSHOP: UPSIE DAISY!

Dealing with Discouragement

by Kristin Hathaway

LEADER'S GUIDE

RELEVANCE: It is normal to get discouraged from time to time. The Bible shows us what to do when we get discouraged or when we recognize discouragement in others.

CONTEXT: Leaders need to know what to do when they feel discouraged and how to encourage those they lead and work with. The information in this workshop is applicable to all of us, but can be especially helpful for presidents and team leaders.

TIME: 75 minutes

HOOK YOUR AUDIENCE: (10 Minutes)

Show the group a wilted daisy or other flower. Ask the group to discuss with a partner what keeps a flower growing well and reasons why a flower or plant might wilt. After discussion time (about 5 minutes) allow people to call out their answers.

> *Note to Trainer: Using the flower to represent discouragement is a powerful metaphor that is part of everyday life. When participants see a wilted flower in the future, it will act as a "cue" to remind them of the truths presented in this workshop. Jesus used visual cues like this from the world around Him as He taught the people through parables.*

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MAKE YOUR POINT 1: **DISCOURAGEMENT** (5 Minutes)

Like this plant, if we are not getting what we need, we tend to "wilt" and look down. It is natural to get discouraged sometimes, and it affects our ability to serve and lead well. What is discouragement? *Allow for some responses.* **"Discouragement" literally means "to hinder, hold back, restrain or frustrate." Let's look at some situations in the Bible when people felt discouraged.**

ENGAGE YOUR LEARNERS 1: (15 Minutes)

Divide into groups of three or four and read the Scripture provided and answer the discussion questions.

> *A group of 3-4 people is the maximum number conducive to participation. If the small group has more than four members, those who are more conservative, shy or introverted will likely remain silent. Those individuals will not benefit from verbal processing and the small group will not benefit from their input.*

Examples from Scripture:

- I Samuel 1:1-17
- I Kings 19:1-10
- Ezra 9:1-7
- Nehemiah 1:1-4
- Psalm 3
- Psalm 6
- 2 Corinthians 12:6-10

Discussion questions:

1. Why is the person in this passage discouraged?

2. How did he/she indicate their discouragement? *(consider body language, words, thoughts, actions, emotions, physical symptoms)*

After the groups have had some discussion time, make two columns on the white board (or chart paper). In one column list the REASONS FOR DISCOURAGEMENT. In the other, list WAYS IT SHOWS.

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Below are some possible answers to the discussion questions. These are included as a tool to help guide the discussion but are not meant to be the "correct" answers. It is far better to use the ideas and exact words of your participants, rather than supplying them with the "official" answers. You are much more likely to get their buy-in if their words are honored and individuals feel they are contributing something of value to the discussion.

- I Samuel 1:1-17 **Hannah**
  Reasons: false accusations, teasing, barrenness, unmet expectations
  Ways it Shows: crying, downcast, voicing discouragement.

- I Kings 19:1-10 **Elijah**
  Reasons: feeling alone, physical exhaustion, fear for his life
  Ways it Shows: words about ending his life

- Ezra 9:1-7 **Ezra**
  Reasons: sin of a nation
  Ways it Shows: torn robe, pulling hair out, speaking words of shame

- Nehemiah 1:1-4 **Nehemiah**
  Reasons: sad social situation, corporate sin
  Ways it Shows: crying, mourning, fasting

- Psalm 3 **David**
  Reasons: betrayal by a loved one, fear of death
  Ways it Shows: crying out to God, voicing that he feels overwhelmed

- Psalm 6 **David**
  Reasons: physical pain, emotional distress, lack of sleep
  Ways it Shows: signs of sleep deprivation, groaning, crying, speaking words of discouragement

- 2 Corinthians 12:6-10 **Paul**
  Reasons: his "thorn," prayer answered differently than he desired
  Ways it Shows: physical pain, repeated requests for deliverance

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MAKE YOUR POINT 2: **ENCOURAGEMENT** (5 Minutes)

Now **that we have seen what discouragement means and how we can identify it, let's talk about encouragement. What is Encouragement?** *Allow responses.* ***Encouragement means: "to strengthen, become strong, be firm, be secure, restore strength, support, repair, withstand."*** **What does the plant do to become firm again? It reaches down to its roots to bring up some extra stored energy. Sometimes we have to go down to our roots (what we know to be true) to become encouraged or to encourage others. What is our "water?" What is our "fertilizer?"**

ENGAGE YOUR LEARNERS 2: (15 Minutes)

Looking back at the Bible characters we talked about in our small groups, what did they do when they needed encouragement? What truth did they reach for or receive to become encouraged? What do we know to be true that we can turn to when we or someone we know is feeling discouraged?

Guide the group through ways to encourage others. Answers may include: reminding the discouraged friend of the goodness of God, helping them recall times when God has been faithful, reading Scripture, recalling how the Lord called them to their current leadership position...

MAKE YOUR POINT 3: **PERSONAL DISCOURAGEMENT** (5 minutes)

Before we wrap up this workshop, we are going to take some time to share and pray about our own personal discouragement. This may be a little vulnerable, but I think you'll find that it's worth it. You certainly do not have to share or pray out loud- you may just wish to be an encouragement to others as they share, which is totally fine.

> *Make sure this activity is OPTIONAL. You want your room to be "safe" and never threatening. This activity may be threatening in at least two different ways- praying out loud and sharing personal situations. Using groups of 4 helps provide a little buffer so an individual can feel more comfortable skipping their turn to share or pray. Be sure each group asks ahead of time for those who are not comfortable praying out loud. Consider sharing your own discouragement as a model for this activity. Your own vulnerability will help others follow suit.*

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ENGAGE YOUR LEARNERS 3: (15 minutes)

Let's get into groups of about four *(perhaps use the same groups from the Scripture exercise)*. **If you are comfortable, share with your group one thing that has discouraged you lately. The job of the other members of the group is to come up with a Scripture or truth to apply to that area of discouragement. Then pray for the one who shared and for their circumstance. Be sensitive. Be good listeners.**

If time allows and participants are willing, allow them to share out a few examples of their discouragement and the encouragement offered to them by their group.

APPLY IT TO LIFE: (5 Minutes)

Take a few minutes to write on your bookmark (or index card) a truth you want to remember the next time you or another person is feeling discouraged.

Remember, we can all become discouraged from time to time. Be like the plant and keep referring back to what you know to be true. Do not be guided by the circumstances, be guided by the Truth!

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PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

RELEVANCE: It is normal to get discouraged from time to time. The Bible shows us what to do when we get discouraged or when we recognize discouragement in others. Leaders need to know what to do when they feel discouraged and how to encourage those they lead and work with.

I. DISCOURAGEMENT

- What is discouragement?

ACTIVITY: Examples from Scripture:

- I Samuel 1:1-17
- I Kings 19:1-10
- Ezra 9:1-7
- Nehemiah 1:1-4
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- Psalm 6
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SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why is the person in this passage discouraged?

2. How did he/she indicate their discouragement? *(consider body language, words, thoughts, actions, emotions, physical symptoms)*

II. ENCOURAGEMENT

- What is encouragement?

- Ways to encourage ourselves and others:

III. PERSONAL DISCOURAGEMENT

- One truth I want to remember the next time I am discouraged:

- One way I can encourage someone else:

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