Bonus Activities

All Ages

Pray for Others: Talk about how we can pray for military families and for those who are in the military (pray for safety, for comfort, for healing, for peace, etc.). Encourage children to choose one word that stands out to them and use it to pray for military families and those in our military.

Older Children

Start a Collection: Research what animal shelters in your area need. Then, encourage children to create posters asking for those items. Place the posters around your church and place bins under the posters. Possible items include clean towels and blankets, dog toys, cat toys, dog and cat food, etc. Talk about how animals help us, and how they need our help too.

Preschoolers

Pretend to Be Animals: Encourage children to choose an animal to pretend to be. Have them sound like the animal and walk like the animal. See if others can guess which animal they are.

Pathlight

www.cbf.net/pathlight

CBF's *Pathlight* curriculum helps children explore the Good News of Jesus through stories, scripture and activities.

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Pathlight

Your word is a lamp that gives light wherever I walk. **Psalm 119:105 (CEV)**

Theme Overview

CBF-endorsed Chaplain Christina Pittman is an encouraging and welcoming presence. She has dedicated her ministry to innovative approaches to spiritual resilience and works to help and encourage members of the military. This session focuses on the theme of encouragement.

Bible Verse

1 Thessalonians 5:11
This is why you must encourage and help each other, just as you are already doing.

Session Outline

Prepare

- Make copies of the Student Handout.
- Review the Story and Bible Verse.

Welcome

- Greet students as they arrive.
- **Ask**: "Who helps you when you are having a difficult time?"

Engage

- Distribute the Student Handout.
- Read and discuss the Bible Verse.
- Work on the Handout Activity.
- Transition to Story Time.

Share

- Tell the Story, "Encouragement through Dog Therapy."
- Share the photo and caption.
- Discuss the Story and pray.

Conclude

- Lead students in Bonus Activities as time permits.

Encouragement Through Dog Therapy

"Knock, knock, knock." Christina knocked on the door and then took a step back. A woman opened the door, with a shy little girl standing behind her. "Hi, I'm Christina. I'm a chaplain with the Air Force. And this is my dog, Avalon," Christina said. When the little girl, Caroline, saw Avalon, her face lit up with a smile and she came out from behind her mother to pet the dog. "Your dad said that someone could use a bit of cheering up," Christina said. "So we came to say hello." "Thank you so much," Caroline's mother, Amy, said. "It's been a long deployment, and Caroline has been having a hard time lately. She really misses her dad." Christina squatted down so that she was eye level with Caroline. "Hi Caroline, I'm Christina. Your dad sent me here to check on you. He wanted me to tell you that he misses you. And he thought you might want to play with Avalon," said Christina. "Hi Christina," Caroline said shyly. "Yes, I would love to play with Avalon!" Christina and Avalon visited with Amy and Caroline for a while. As they were leaving, Amy took Christina aside and thanked her for coming. She told her how much it meant to Caroline to know that her dad was thinking about her. And how much Avalon's presence had cheered her up. "I'm so glad," said Christina. "We are always happy to visit. It's our job to encourage service members and their families. And we are happy to help!"

Discussion and Prayer ✱

- **Ask**: How do Christina and Avalon help military families?
- **Ask**: How do you think Christina and Avalon may help people in the military?
- **Ask**: How can we help others who are sad or lonely?
- **Say**: Christina and Avalon visit families and encourage them. They help them when they are feeling sad. Christina and Avalon also help people in the military by being a calming and encouraging presence. Dog therapy helps people who have had difficult times and are struggling. Dogs can help calm them and remind them that they are loved.
- **Pray**: Dear God, thank you for Christina and Avalon. Help them continue to find ways to encourage and support people in the military and their families. Amen.

Christina Pittman

CBF-endorsed Chaplain Christina Pittman is an encouraging and welcoming presence.

STUDENT HANDOUT
FEBRUARY 2, 2025

Pathlight

Your word is a lamp that gives light wherever I walk. Psalm 119:105 (CEV)

Learn About

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Bible Verse

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Create a Valentine Puppy

Items needed: craft foam; variety of colorful cardstock or construction paper; scissors; pencils; glue or glue sticks; large wiggly eyes; small craft foam heart stickers; ribbon

1. Draw a heart on a piece of craft foam and cut it out. *(For younger children, cut the pieces of craft foam into hearts ahead of time.)*
2. Once the heart is cut out, lay it on a flat surface with the pointy side of the heart facing up.
3. Pick a colored piece of paper and use your scissors to cut two ear shapes for your puppy.
4. Glue your two ears, one on each side, on the craft foam heart shape.
5. Place one of the heart stickers where the heart goes inward to create a puppy nose.
6. Glue the wiggly eyes to the center of your heart to make your puppy.
7. Glue a ribbon to the top if you wish.
8. Give your Valentine Puppy to someone you want to encourage!

(For a picture, visit: www.gluedtomycraftsblog.com/2022/01/craft-foam-heart-valentine-puppy.html)