The Life of Timothy



Scripture Reference: Acts 16:1-5; 2 Timothy 1:3-7; 3:14-15; 1 Thessalonians 3:2

Suggested Theme: We can be like Timothy and begin to learn about God from an early age.

Memory Verse: “You have known the Holy Scriptures since you were a child. The Scriptures are able to make you wise. And that wisdom leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” 2 Timothy 3:15, ICB

Story Overview:

From infancy and throughout his life, Timothy studied the Scriptures and learned about God. His father was an unbelieving Greek, but his mother and grandmother believed in God. They taught Timothy to do the same from when he was a baby. As a young man, Timothy joined the Apostle Paul on missionary journeys and continued serving God in many ways over his lifetime. He was like a son to Paul and one of his most trusted co-workers.

Background Study:

As teachers and influencers of children, it is inspiring to consider Timothy and how he learned the Scripture from the time he was an infant. Investing in bible study in children can greatly influence their choices and what they do throughout their lives.

Not all children are blessed with a household where both parents are Christians. Timothy is also a good reminder that the influence of one believing parent or grandparent can help them develop a strong faith.

One of the reasons Timothy was such a tremendous help to Paul was because, coming from a religiously mixed household, he would have had an intimate understanding of both the Jewish and Gentile perspectives.

Timothy likely witnessed his Greek father living and working in a culture immersed in the Greek false gods. To get an idea of what life was like in Timothy’s hometown of Lystra, we can read about Paul and Barnabas’ emotionally charged reception there on Paul’s First Missionary Journey. The people of Lystra first tried to sacrifice to them as if they were gods and then got so angry with them that they even tried to kill Paul. It is possible that Timothy’s mother, Eunice and grandmother, Lois, might have even been among the disciples that gathered around Paul outside the city of Lystra after he was stoned and left for dead (Acts 14:19-20). Timothy joined him in his travels on Paul’s 2nd Missionary Journey.

In addition to being familiar with Gentile life, Timothy knew the Scripture and understood from his mother’s Jewish background what it meant to live under Jewish laws. Although it is not a requirement for Christians to be circumcised, Paul instructed Timothy to meet this Jewish requirement (Acts 16:3). By showing the Jews that he respected the Law, Timothy could then, like Paul, move freely among both Jews and Greeks to teach them about Jesus.

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Even when young, Timothy was respected by the Christians in his hometown of Lystra and Iconium. Paul had great fatherly affection for him and trusted him very much. Paul told Timothy, “I have none like him” (Philippians 2:19-20).

Paul’s last recorded letter in the Bible is 2 Timothy. In that letter, Paul gives Timothy advice for ministry, but he also has a personal request. Others have deserted Paul, but he asks his trusted friend, Timothy, to bring him his books and parchments. Winter was approaching. Paul asks Timothy to bring his cloak (2 Timothy 4:9-13, 21).

Other references to Timothy indicate that he was a man whom young people could look to as an example of a faithful Christian life. Many other references to Timothy can be found throughout the New Testament.

Other Bible Texts that Mention Timothy:

Timothy’s Background:
Acts 16:1-5; 2 Timothy 1:5; 2 Timothy 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:23

Ministry and Personal Advice Paul Gave Timothy:
1 Timothy 1:1-4, 18; 1 Timothy 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 5:23; 2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14; 2 Timothy 2:1; 2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Timothy 2:22; 2 Timothy 4:2-5

Paul’s Respect and Affection for Timothy:
2 Timothy 1:1-5; 1 Corinthians 4:17; Philippians 2:19-24; 1 Thessalonians 3:2; 2 Timothy 4:9-13, 21

Other Mentions of Timothy(Writing Letters and Prison):
1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1; Philemon 1:1; Hebrews 13:23

Timothy’s life is a wonderful example of a child who learned from God’s Word and grew up to be strong and faithful. Timothy’s example should encourage us, as Bible teachers, to ensure that our preparation is good and that everything stays focused on the Word.

Children do not have to wait until they are “older” to learn about God and His Word. Timothy was not just “baby-sat” during infancy—-he studied the word of God. Don’t ever lose sight of the importance of teaching children!

Way to Introduce the Story:

Invite a young, talkative child (younger than the children you teach) to tell your children what they know about God. You might ask them, “Suzy, do you love God? Who made the elephants? Do you like to say prayers? Can you sing Jesus Loves Me?”

Follow this time up with a discussion. Ask your group if they remember when they were that little. Did they learn about God when they were younger? What was one of the first things they remember learning? Who were your teachers?

“In today’s story, we will learn about someone who started learning from the word of God when he was a little boy. His mother and his grandmother helped him learn.”

The Story:

Timothy was a man who followed God and taught many people about Jesus. However, Timothy’s story begins long before he began preaching about Jesus. As you might guess, Timothy’s learning began as a baby.

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Timothy was born to a family that lived in the town of Lystra. His father was a Greek. Greeks did not usually recognise the one true God but worshipped many false gods. From an early age, Timothy understood that not everyone followed God.

Even though Timothy's father did not recognise God, his mother, Eunice, and grandmother, Lois, did. They were both Jews who had become followers of Jesus. So, from an early age, Timothy understood what it meant to love God and Jesus.

Beginning when Timothy was a baby, his mother and grandmother taught him from the Scriptures. Timothy listened to what they were teaching and learned to read them himself. The Scriptures helped him learn to be wise and make good choices in his life. He learned how to be a good boy.

As Timothy grew into a young man, he continued to study the Scriptures. When the people in his town worshipped idols and false gods, Timothy knew the Scripture taught that there was only one true God. Timothy followed the Scriptures and believed in the one true God.

The Scriptures also taught about a Saviour that would save the world from sin. Timothy knew that the Saviour was Jesus. Timothy obeyed the Scriptures and followed Jesus as his mother and grandmother did.

Timothy showed concern for people. Jesus's followers in Timothy's town respected him and said many good things about him.

Paul, the missionary, had come to Timothy's town of Lystra before, but Timothy and others who believed in Jesus were so happy that Paul was returning for another visit. Many people in Lystra did not believe in Jesus, so now they would have the opportunity to hear Paul preach. This would have made Timothy happy.

When Paul arrived in Lystra, he heard about Timothy. Jesus's followers told Paul how Timothy had studied the Scriptures since he was a child. Paul knew Timothy's mother and grandmother had taught him well.

Paul was a missionary who travelled around telling people about Jesus. Paul invited Timothy to join him on his missionary journeys once he got to know Timothy and heard everyone speak so well of him.

What an amazing opportunity for Timothy! He could see all of the good things that Paul was doing. Paul could show him how to teach and preach. Timothy wanted to help Paul and be part of this great missionary journey.

Throughout the following years, Timothy accompanied Paul on many adventures. They not only worked together but also became good friends. Paul loved Timothy like a father loves a son.

Paul helped Timothy learn how to be a good preacher and worker for churches. Paul trusted Timothy so much that he sometimes sent Timothy to churches to help them. Timothy continued to care for people and help them learn to follow Jesus.

Many times, Timothy had helped Paul write letters to churches, but in the last few years of Paul's life, Timothy was the one who received letters. You might recognise the names of the letters in your New Testament. They are called First and Second Timothy.

Paul wrote the second letter from prison. He felt alone, and he asked Timothy to please come and join him. Winter was coming, so he asked Timothy to bring his coat. Paul also asked Timothy to bring his books and papers in the letter. Paul knew his good friend Timothy would travel a great distance to come to see him when he asked for help.

Even though Timothy was an adult, Paul did not want him ever to forget how important it was that he learned to read the Scriptures at an early age. Here is what Paul wrote to Timothy in his last letter:

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> “I remember your true faith. That kind of faith first belonged to your grandmother Lois and to your mother Eunice. And I know that you now have that same faith.” 2 Timothy 1:5, ICB

> “But you should continue following the teachings that you learned. You know that these teachings are true. And you know you can trust those who taught you. You have known the Holy Scriptures since you were a child. The Scriptures are able to make you wise. And that wisdom leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” 2 Timothy 3:14-15, ICB

So now you know more about Timothy’s life. And what about your life? Are you learning from the Bible as Timothy did?

top

Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using various methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible, but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection or other group participation.

Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing, so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Click here for visual aids and more storytelling methods.

top

Review and Reflection Questions:

Review questions help children remember and know the facts of a story. Reflection questions encourage them to internalise the meaning and implications for their lives. Asking at least one of each type of question can help strengthen a child’s spiritual development and help them connect to God. Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.

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Review:

- What was the name of the young man who started learning about God when he was young? (Timothy)
- Who taught Timothy about the word of God when he was young? (His mother, Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois)
- What missionary did Timothy help? (Paul)
- How close were Paul and Timothy? (Very close. Paul thought of Timothy like a son)
- What are the names of the letters Paul wrote to Timothy? (1 and 2 Timothy)
- What does this story show you about God?
- What does this story show you about people?

Reflection:

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- What do you think Timothy was like as a child? What do you think his personality was like? What do you think he enjoyed doing?
- Do you think it was hard for Timothy to have one parent who followed Jesus and one parent who didn't?
- Who has taught you about God or the Bible in your life?
- Have you ever helped someone understand something in the Bible or about God?
- Is there something about God or the Bible you want to understand more? What is your next step to understand this more?
- How do you think Timothy felt when Paul asked him to join him on his missionary journeys?
- How do you think Timothy felt about having Paul, a Christian man, in his life, especially since his father was not a Christian?
- How does God feel about young people, including babies and children? What does he believe about young people?
- What part of this story did you find the most interesting?

Prayer:

It is important to guide children in learning how to pray. In prayer, children can connect with God and learn that He hears and answers them. God can become a lifelong friend who is with them every moment of their lives. Try using a variety of prayer methods from time to time so that the children can learn to connect with God in different ways. Note that you can pray at any time throughout your lesson. A variety of prayer methods are found here.

Song Suggestions:

- Crayon Song
- He's Still Working on Me Song
- He's Got the Whole World in His Hands Song
- Oh, Be Careful Song
- Books of the New Testament
- I Can Be a Missionary
- Jesus Loves the Little Children of the World Song
- Refer to the Song Page on this website for more song options.

top

Activities and Crafts:

- How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation.
- Visit the activities and songs pages for additional activities and crafts.

Activities:

- Display some of the material used to teach children younger than those in your group. They will notice that the material seems babyish. Let them enjoy that they have "matured in the Lord" since that time.

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- Arrange to have the children visit a group of younger children and observe how they learn.
- Talk to a teacher of a younger group and ask if there is a visual aid or room decorations that your children could make for them. This will take planning in advance.
- Play a simple word game. Bible Wordz Game is an adaptable game in which children form words from letter tiles. The words relate to those in the Bible lesson.

Invite the children to respond to this story using the adaptable “God’s Story” printable reflection page. Free printables for this story.

Crafts:

- Make a “family scrapbook” for Timothy’s family. Draw pictures of his mother, grandmother, and father. Continue the scrapbook to show Paul and some of the events of Timothy’s life (reading Bible scrolls as a child, helping Paul write letters, first preaching job in Ephesus, etc.)
- Make a scroll. Click here for instructions. Have children write out the words of 2 Timothy 3:16 on the scroll.

Print and use these free bookmarks, trading cards or timelines. Free printables for this story.

top

Other Online Resources:

- Colouring page (raisingourkids.com)
- Colouring page and puzzle worksheets- when Timothy joined Paul on his 2nd missionary journey (Calvary Curriculum)
- Printable, Simple flip chart for younger children at freebibleimages.org
- Wordsearch of Books of New Testament (christiananswers.net)

top

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