

LESSON PLAN

Scripture Texts:

1 Timothy 4:6-16

Philippians 2:19-24

Session Theme:

Leadership

a. Welcome to Class

Teachers should arrive in the classroom well in advance of class. Welcome students as they enter, and inquire about their week. Pass out name tags and record attendance on a classroom chart.

b. Icebreaker: Follow the (Good) Leader!

Write on the board, "A good leader is someone who ...". Let kids give suggestions. If needed, prompt the kids with ideas: is honest, is trustworthy, doesn't pick on people, etc. Write each idea on the board. Ask if they think a good leader could be a young person or even a kid. Why or why not? How could they, themselves, be good leaders and faithful servants of Christ, even now at their young age?

In today's Bible story, Paul is giving instructions to a young man named Timothy on how to become a good and faithful Christian leader. Timothy might have been feeling nervous because of his age and inexperience, but Paul believed in him. Let's begin our lesson and learn what Paul had to say!

c. Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, you call people of all ages to lead, and you give them the gifts they need to do so. Help us to be faithful followers of Christ and to use our talents to serve you. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

d. SEED Video or Song (Optional)

The teacher may introduce the lesson by playing the video clip from the SEED website. This time may also include an opening song or two, using a commercial Sunday School music CD.

Song suggestions for this lesson:

- *"He Leadeth Me, O Blessed Thought" (hymn)*
- *"Rise Up, O Saints of God" (hymn)*

e. Brief Bible Background

Read together the introduction to the lessons for the day, and briefly summarize the context and setting:

- Today's Lesson is from the New Testament
- Scripture Section: Letters

In addition to the letters written by the Apostle Paul to specific places or people, other more general letters (called "epistles") were written by a few of the apostles to be read by congregations at large, to teach people how faith guides our everyday lives.

f. Communicate the Bible Story

Always keep in mind that the main purpose of Sunday School is to put people in contact with Bible stories. Use a version that is appropriate to the age level.

Upper Elementary: Read the Bible Story and Rhyme

Youth/Adults: Read the Scripture text from the Bible

For Upper and Lower Elementary, use the Storyteller questions to help students think about details of the story.

g. Complete the Worksheet(s)

Continue with the handout sheets appropriate to the age level of the students in class:

Upper Elementary: Worksheet and Drama

Youth: Bible Study (Maps, Timelines, Questions)

Adult: Bible Study Sheet (Introduction and Discussion)

h. Craft and Activity Time

If there is time after covering the Bible story, the class may move to craft and activity time, described on the following page. (Do not let the activity time supersede the actual time spent on the Scripture lesson.)

i. Summarize and Review

Before ending class, briefly summarize the day's lesson one last time. If you have not already done so, introduce the Theme Word for the week, providing the definition, and asking how the lesson connects to that theme.

Youth/Adult: Discuss "Reflection for the Week Ahead"

j. Closing Prayer

Close the session in prayer before dismissal:

Upper Elementary: Practice a prayer from memory (e.g., the Lord's Prayer, Luther's Morning Prayer, etc.)

Youth/Adult: Use the ADTRC Prayer format

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Bible Study Leader's Guide

The following is a discussion and answer guide for the Youth and Adult Bible Study sheets. For all leaders, it can serve to provide some background on the Bible lesson.

Discuss: 1 Timothy 4:6-16

1. In this Bible passage, Paul gave advice to Timothy about what it takes to be a good leader in the Church. What quality and behaviors did Paul encourage Timothy to reflect? What things did Paul tell Timothy to avoid?

   When he wrote this letter, Paul was separated from his young coworker. Knowing that church leadership would not be easy, Paul wanted to prepare Timothy for the challenges ahead. He emphasizes two important things: faithfulness to God's Word and living as a good example to others. He wants Timothy not to indulge in fake stories and speculation.

2. In verses 7-8, Paul compares practicing a life of faith to an athlete's physical training. Why do athletes need regular and constant training? How is this like being a person of faith?

   We all know that an athlete must train and practice to get good at what they do. Athletes must maintain their fitness and keep in shape. The same is true in our lives of faith. We need to put our faith into practice on a daily basis, and strive to keep our focus on God. As Paul says, bodily training is of some value, but godliness is of value in every way. Paul wants Timothy to take his faith seriously and please God above all else.

3. What reason does Paul give for *why* we "toil and strive"? Which would you say is true: Do we earn God's favor by doing good, or do we strive to do good because God has already shown us his favor? Explain.

   Some people falsely think that the reason we do good is to earn our way into heaven. They think that following the rules will make God love us. But they've got it backwards. God already loves us; the reason we do good is out of gratitude and love. To put it bluntly, faith can be hard work; doing good is not always easy. But we do it, not to gain something for ourselves, but to live the life that God has set before us and serve others.

4. Read the practical things that Paul mentions in verses 11-16. Are these instructions only for church leaders like Paul and Timothy, or do they apply to all Christians?

   It is especially important for leaders to set a good example because of the influence they have on others. As James says, "Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness" (James 3:1). As a leader in the Church, Paul expects Timothy to set a good example in word and deed, as well as in love, faith and purity. Furthermore, he should not neglect to read his Bible. But the truth is, this is what God wants of all his followers. We should *all* strive to do these things.

5. In verse 14, when Paul says that he doesn't want Timothy to "neglect" the gift he has, what is he asking of Timothy? Why would it be wrong for us *not* to use the gifts we are given by God?

   When Timothy was chosen to be a pastor, those who laid hands on him probably saw that he had special ability for the ministry, whether it was in preaching, teaching, or another talent. God gave him this talent for a purpose and wanted him to use it. God gives us all many gifts and abilities. As Jesus showed in his parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30), God wants us to put all that he has given us to good use in his service.

6. God gives all of us different skills and talents. What are some of the gifts that God has given to you? How do you (or could you) use those gifts to serve God and do good in the world? What are some new ways of serving that you might be willing to try?

   Answers will vary. Talents can be obvious, like artistic or athletic ability. But some are quieter, like being a good listener or being able to tell when someone is upset. All gifts can serve God!

   (Teachers: Consider going around the class and having each student name a good quality they see in the person sitting next to them.)

7. Read Philippians 2:19-24, in which Paul wrote about Timothy to the church in Philippi. In his commendation of Timothy, what does Paul say about the young man's character? How does Paul describe his own relationship with Timothy? Why would that kind of recommendation be important in the Church?

   Here Paul is giving his recommendation of Timothy, because he intends to send the young man to serve the church in Philippi. He says he knows that Timothy will be concerned about their well-being, rather than focused on his own.

8. Why is it important for the Church to identify and raise up the next generation of leaders? What are some of the ways we do this? Do you know a young person you think would be a good Church leader? What might you tell that person?

   Churches can encourage youth to be open to serving God in the church, perhaps even as an ordained pastor. Youth can participate in retreats that discern vocation. Churches can also directly sponsor seminarians and seminary education.

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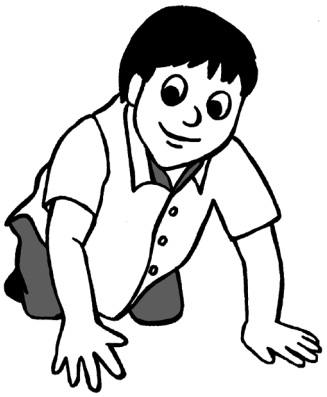
Classroom Craft and Activity Page

Listed below are in-class activities and craft projects related to the theme for the day. Choose one of the following based on the age and capabilities of the students. (Never let the activity or craft time take precedence over the biblical story.)

Activity 1: Circuit Training Activity

Materials Needed:

- Large area to play a game
- Card stock or heavy paper
- Marker
- Masking tape or cones to make a starting line



Instructions:

Before class begins: write the following directions, each on a separate sheet of card stock or heavy paper:

1. Do 4 jumping jacks
2. Sing these words: "Jesus loves me, this I know."
3. Do 3 pushups.
4. Kneel and fold your hands in a prayer position.
5. Do 4 sit ups.
6. Finish this sentence, "I thank God for ____."

Place these signs (in numerical order) around the perimeter of the room. Kids will move from place to place, following directions, before moving on to the next activity. This is similar to circuit training at a gym.

To do the activity:

Have kids stand behind a starting line. When you say "Go!" the first athlete will race to the first sign on the floor, stand in front of it, and do whatever it says to do.

When that athlete finishes the first activity, you will tap the next athlete and have him or her begin the course at the same place.

Continue with a new athlete starting an activity just as the previous person finishes it. All kids will perform each activity in the circuit in order. Continue like this until everyone has completed the entire course.

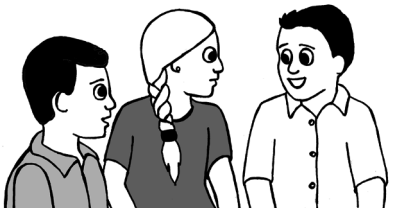
When kids are done, discuss why training spiritually is every bit as important as physical training.

In today's Bible story, Paul told Timothy that it was good to train oneself physically, but even better to train spiritually for godliness. Let's try to do both whenever we can!

Activity 2: Common & Compliment Game

Materials Needed:

- Large area to play a game
- Card stock (1/2 piece)
- Marker



Instructions:

Invite kids to sit in a circle on the floor or around a table. Then, follow these directions:

On a piece of card stock, write "The Leader" in large letters. Choose a volunteer to hold this sign.

The Leader will look around the circle and notice someone who has something in common with himself or herself. It can be the same color hair, the fact that both wear eyeglasses, a similarly colored shirt, etc.

After noting the commonality out loud, the Leader will give that person one compliment. For example, "Josie and I both have yellow shirts. Josie is also a really good artist."

The Leader will then pass the sign to the person he or she just complimented. That person will then become the new Leader and the game will continue.

Be sure that everyone gets a chance to be chosen to receive a commonality and a compliment. To help this along, explain that no one can be mentioned more than once. If someone seems to be getting left out, you can take a turn, yourself, and find something in common with that person as well as something to lift up.

After everyone has had a chance to be the Leader and to be noticed and complimented, discuss the ideas below.

A good leader gets to know other people, focuses on what they have in common, and notices strengths, among other things. When we build each other up, like in this game, we can help others become their best selves. That is quiet leadership on our part, and may help the other person become a leader too!

What are some other things we can do to become good leaders at school, church, or home?

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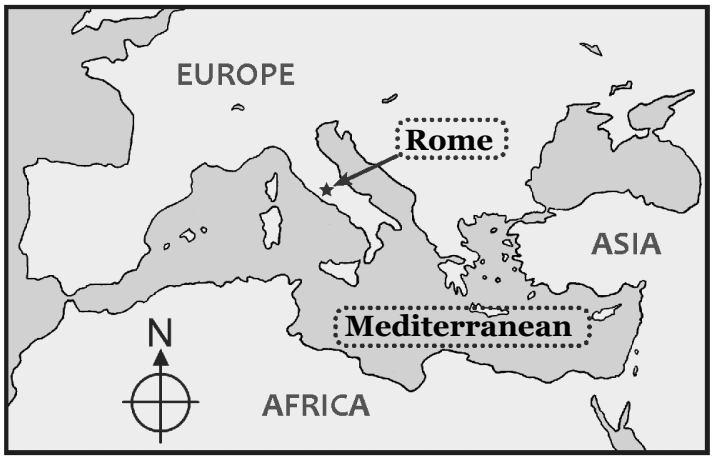
Worksheet Answer Key

Shown below are the answers and solution to the children's worksheet for this week's lesson:



"Rather train yourself for **GODLINESS**; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come" (1 Timothy 4:7-8).

Map Answer Key



The Mediterranean Sea is bordered by these three continents: 1) Europe, 2) Asia, and 3) Africa

Vocabulary Word for the Week

Teachers may want to introduce the theme word for the week to help expand students' biblical vocabulary.

Leadership

the ability to bring a group together and point them in a good direction

Paul trained Timothy in leadership. He believed the young man would be a great pastor one day.

Reflection for the Week Ahead

Timothy was younger than Paul and was a new Christian pastor. He had much to learn, but Paul believed in him. Paul also wanted to help by giving him good, wise counsel. It's pretty amazing that we have Paul's written advice even today!

Have you ever been a leader of something? Perhaps you have led a group in class, or a sports team, or a music ensemble, or even a single game. Leading can be a little nerve wracking. We worry about doing everything right, and about not making mistakes.

Yet just as Paul reminded Timothy, we are supposed to use our gifts and not let fear stop us. If we rely on God and look to him, he will guide and help us in all we are called to do.

Talk to one another about these questions:

Have you ever led anything? What was it, and how did that go for you?

What do you think the hardest part of being a leader must be?

Do you prefer being the person out front, giving the directions, or the person in the background, following directions? Why?

The Practice of Prayer

Write a prayer that gives thanks to God for the freedom we enjoy in Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the words to share the love and gift of freedom with others.

Practice using the ADTRC Prayer Form: Address, Description, Thanks, Request, Conclusion.

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