

# Discipleship Content: Encouragement

## Section 1: PARTICIPANT PREP

### COMPETENCY

“Encouragement” – ICNU

Seeing the leadership/discipleship potential in others cultivates connection and courage. When we tell others what leadership gifts we see in them, we give them permission and build confidence to grow in their leadership. We find the same permission-giving throughout the life of Jesus.

Encouragement has power. A recent study revealed that generation Y and Z are both looking for the encouragement of mentors. It is powerful to see how Jesus encouraged his disciples, through ups and downs. It is powerful for us to grow in this area as we lead and influence others.

A well-known church planter and leadership network developer, Mac Lake, said this, “encouragement is powerful and has the ability to lift a spirit, shape self-esteem or galvanize an individual’s resolve to continue in the face of difficulty.” It is interesting how we can recognize the power of encouragement in our lives yet sometimes miss the opportunities as we lead others. Mac mentioned one scripture from an observation of Solomon, a pretty wise guy and his reflection is powerful, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver.’ (Prov. 25:11) The **right word**, spoken the **right way**, at the **right time** can impact lives in ways we may never know.”

### ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read the Scriptures below and answer the questions.
2. Read the article and answer the questions.
3. Write out three people who encouraged you in a way that gave you confidence to grow in your leadership.

**Scripture** - Read the following passages and answer the questions provided.

**1 Thessalonians 5:11** – *“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”*

**Romans 1:12** – *“That is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith.”*

**Hebrews 10:24-25** – *“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another.”*

**Proverbs 11:25** – *“A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.”*

### **Scripture Questions:**

1. How do various writers in the Bible mention the impact of encouragement?
2. How does encouraging others impact yourself and the greater community?

3. How did someone else's encouragement help you overcome a limiting belief you had about yourself?
4. What elements of a day allow you to see the potential in others more often?

**Article – Read the following article and answer the questions provided.**

## **Hero Maker Practice 2: Are You Leading With a Bias to 'Yes'**

Adapted from "Hero Maker" by Dave Ferguson

Excerpts from <https://exponential.org/hero-maker-2-permission-giver/>

Back in junior high, I had what I call my first "I-C-N-U" conversation.

I was at a summer camp in Indiana, and Dennis Gamauf was there. If you aren't into basketball, you probably don't know who he is. But I did. Back then I lived and died basketball, and I knew that Dennis had played in the Big 10 conference for Purdue. All week, I was just in awe of this guy.

I remember one day we were leaving the softball field and suddenly, I just felt this big hand on my shoulder. I turned around and it was Dennis. He said a few things about basketball and then he said, "Dave, I see in you someone who could be a really good leader."

I remember thinking, *Wow! Dennis Gamauf sees that in me?*

It happened years ago, and yet I still remember that "I-C-N-U" conversation. **Dennis gave me permission to see something in me I hadn't seen.**

### **Seeing the Leadership Potential in Others**

That's what the second practice in [moving from hero to hero maker](#) is all about. **You begin to take the focus off your leadership and begin to see all the leadership potential God has put around you.** I see what God can do through my own leadership shifts to I see what God can do through others, and I let them know what I see in them. It's a shift in *seeing*: "I see this gift in you," and "I see God at work in you when you . . ."

We find the same permission-giving throughout the life of Jesus.

When Jesus says to a group of ragtag working-class fishermen, "Come, follow me ... and I will send you out to fish for people" (Matt. 4:19), He basically tells them, "I see in you what you don't see in yourselves." Here's this rabbi saying, "I think you could be a really good leader." They never expected a rabbi to see them worth teaching and leading. But Jesus saw in them a group that could change the world.

Think about what he did with Peter: "Hey Rock, on you I'm going to build my church. This movement of love is going to start with you."

And then, ultimately, He gives us permission, saying, "My Spirit is going to come, and you're going to be My witnesses to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Essentially, He says to us, "**I see in**

**you the potential for leading a movement that will bring My people to me both on earth and in paradise.”**

### **Leading With ‘Yes’**

When you start to see the potential in the people around you, you begin to lead with a “yes” and give them permission to fully engage in the mission. **The one thing every hero maker possesses that everyone around him or her needs is permission**, which needs to come in the form of a yes.

A recent study called “Growing Young” reported that the more you give millennials permission—handing them the keys of everything from the church facility to the soda machine by the youth room—the more they’ll thrive.

If you want to multiply leaders who in turn multiply leaders, you must lead with a yes. **If the people around you cannot get a yes, they will never discover the dream God has for their lives** or reach their redemptive potential. If your followers can’t get permission from you with a yes, they will never be engaged in the mission.

### **Six Levels for Giving Permission**

Admittedly, saying yes, especially at first, is hard. There are all sorts of fears that keep us from leading with a bias to yes. Below are six progressive levels to help you move toward saying yes and giving permission:

Level 1: Watch what I do, and then let’s talk about it.

Level 2: Let’s together figure out a plan.

Level 3: Propose a plan for what I should do, and let’s talk about it.

Level 4: Let me know your plan, but wait for my feedback.

Level 5: You should handle it completely, and then let me know what you did.

Level 6: You should handle it completely, and there is no need to report back to me.

This approach helps you to frame ministry around the word yes. If you are going to be a permission giver, you need to develop a yes reflex.

Recently, in an interview for our “Hero Maker” podcast, pastor, author and former NFL player Derwin Gray joined us to talk about the influencers in his life who saw greatness in him and led with a bias to yes. Now he models that same permission-giving with his church in South Carolina. Eighty to 90 percent of Transformation Church’s staff was at one time part of the congregation.

“We believe in multiplication and replication within the body,” Derwin said, “but **you have to see that in people, say it, encourage it, and then equip them for what God wants to do in and through them.** As a leader, you have to ask: ‘How do I give people permission to dream and then pursue that dream?’”

### **Reflection and Discussion Questions:**

1. What was a life transforming ICNU affirmation that you’ve received? Reflect upon how you felt and what was the result of that moment.
2. What was an ICNU conversation you had with someone else? How did you feel about it? What happened in that person’s life as a result?

3. What holds you back from ICNU conversations?
4. Who is one person that you feel prompted to have an ICNU conversation this week?  
What will you say?
5. Who is someone you feel is good at initiating INCU conversations?

# Discipleship Content: Encouragement

## Section 2: LEADER GUIDE

### SESSION CONTEXT

Encouragement has power. A recent study revealed that generation Y and Z are both looking for the encouragement of mentors. It is powerful to see how Jesus encouraged his disciples, through ups and downs. It is powerful for us to grow in this area as we lead and influence others.

A well-known church planter and leadership network developer, Mac Lake, said this, “encouragement is powerful and has the ability to lift a spirit, shape self-esteem or galvanize an individual’s resolve to continue in the face of difficulty.” It is interesting how we can recognize the power of encouragement in our lives yet sometimes miss the opportunities as we lead others. Our hope is this time will be a time where you can lead people through ICNU conversations and give them a tool to do that in their spheres of influence. Mac mentioned one scripture from an observation of Solomon, a pretty wise guy and his reflection is powerful, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver.” (Prov. 25:11) The **right word**, spoken the **right way**, at the **right time** can impact lives in ways we may never know.” May words of life flow from you as you lead others to speak words of life as well!

### SESSION OUTLINE

#### CONNECT [5 mins]

Spend time allowing your group to connect with one another relationally.

#### CELEBRATE [5 mins]

What have you seen God do in your life since we met last that we can celebrate together?

#### CHECK-UP [5 mins]

How have you put the competency we learned last time into practice since we last met?

#### COACH [30 mins]

**Coaching Focus Reminder:** *Overall reminder about this section. Below is the participant guide with added “COACHING BOXES with questions, thoughts or conversation starters for your discussion. Any of the **highlighted questions** are “must-discuss” while everything else is at your discretion.*

*Remember, we have all faced this struggle at some point or another. What or who helped you learn this specific competency? How significant has it been for you to lead your family and others? How thankful are you for the reminder of overflow is the path towards fruitfulness?*

#### COMMUNICATE [2 mins]

Share important information with your group.

What to know before we meet again? Reiterate some of the next steps.

What do I need to know before the next meeting?

#### CARE [5 mins]

Spend time praying with your group (take specific prayer requests).

## PARTICIPANT GUIDE WITH “COACHING BOXES”

### COMPETENCY

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### ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read the Scriptures below and answer the questions.
2. Read the article and answer the questions.
3. Write out three people who encouraged you in a way that gave you confidence to grow in your leadership.

**Scripture** - Read the following passages and answer the questions provided.

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**Proverbs 11:25** – *“A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.”*

### **Coaching Opportunity**

1. Take a moment as discuss a couple of the scripture reflection questions.
2. Reminder – we want to build upon the questions for engaging in a listening and hearing from God relationship from module 2 – What is God saying? What do I do?

### **Scripture Questions:**

1. How do various writers in the bible mention the impact of encouragement?
2. How does encouraging others impact yourself and the greater community?
3. How did someone else’s encouragement help you overcome a limiting belief you had about yourself?
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### Coaching Opportunity

1. After you have reflected on a couple questions read Matthew 4:19 together and discuss: "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people."
2. Jesus saw the disciples in this situation doing their "normal" job that was actually pretty devaluing in the society. Jesus sees the potential in them and has an ICNU conversation. What do you think these young men thought when Jesus invited them to a greater adventure? How do you think that adventure changed their perspective of their own identity, value and future purpose?

Article – Read the following article and answer the questions provided.

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#### Seeing the Leadership Potential in Others

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### **Six Levels for Giving Permission**

Admittedly, saying yes, especially at first, is hard. There are all sorts of fears that keep us from leading with a bias to yes (We discuss these fears thoroughly in the new book *Hero Maker*). Below are six progressive levels to help you move toward saying yes and giving permission:

Level 1: Watch what I do, and then let’s talk about it.

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**through them.** As a leader, you have to ask: ‘How do I give people permission to dream and then pursue that dream?’

### **Coaching Opportunity**

1. Feel free to read this thought and question directly - There is often a desire in us to be the hero of our story. As we are learning about Jesus and how He led others, He truly sought to be a hero-maker of others. When it comes to giving people permission, we can choose to be hero makers over the hero. In this idea of ICNU, a hero’s thinking is – “I see what God can do through my own leadership” while a hero maker thinks like this, “I see what God can do through others, and I let them know what I see in them.” How would this practice of ICNU change how you think?
2. Discuss any of the other questions listed.

### **Reflection and Discussion Questions:**

1. What was a life transforming ICNU affirmation that you’ve received? Reflect upon how you felt and what was the result of that moment.
2. What was an ICNU conversation you had with someone else? How did you feel about it? What happened in that person’s life as a result?
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4. Who is one person that you feel prompted to have an ICNU conversation this week? What will you say?
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### **Coaching Opportunity**

1. Key Learnings Question – What is one of the key leadership learnings you want them to walk away with?
2. Key Learnings Question – How will we use this leadership principle in our homes, workplace, and volunteer role?
3. What are some practical ways I can apply this today?
  - a. What is God saying to you about this principle?
  - b. What are you going to do about it?
  - c. How can I encourage you as you take this next step?

## **Additional Resources – Use during session or for participant development.**

1. Watch this 2-minute overview of an ICNU conversation.  
<https://benttree.org/leader-path/best-practices-icnu/>
2. Read the following blog “What Is ICNU?” by Cindy Scott.

### **WHAT IS ICNU?**

What does ICNU mean?  
by Cindy Scott on April 18, 2019

I first learned of the ICNU conversation from the life-changing book *Exponential* and those letters have become part of our language for my husband and me.

ICNU means “I see in you.” It’s a call out for leadership. It says, “I see in you things like:”

- A gift of listening to people and truly caring.
- The ability to encourage people no matter where they are at in their journey.
- Leadership qualities that may be ready to share.

Think about it. Can you remember a time when someone said something like that to you?

I have a pastor friend, Eric, who is brilliant at this! He regularly encourages me in my giftings and challenges me to move forward. Honestly, sometimes he sees things more clearly than I do. Left to myself I would not have had the courage to do many of the things I have done, but with the encouragement and challenge of others, I have become more of myself than I could have seen without them.

*Exponential* talks about how Jesus was the king of ICNU conversations. He called his disciples out from their current professions when they were not even close to ready to commit to him. He gave Peter a new name that meant “rock.” He saw in them what they could be.

### **WHAT DO YOU SEE IN THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU?**

It’s the opposite of [freeze-framing](#), which we have talked about before. ICNU looks not only into what is visible but into the future of what could be.

Pastor Eric spoke life into my leadership capability long before I was thriving in ministry. He encouraged me when I didn’t do as well as I thought I would on something. He invited me to share with his people and paid me what he wanted others to pay me. He truly believed me into the person I am today.

I'd like to think I have done that with others. I remember college students I asked to become RAs or coaching trainees I thought would be good facilitators or coaches. And now they are doing things they may not have done without the encouragement.

So, what do you see in the people around you?

Maybe you can make a list of the people in your group and intentionally speak vision and hope into their lives. That could be a great adventure!

And, while you are at it, take a moment and consider who in your group is ready for a call into small group leadership? Or maybe you have a friend who's not in your group that could be a good small group leader, and an ICNU conversation could make all the difference.

Remember, you are an influencer, and your words can bring life!