

Paul Exhorts Timothy

Timothy leads the church as an approved worker.

Lesson Focus

Paul wrote to Timothy to encourage him in his role as a leader of the church. Paul also instructed Timothy to be an honorable vessel, set apart as holy and useful to God, and pointed him back to Scripture as the foundation for continued spiritual training.

Key Passages

2 Timothy 2:20–21, 3:14–17

Memory Verse

Philippians 3:20–21 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body.

Prepare to Share

Scriptural Background

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages for this lesson along with this background.

After being released from his house arrest in Rome, Paul traveled back through many of the cities he had ministered in throughout his ministry. Before long, he was imprisoned again and by AD 67 or 68, he was beheaded. But during these last few years of his life, Paul focused on training the next generation of church leaders. Timothy and Titus had both served along with Paul during various portions of his ministry. Paul had sent them to help lead and organize churches. While they were there, he wrote to them, offering instructions and exhortations.

In the first letter to Timothy, Paul emphasized the practical. He warned about false doctrine and called Timothy to wage war against it (1 Timothy 1:3–20). He gave instructions concerning the leadership in the church, including qualifications for overseers and deacons and limitations on the role of women in the church (1 Timothy 2:9–15). He offered instructions regarding pastoral responsibility toward sinning members, widows, elders, and slaves (1 Timothy 5:1–6:2). Then he gave some specific instructions concerning the man of God, warning him of certain pitfalls and exhorting him to proper character (1 Timothy 6:3–21).

In the second letter, Paul turned his attention to exhorting Timothy. He wrote to strengthen Timothy, calling him to suffer as a good soldier, strive like an athlete, and work diligently like the farmer (2 Timothy 2:1–6). Paul commanded Timothy to strive to

perform in such a way that he would be approved by God as faithfully handling the Scriptures (2 Timothy 2:15). Paul called him to flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness (2 Timothy 2:22). Paul also encouraged Timothy by reminding him that Scripture is the very breath of God and would equip him for the things he was called to do and to teach (2 Timothy 3:16–17). Finally, Paul reminded Timothy of his calling and exhorted him to faithfully continue to preach the word and stand against error (2 Timothy 4:1–2).

Timothy was a young pastor who was given an incredible responsibility. But he had been called to this position by God, a truth confirmed through prophecy, and the elders had affirmed his calling, ordaining him for the ministry (1 Timothy 4:14). Paul reminded him of this divine calling, encouraging him to not allow his age to be an obstacle to the ministry. Rather, he should set an example of godliness (1 Timothy 4:12).

As believers, we are called to follow Christ and to follow our leaders as far as they follow Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 3:17). Paul instructed Timothy to train himself in godliness (1 Timothy 4:7), immersing himself in the reading of Scripture and the work entrusted to him so that all might see his progress and hearers might be saved (1 Timothy 4:15–16). As Timothy and all church leaders are called to emulate godliness, so are the individual members called to follow in that example. May we be diligent to present ourselves as approved workers, having trained ourselves in godliness.

Historical/Apologetics Background

The letters to Timothy and Titus are often called pastoral epistles due to their concern for the orderly pastoral care of local congregations of believers. These epistles include advice on the governing of the church, but Paul also demonstrated his own pastoral care toward the young men he was training to be pastors. If Paul wrote these letters to pastors about how to be pastors, do they only apply to pastors?

The simple answer is no; we can all find value in the inspired words of these books. But there is an important hermeneutic principle that we must address here. As we should do with any passage we read, we must consider the context. When Scripture speaks to a

specific audience, we should not automatically generalize the content. Let's consider an example.

Second Timothy 3:16–17 is commonly memorized, taught, and applied. It provides one of the clearest and simplest teachings on the inspiration of Scripture. But when drawing the conclusion through verse 17, we find that it is the “man of God” who may be complete and equipped. The “man of God” refers to an official messenger of God and is reminiscent of the Old Testament title for a prophet (e.g., 2 Chronicles 11:2). In the New Testament, it is only applied to Timothy (1 Timothy 6:11). So, Paul meant that God's official preacher could be complete and equipped.

However, we can apply this truth generally to all Christians because the principle is elsewhere applied to a more general audience. Paul explained to the Ephesians that the church leaders were appointed to equip the saints for ministry until “we all attain to . . . the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11–13). The writer of Hebrews prays that God will equip the believers “with everything good that you may do his will” (Hebrews 13:20–21). In passages like these, we see that God equips all his saints for the work he calls them to do. Because Scripture clearly teaches this elsewhere, we understand Paul’s words to Timothy as generally applicable, even though he was writing within the specific context of pastoral exhortation.

Whenever we read Scripture, we must be careful to understand the context within which it was written and not to apply it where it does not belong. For example, we cannot read “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God” (1 John 3:1) and claim that all people are God’s children. The Bible only ever speaks of the saints as children of God while others are enemies of God (Romans 5:10). To apply the term to the lost would be to incorrectly apply the Scripture. One of the most basic rules of hermeneutics is to let Scripture interpret Scripture. Let’s do our best to rightly handle the Word.

Training Day Relay

Materials

- ☐ Beanbag or ball, one for each team
- ☐ Masking tape, cones, chairs
- ☐ Box or basket for each team, large enough for the beanbag/ball

Instructions

Use masking tape to mark a start line and a turn around line across the room. Divide students into teams. Place a beanbag/ball for each team at the line across the room. When you say "Go," the first students in line will run to their beanbag, pick it up, toss it up into the air, catch it, and place it back down on the tape then run back to the start to tag the next teammate in line to run. If they miss catching the toss, they must try once more to catch it. If they are unsuccessful, have them pick it up and place it back on the tape then run back to their line. The first team to finish wins.

For the next round, make the relay more challenging by having students throw the beanbag into a box/basket when they reach the other side. Allow them two tries before returning to their team.

For the third round, add another challenge by placing cones or chairs between the lines for students to weave around when they run. Then they may have two tries to toss the beanbag into the box/basket before returning to their team.

Suggested Discussion

Our relay race got more difficult each time you did it. That's how athletes and soldiers train. They begin with simple exercises. As they practice and train, they get better at them and learn to do more and more. In today's lesson, we learned that believers should be growing to be more like Jesus through spiritual training.

? What did Paul say can be used for spiritual training? *Scripture, God's Word, the Bible.*

God's Word, the Bible, is useful for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness. It helps us learn about God and practice turning from sin and growing in our faith and obedience to him.

Review Questions

K-1st Review Questions

1. Who wrote the two letters to Timothy, which are New Testament epistles? *Paul.*
2. What other church leader received a letter from Paul: John, Titus, or James? *Titus.*
3. What did Timothy do in the church? Was he a pastor, Sunday school teacher, or music leader? *A pastor.*
4. What instruction did Paul give to help Timothy lead the people in his church: talk louder, be bossy, or show a good example? *Show a good example.*
5. What word did we talk about that means learning how to do something and practicing it? *Training.*
6. What kind of training should Christians be doing to be more like Jesus: drivers' training, spiritual training, or dog training? *Spiritual training.*
7. To be honorable vessels for God, we must grow in faith, love, and peace and also turn away from what? *Sin.*
8. Can you give an example of a vessel for honorable use? *Something nicer than an everyday item, i.e., decoration, tray, vase.*
9. Can you give an example of a vessel for dishonorable use? *An everyday item or utensil, i.e., mixing bowl, cooking pot or pan, duster, broom.*
10. An important part of being an honorable vessel is rightly handling and understanding what? *The Word of God, the Bible.*
11. When did Timothy begin learning God's Word: as a child, as a young man, or when he traveled with Paul? *As a child.*
12. Who had taught Timothy the Scripture since childhood? *His mother and grandmother.*
13. All Scripture is breathed out by whom? *God, the Holy Spirit.*
14. God guided the writers of the Bible to write exactly what? *Exactly what he wanted it to say.*
15. What is useful for teaching, reproving, correcting, and training in righteousness? *Scripture, God's Word, the Bible.*
16. When we use God's Word for spiritual training, it will help believers be ready to do what kind of work for God: housework, good works, or farm work? *Good works.*

Pre-K Review Questions

1. Who wrote the two letters to Timothy, which are New Testament epistles? *Paul.*
2. What did Timothy do in the church? Was he a pastor or a music leader? *A pastor.*
3. What word did we talk about that means learning how to do something and practicing it: trying or training? *Training.*
4. What kind of training should Christians be doing to be more like Jesus: spiritual training or dog training? *Spiritual training.*
5. To be honorable vessels for God, we must grow in faith, love, and peace and also turn away from what? *Sin.*
6. Can you give an example of a vessel for honorable use? *Something nicer than an everyday item, i.e., decoration, tray, vase.*
7. Can you give an example of a vessel for dishonorable use? *An everyday item or utensil, i.e., mixing bowl, cooking pot or pan, duster, broom.*
8. An important part of being an honorable vessel is correctly understanding what: the Bible or the rules? *The Bible.*
9. When did Timothy begin learning God's Word: as a child or when he traveled with Paul? *As a child.*
10. Who had taught Timothy the Scripture since childhood? *His mother and grandmother.*
11. Who guided the writers of the Bible to write exactly what he wanted it to say? *The Holy Spirit, God.*
12. Why is the Bible so important? Whose words are in the Bible? *God's words.*
13. What is useful for teaching, reproving, correcting, and training in righteousness? *Scripture, God's Word, the Bible.*
14. When we use God's Word for spiritual training, it will help believers be ready to do what kind of work for God: housework, good works, or farm work? *Good works.*

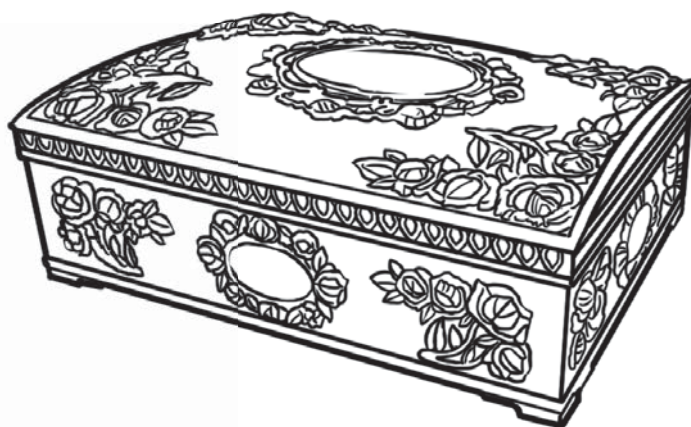
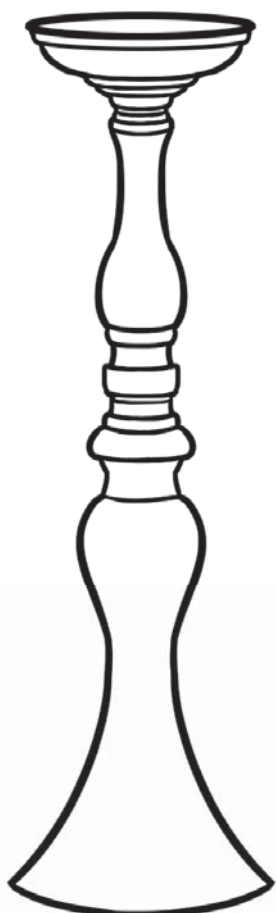
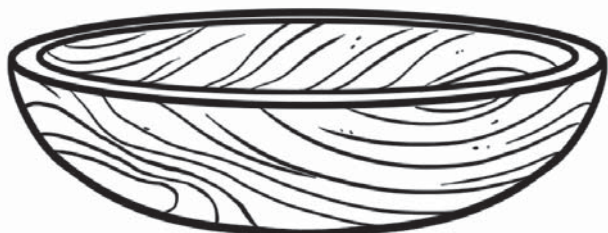
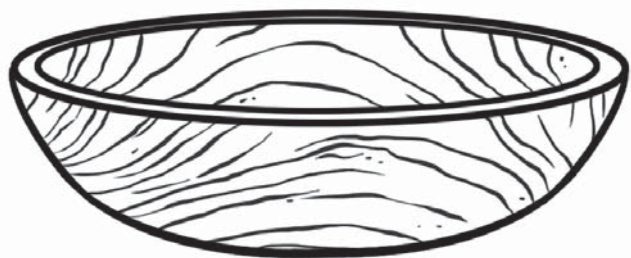
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Memory Verse Games

Allow students to refer to the Flip Chart Memory Verse Page during the games.

You may want to cover it up after a few weeks for more of a challenge.

Echo! Echo!

Do what I do—say what I say! Groups will echo each other as they recite the memory verse together.

Materials

- ☐ Flip Chart Memory Verse Page

Instructions

Divide the class into two groups. You will say a word or phrase of the memory verse while doing some sort of action—sit down, stand up, spin in a circle, touch your toes, etc. The groups will take turns “echoing” what you say and do as you recite the verse. Repeat several times. You can whisper, shout, squeak, etc. Switch around and let older students take turns leading.

Egg Hunt

Hunt for all the parts of the memory verse hidden in the eggs! This game can be played all year round. The plastic eggs just happen to be great little containers that can be hidden easily.

Materials

- ☐ Flip Chart Memory Verse Page
- ☐ Strips of paper
- ☐ Plastic Easter eggs

Instructions

Write the memory verse on strips of paper with one or two words on each strip. Put one strip inside of each plastic Easter egg. Hide all the eggs around the room.

Have the students search for the eggs and bring them back to the table. They will open the eggs and work together to put the verse in the proper order.

For a larger class, prepare more than one set of eggs (sorted by colors for different teams). Students can work in teams to collect and construct the verse.

Follow the Leader

Follow the leader around the room. Say the verse and do the motion before moving on.

Materials

- ☐ Flip Chart Memory Verse Page
- ☐ Follow the Leader Cards
- ☐ Tape

Instructions

Print and cut out the Follow the Leader Cards. Tape each one to a chair or table and randomly place them around the room. You will lead the students around the room and stop at each card. Read the card and lead the children to do what the card says while reciting the memory verse. Then move around to the next one. You may want to repeat this activity or have students take turns leading.

Freeze!

Stomp like a dinosaur or spin in circles, but when it's time to freeze, get ready to say the memory verse.

Materials

- ☐ Flip Chart Memory Verse Page

Instructions

Students will move around the room in a specified action you give, such as crawling, skipping, turning in circles, galloping, walking in giant steps, etc. Then when you say, "Freeze!" the students will stop and freeze in position. Recite the memory verse, then begin again with a different action. You may need to show them how to freeze and hold a position.

Funny Voices

Recite the memory verse together using different voices. Be squeaky like a mouse or whisper as quietly as you can. How many voices can you do?

Materials

- ☐ Flip Chart Memory Verse Page
- ☐ Funny Voice Strips
- ☐ Container

Instructions

Print and cut out one set of the Funny Voice Strips and put them into a container. Choose a student to draw out a strip and lead the whole class in reciting the memory verse using that kind of voice. Have fun with it and repeat several times choosing a new voice each time!

Sneaky Stickies

Students will try to be sneaky as they cover up the words and pictures of the memory verse!

Materials

- ☐ Flip Chart Memory Verse Page
- ☐ Sticky notes

Instructions

Open the Flip Chart to the Memory Verse Page. Recite the verse together then choose a student to place a sticky note over one word, phrase, or picture on the Flip Chart. Recite the verse again, including the part that is covered up. Continue to choose students to place stickies, one at a time, reciting the whole verse between each turn—including the words/pictures that are covered. When all of the words/pictures are covered up, try to say the whole verse together!

Lesson Review Games

These games are written for team play, however, they can easily be adapted for smaller classes.

Allow students to refer to the Flip Chart during the games.

Basket Toss

Students give the correct answer and toss the beanbags. Each basket has greater points.

Materials

- ☐ Review Questions
- ☐ One beanbag for each team
- ☐ Three laundry baskets or boxes
- ☐ Masking tape

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use masking tape to make a tossing line. Bring in three baskets or boxes. Set the baskets in a line, with each one a little

farther from the tossing line. Label the baskets with 5, 10, and 25 points so the farther away it is the higher the score.

Divide the class into two or more teams depending on size. Have the teams line up at the tossing line. Take turns asking the first students in line from each team a review question. When a student answers correctly, he will have a chance to toss a beanbag into a basket then go to the end of the line. If the beanbag misses, there are no points scored. If someone does not answer correctly, he may ask his teammates for help. Keep track of the scores on the board. Continue until all the questions have been answered. Repeat questions if necessary.

Board Game

Teams will answer questions and make their way to the Finish on the Game Board.

Materials

- ☐ Review Questions
- ☐ Game Board (provided in the Teacher Kit)
- ☐ Dice, numbered cards, or spinner
- ☐ Buttons or other small items as game pieces for each team

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Divide the class into teams. Team members will take turns answering the review questions. If they answer correctly, they will roll the dice, spin, or draw a numbered card and move that number of spaces on the Game Board. Follow the directions on the spaces to move ahead, fall back, or switch places with another team. If someone does not know or does not answer correctly, he may ask his teammates for help. Alternate between teams as long as time permits, repeating questions if necessary. The first team to make it all the way to the end wins.

Bowling

What do you do with extra water bottles and softballs? Go bowling, of course. Students will answer questions then bowl for points.

Materials

- ☐ Review Questions
- ☐ Six to ten empty water bottles
- ☐ Softball or other small playground ball
- ☐ Masking tape
- ☐ Dried corn or beans (optional)

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Pour a small amount of dried corn or beans into the bottom of each

water bottle and tighten the lid. Set out the water bottles on one end of the room. Use masking tape to form a "lane."

Divide students into teams. Have students line up. Ask the first student a review question. If he answers correctly, let him roll the ball toward the bottles. Each bottle that is knocked down is worth 1 point. A strike (knocking down all the bottles) is worth 20 points. Take turns asking questions of each team. If a student gives an incorrect answer or does not know the answer, he can ask his teammates for help. Keep track of the scores.

Football Frenzy

Who can score the most touchdowns?

Materials

- ☐ Review Questions
- ☐ Football Cutouts, one per team
- ☐ Tape or poster putty

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions. Print and cut one Football Cutout for each team. Color them different colors for each team, or have teams choose and write a name on their football. On the board draw 6 vertical lines and label them 50, 40, 30, 20, 10, and End Zone to represent yard lines on a football field. Make the lines long enough so there is room for the footballs to be placed along them with room in between. Divide the class into teams. Place

each team's football at the 50-yard line using tape or poster putty on the back.

Alternate asking review questions to each team. If the answer is correct, move the team's football to the next yard line toward the End Zone. If the answer is incorrect, the team's football stays where it is. If a student is unsure of the answer, he may "pass" the question to a teammate to answer. Only one pass per question is allowed, and this does not affect the order of the questions being asked on the team.

When a team's football reaches the End Zone, they have scored a touchdown worth 6 points, and the team's football is placed back at the 50-yard line on the next turn. Keep track of scores on the board.

Continue asking questions and moving the teams' footballs until all the questions are asked or for a set time. You may repeat questions as necessary. At the end, the team with the most points wins.

Musical Questions

When the music stops, who will answer the question?

Materials

- ☐ Review Questions
- ☐ Chairs
- ☐ Worship music
- ☐ Different color/style chair, masking tape, colored paper, etc.

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions. Set up chairs either in a circle or in two rows back to back so students have room

to walk around them. Mark one chair as the "question" chair (use a different color/style chair or mark it with tape, a paper question mark, etc.)

Instruct students to walk in front of the chairs when you play the music. When the music stops, they will race to find a seat. The student in the question chair answers a review question. Continue playing music and having students change seats until all the review questions are answered.

Racetrack

Who will reach the checkered flag first?

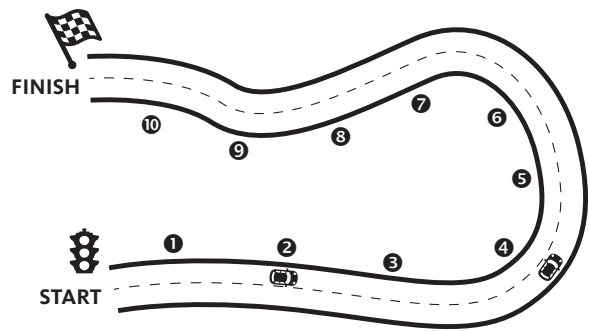
Materials

- ☐ Review Questions
- ☐ White board or chalk-board
- ☐ Markers/chalk
- ☐ Optional: paper cutouts for each team (cars, animals, circles, etc.), tape/poster putty

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions. Draw a racetrack on the board. It may be as simple as a straight horizontal path or a curvy circle. Label "Start" and "Finish" (with a checkered flag) at either end of the track. Add numbers along the track (e.g., 1-10) at equal intervals between Start and Finish. The numbers will be used as placement points for the racers as they progress along the track.

Divide the class into teams. You may draw a different symbol (e.g., stick figure, circle, X or O) to represent each



team at the Start, or use paper cutouts as team markers and stick them to the board with tape/poster putty.

Ask the first team a review question. If they answer correctly, move their marker or redraw their symbol along the track at #1. If they answer incorrectly, give the next team a chance to answer and move to the first number. If they do not know, give the answer and ask that question again later. Continue to alternate asking review questions and moving teams' markers along the racetrack according to the numbers along the track. The first team to reach the Finish wins!