20

Leader Guide for Ages 3-6

Teachers Dig In

Dig In to the Bible

- Read: Acts 16:1-4; 1 Timothy 4:6-16; 6:11-21; 2 Timothy 1:3-18
- In This Passage: On his travels, Paul meets a young man named Timothy. • Timothy joins Paul in his missionary work. Later, Paul writes encouraging letters to Timothy, reminding him not to let anyone look down on him for being young. God loves every age, and any age can set an example!
- Bible Point: God loves every age.
- Summary Verse: "But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior" (Philippians 3:20).

Dig Deeper

- You'll Be Teaching: God loves every age. Some kids may feel like they're limited in what they can do for God until they're adults. Use this lesson to encourage them to set an example for other Christians in what they say, in how they live, through loving others, and through their pure faith.
- Think About: How have you seen God through the kids you teach?

Dig In to Prayer

Ask God to use each child now and every year of his or her life moving forward.

Quick Tip

Paul encouraged Timothy to set an example for other Christians. Even though Paul was older than Timothy, he saw that Timothy's youth shouldn't hold him back. You're filling the role of Paul in your kids' lives. Are you encouraging them to set an example? Have you told them ways they've inspired you? Empower your kids by letting go of your "teacher" role and thanking them for what they have taught you.

MUSIC VIDEO

Preschoolers sing songs of praise to God.

Supplies

- "We Are God's People" (watch or download <u>here</u>)
- "Wild About Us!" (watch or download <u>here</u>)
- "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" (watch or download <u>here</u>)

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TALK-ABOUT VIDEO

Recommended for elementary kids.

Supplies

• "Young and Old" teaching video (watch or download <u>here</u>)

OPENING

Preschoolers share about a topic related to the lesson.

Supplies

Bible

DEEPER BIBLE

Preschoolers play dress-up.

Supplies

- variety of dress-up clothes
- red bulletin board paper
- music
- music player
- partition

Easy Prep

- Use the red bulletin board paper to create a "red carpet" for kids to walk on.
- Set up a partition behind which kids dressing up can privately choose their outfits before they reveal them. Place the dress-up clothes there.

CORE BIBLE AT HOME

Only available in One Room class format.

CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

Preschoolers learn a song about the Bible story, travel to places to share the good news, and discover letters to Timothy.

Supplies

- Bible
- "Places" handout (1 copy) (download here)

- "Letters to Timothy" handout (1 copy) (download here)
- blue copy paper and red copy paper (1 piece of each color)

Easy Prep

- Print the first page of the "Letters to Timothy" handout on blue copy paper. Print the second page of the handout on red copy paper. Cut apart each handout on the dashed lines. Determine where you'll end up for the "Find Special Letters" section of the activity, and then hide each cut piece of the handout in a different place in that area.
- Hang each place from the "Places" handout in a different area of the room.

LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Preschoolers act out different ages and pray for people they know.

Supplies

• Friends With God Story Bible (optional) (order here)

OBJECT LESSON

Preschoolers drop big and little objects.

Supplies

- several pairs of big and little classroom objects (5 pairs of objects for every 10 kids)
- 2 step stools

Easy Prep

 Gather several pairs of objects that have both a big and little version. Examples include a big and little crayon, big and little balls, big and little craft sticks, big and little toy cars, big and little books, and big and little blocks.



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Preschoolers play a game like The Farmer in the Dell.

LOW-ENERGY GAME

Preschoolers match pictures with ages.

Supplies

- "People" handouts (download <u>here</u>) (1 for every 5 kids)
- red and pink paper

Easy Prep

- Cut hearts from red and pink paper. Then cut the hearts in half like puzzle pieces, making zigzags or rounded edges as you cut.
- Create sets of hearts by cutting apart the pictures of people from the handout and gluing each picture to half of a heart. On the other half, use a marker to write that person's approximate age. Ideas include
 - 1 for baby
 - o 5 for preschooler
 - 10 for elementary-age child
 - 15 for teenager
 - o 35 for parent

	 65 for grandparent 	
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	AFT	
Preschoo	olers make stacking cups.	
S	Supplies	
	• 3-ounce cups (1 per child)	
	 5-ounce cups (1 per child) 	
	8- or 9-ounce cups (1 per child)	
	16-ounce cups (1 per child)	
	 "Every Age" handouts (1 per child) (download <u>here</u>) 	
	crayons or markers	
	child-safe scissors	
	glue sticks	
E	Easy Prep	
	Make a sample craft to show preschoolers.	

*Marked supplies can be reused from Core Bible Discovery

Let's keep kids safe! You can help by using supplies as instructed for only ages 3+, purchasing child-safe items, and being aware of allergy concerns.

20



MUSIC VIDEO All That I Am (Psalm 103:1)

[10 min]

Supplies

- "We Are God's People" (watch or download here)
- "Wild About Us!" (watch or download here)
- "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" (watch or download here)

<u>Tip</u>

• Don't have internet in your classroom? That's okay! You can choose your own worship songs from our Best Of Dig In Music DVD <u>here</u>.

Sing Songs to God

Sing the three songs in any order.



TALK-ABOUT VIDEO Young and Old

[10 min]

Supplies

• "Young and Old" teaching video (watch or download here)

<u>Tips</u>

- Talk-About Videos may work for preschoolers, but they're geared more toward elementary kids. If you find that the videos aren't hitting the mark for your preschoolers, try using the Preschool Puppet Skit activity block instead.
- Don't have internet in your classroom? That's okay! You can download the videos before class using the "download" button at the link provided, or purchase DVDs <u>here</u>.

Discuss and Watch "Young and Old"

Say: Today we're learning that <u>God loves every age</u>. He wants a friendship with people of every age—young and old. We're going to watch a video where people young and old answer some questions about God and the Bible. First, let's see how *you'd* answer those questions.

Ask: • What's a Bible story you like?

- What's Jesus like? Tell me about him.
- What might Jesus say about you?
- What do you do to show God you love him?
- What can you teach someone who's younger than you?
- What have you learned from someone who's older than you?

Say: Let's see what people of all different ages said when we asked them questions like these.

Watch "Young and Old."

Ask: • Which answers did you like best?

· What did you learn from someone in this video?

Say: The people in this video are young, old, and in between. But you know what they have in common? God loves them all, and they all love God! We can learn from people who are younger than we are and people who are older than we are. And we can *teach* people who are older or younger than we are, too! <u>God loves every age</u>!



[5 min]

07/13/2025

Supplies

Bible

Welcome

- Thank kids for coming.
- Just for fun, have preschoolers give someone a "round" of applause by clapping in a circle in front of a friend.
- Make announcements.
- Introduce new kids.
- Celebrate birthdays by teaching preschoolers to do a "happy birthday" wave.
- Collect the offering.

Introduce the Lesson

Say: <u>God loves every age</u>. That means he loves babies, and he loves preschoolers like you! He also loves older children and teenagers. And he loves adults like your mommy, grandpa, and aunt. Today we'll read about a young man who God loved. His friend sent him some letters to remind him that <u>God loves every age</u>.

Share

- Share about something you've received in the mail.
- In leader-led small groups, have preschoolers share about things *they or their parents* have gotten in the mail.
- After small groups have discussed, have adult or teen helpers share with the whole group what they talked about in their small groups.

Summarize

Open a Bible, and say: No matter what age we are, it's fun to get letters or packages in the mail—especially when they have a special message like "<u>God</u> <u>loves every age</u>." The Bible shares the letters one young man got in the mail. The letters remind us that <u>God loves every age</u>. Through the Bible, God tells us all about how much he loves each of us. Let's listen to God as we hear from the Bible today.

Pray, thanking God that he loves every age.



DEEPER BIBLE Dress-Up Time!

[15 min]

Supplies

- variety of dress-up clothes
- red bulletin board paper
- music
- music player
- partition

Easy Prep

- Use the red bulletin board paper to create a "red carpet" for kids to walk on.
- Set up a partition behind which kids dressing up can privately choose their outfits before they reveal them. Place the dress-up clothes there.

<u>Tip</u>

You can purchase downloadable music and other items to enhance your DIG IN program <u>here</u>.

Dress Up and Walk the Red Carpet

Divide preschoolers into groups of five or six, and, if possible, have a helper sit with each group.

Say: Today we're talking about people who are different ages—babies, preschoolers, big kids, and grown-ups. When we're little, it's fun thinking about what we want to be when we're older and grown up, like a firefighter or ballerina or astronaut. Let's take turns right now dressing up like what we want to be when we're older!

Choose one child from each group to go to the dress-up pile first and put on an outfit to show what the child wants to be when he or she grows up. Have an adult or teen helper assist the children as they get in costume.

While children are waiting for the others to choose an outfit, have them make guesses about what they think the children behind the partition want to be when they're older.

After kids choose their outfits, play a fun song and have kids walk in a line on the red carpet to show off their dress-up clothes. As these kids walk the red carpet, invite the other children to cheer the walkers along.

After a pass or two along the red carpet, turn down the song and have the children take turns sharing what they want to be someday.

Then have preschoolers return the clothes to the pile, and choose a different child from each group to have a turn. Continue until every child has had a turn to dress up and walk the red carpet. Rotate through several different songs so each group has a fresh song to walk the red carpet to. If you have a lot of children, you can repeat songs later on.

If time allows, let kids take more than one turn. It's okay for them to explore what they want to be by trying on different dress-up clothes.

20

Say: It's exciting to imagine what we might want to be when we're older and how we'll be able to help people as a doctor or teacher or scientist. Sometimes it might feel like we have to wait until we're older to be important or special. But God loves every age! You're just as important to God now as you were to him when you were a baby and as you'll be when you're older. And each of you is so important to your family and friends and teachers, just like Timothy was important and special to his friend Paul. God loves every age!



CORE BIBLE AT HOME Not available for this age level.

[20 min]

To use this feature, please ask your DIG IN Director to create a **One Room** classroom. For instructions and tips on creating a classroom for at-home lessons, click <u>here</u>.

CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

Acts: God Uses Timothy's Gifts (Acts 16:1-4; 1 Timothy 4:6-16; 6:11-21; 2 Timothy 1:3-18)

[20 min]

Supplies

- Bible
- "Places" handout (1 copy) (download here)
- "Letters to Timothy" handout (1 copy) (download here)
- blue copy paper and red copy paper (1 piece of each color)

Easy Prep

- Print the first page of the "Letters to Timothy" handout on blue copy paper. Print the second page of the handout on red copy paper. Cut apart each handout on the dashed lines. Determine where you'll end up for the "Find Special Letters" section of the activity, and then hide each cut piece of the handout in a different place in that area.
- Hang each place from the "Places" handout in a different area of the room.

Travel and Share

Gather the children in one area of the room. Say: **Today we'll learn that** <u>God</u> <u>loves every age</u>. We'll hear about a special friendship between a man named Paul and his friend Timothy, who was younger. Paul helped Timothy know that he could do important things for God, even though he was young. Paul and Timothy's friendship helps us know that <u>God loves every age</u>.

Have the children stand. Show the Bible, and say: **The Bible says Paul and Timothy both loved God and Jesus. They wanted to tell others about God and Jesus. So when they met and became friends, they traveled around to new places to tell people that God loves them.**

Lead the children in marching around the room. Start singing the following verses to the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb." Encourage the children to join in with the song.

Paul and Timothy shared God, They shared God, they shared God. Paul and Timothy shared God With people all around.

After marching around the room several times and singing the verse from the song many times, stop at one of the pictures from the "Places" handout and have the children sit near it. Say: **Paul and Timothy stopped in many places to tell people about God's great big love for them. We can do that, too. It doesn't matter how old we are—whether we're little children or old grandmas or grandpas, we can tell others about God's great big love. <u>God loves every age</u>.**

Point to the picture. Say: **We stopped at** [place]. Let's tell the good news that <u>God loves every age</u> while we're here. Encourage the children to tell two or three others that God loves them.

After children share, lead them in traveling to another picture from the "Places" handout. On your way to the new place, lead children in singing the song they learned a few more times.

Paul and Timothy shared God, They shared God, they shared God. Paul and Timothy shared God With people all around.

At the second location, remind children that Paul and Timothy traveled to many places to tell about God's love. Have the children find one or two other children, ask their age, and then say, "God loves [age of the other child]-year-olds!"

Say: <u>God loves every age</u>. He loves 3-year-olds, 4-year-olds, 5-year-olds, and 6-year-olds. Invite the children to say ages of other people they know.

Say: God loves all those people because God loves every age.

Lead the children to the third location, and sing the song along the way. At the third place, encourage children to tell three others that Jesus loves them, too.

Finally, lead the children to the fourth place, and sing the song along the way. At the fourth place, encourage children to tell one or two other children by name that God loves them—for example, they would say, "God loves James!"

Find Special Letters

Lead the children to the place where you hid the letters. On your way, lead children in singing the song again.

Say: After Paul and Timothy finished traveling together, Timothy lived in one place, where he told people about Jesus week after week. But Paul kept traveling. While Paul was away, he sent Timothy letters that reminded Timothy of God's great big love for everyone.

Let's sing a song about that. Sing the following verse to the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb." Encourage the children to join in with the song.

Letters came to Timothy, Timothy, Timothy. Letters came to Timothy To tell about God's love.

Say: We can read the two letters that Paul sent Timothy in the Bible. I think I left some copies of those letters around here somewhere. Invite one child to look for just one section of the letter. As the child looks, encourage the others to sing the verse of the song they just learned.

When the child finds a section of the letter, take it and read it aloud. Explain what it means.

Here are some suggested ways to explain to preschoolers what each section of the letter means:

- If the letter says, "Put your hope in God. He is the one who can give you everything you need. He loves you. He saves you," you can say: We can trust God because he'll take care of us and give us everything we need.
- If the letter says, "Don't let others look down on you because you're young. God loves every age. It doesn't matter what age you are; you can tell people about the way God loves you," you can say: <u>God loves every age</u>. He loves everyone and wants us to tell others about his love.
- If the letter says, "God hasn't given us a spirit of fear. He gives us power and love," you can say: God doesn't want us to be afraid. He wants us to be sure he'll take care of us. He'll give us power and help us love others.

• If the letter says, "Trust Jesus, who is able to take care of you. He loves you so much!" you can say: Jesus will take care of us, too, because he loves us so much!

Continue having kids find sections of the letters and having the others sing the verse as they wait for them to be found. Read and explain each one before having kids find the next section. Invite children to piece together the letters, based on color. Point out that the Bible has two letters that Paul wrote to Timothy. Say: **We found all the pieces of each letter. Paul wrote to Timothy and let him know that <u>God</u> loves every age.**

Sing a Song

Say: We already learned the first two parts of our song about how Paul and Timothy traveled around to tell people about God's love and how Paul sent letters to Timothy. Let's learn the last part of our song about God's love for every age.

Sing the following song to the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb." Encourage the children to join in with the song.

Paul and Timothy shared God, They shared God, they shared God. Paul and Timothy shared God With people all around.

Letters came to Timothy, Timothy, Timothy. Letters came to Timothy To tell about God's love.

We can put our hope in God, Hope in God, hope in God. We can put our hope in God. God loves every age.

Sing the song several times until the children begin to catch on to the new verses.



LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP Pray for Every Age

Supplies

• Friends With God Story Bible (optional) (order here)

Act and Pray

Gather the children in a circle. Say: **Today we learned that** <u>God loves every</u> <u>age</u>. How old are you? Invite children to shout their ages. Good news! God loves every [age of kids in your class] because <u>God loves every age</u>! Let's play a game where we'll think about people who are different ages.

- Whisper an age group to one child in your group, and then have that child try to act out that age. For example, you might say babies, teenagers, parent age, or great-great-grandparent age. Help kids think of ways to act out the age, if needed. For example, a baby might cry, a parent might hold a baby, a great-grandparent might use a walker, and a teenager might talk on the phone.
- Invite the children to guess what age the child is acting out. After about 20 seconds, let the child share what age group he or she was acting out.
- Lead children in a prayer for people in that age group. Encourage children to say the names of people they know in that age group. You might pray: God, thank you for babies. Help them grow up to be healthy and strong. We know you love babies!
- Repeat this process several times, each time asking a new child to act out a different age group.

Close in Prayer

Say: <u>God loves every age</u>. He can use babies to show his love as much as he can use great-great-grandparents. Even though Timothy was younger than Paul, God used him to share love with others.

Close in prayer, thanking God for loving every age and that he can use every age, no matter what.

If you have extra time, spend some time reading today's Bible story, "My To-Do List for God—by Timothy," from the *Friends With God Story Bible*.

Thank the children for coming to church today. Let them know that you hope to see them back next week.



OBJECT LESSON Big Drop, Little Drop

[10 min]

Supplies

- several pairs of big and little classroom objects (5 pairs of objects for every 10 kids)
- 2 step stools

Easy Prep

• Gather several pairs of objects that have both a big and little version. Examples include a big and little crayon, big and little balls, big and little craft sticks, big and little toy cars, big and little books, and big and little blocks.

Observe Objects

Say: Look at these things I've collected. One is big, and the other is little. Ask: • If we drop them, which one do you think will fall to the floor faster? Invite kids' responses. Let's drop them and see!

Drop Objects

- Choose two kids to begin. Give one a small object and the other its corresponding bigger version.
- Help the two kids get up on separate, side-by-side step stools and hold out the objects so they are at the same height above the ground.
- Have everyone help you count to three, and then have the two kids simultaneously drop their objects.
- Invite kids to talk about whether they think one hit the floor before the other did. Then point out that the objects hit the floor at the exact same time.
- Choose two different kids, and give them a different pair of objects. Repeat the activity until each child has had a turn to drop something.

Talk About It

Say: It didn't matter if the objects were little or big—everything hit the floor at the same time! Sometimes we call young kids "little kids" and older people "big people." God loves little and big people the same. In our Bible story, Timothy and Paul both loved God and told others about Jesus. It didn't matter that Timothy was younger than Paul. <u>God loves every age</u>. HIGH-ENERGY GAME The People God Loves

Play a Game Like The Farmer in the Dell

Say: People in families have different ages. Some are older like grandparents, and some are young like babies! Let's circle up and play a fun game where you'll form a family and pretend to be different ages.

- Have kids form a circle.
- Choose one person to be the "brother" and stand in the middle of the circle.
- Lead kids in singing the chorus to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell" as they gallop in one direction around the circle. The child in the middle will also gallop but in the opposite direction.

The people God loves, The people God loves. God loves every age. The people God loves.

• Once kids are able to follow along with the chorus, have the child in the middle choose one child to be the sister, and have that child gallop with the first child in the inner circle as you lead kids in the following:

The brother picks a sister, The brother picks a sister. God loves every age. The brother picks a sister.

The people God loves, The people God loves. God loves every age. The people God loves.

- Continue with the same process, adding a child for each of the following verses. (Replace the words in the verse with the ones in the list.) Smaller groups may omit verses, and larger groups may have kids choose more than one child to join the center during each verse.
 - \circ The sister picks the mom.
 - The mom picks the baby.
 - The baby picks the dad.
 - The dad picks the uncle.
 - The uncle picks the aunt.
 - The aunt picks the grandpa.
 - The grandpa picks the grandma.
- Repeat the game more than once, if time allows.

Talk About It

Say: In our game, we picked family members. Some were older, and some were young, but everyone was important. <u>God loves every age</u>. It doesn't matter if we're 3 or 93; God loves us so much! Invite kids to give themselves a hug from God.



LOW-ENERGY GAME From Babies to Grandparents

[10 min]

Supplies

- "People" handouts (download here) (1 for every 5 kids)
- red and pink paper

Easy Prep

- Cut hearts from red and pink paper. Then cut the hearts in half like puzzle pieces, making zigzags or rounded edges as you cut.
- Create sets of hearts by cutting apart the pictures of people from the handout and gluing each picture to half of a heart. On the other half, use a marker to write that person's approximate age. Ideas include
 - o 1 for baby
 - o 5 for preschooler
 - 10 for elementary-age child
 - o 15 for teenager
 - o 35 for parent
 - o 65 for grandparent

Put Heart Pieces Together

Say: Look at these puzzle pieces. Let's see if we can match pictures of people with their ages to make hearts!

- Form small groups of five kids, and give each group a set of hearts. Assign an adult or teen helper to each group.
- Mix up the hearts and arrange them on the floor, facing up.
- Choose one child to go first and choose a picture and then the age that matches. Kids may not recognize the number, but picking one that fits together with the chosen picture piece will help.
- Give each child a turn to pick and match a person with an age. If time permits, mix up the hearts and play again.

Talk About It

Ask: • Look at all our pictures. Which age would you like to be? Why? Hold up the picture of the age *you'd* choose, and tell kids why you picked that age. Perhaps you'd like to be 10 so you could ride a bus to school again.

Say: Sometimes people want to be older, and sometimes they want to be younger. But no matter how old you are, God loves you. <u>God loves every</u> age—from babies to grandparents!



CRAFT Stacking Cups

Supplies

- 3-ounce cups (1 per child)
- 5-ounce cups (1 per child)
- 8- or 9-ounce cups (1 per child)
- 16-ounce cups (1 per child)
- "Every Age" handouts (1 per child) (download here)
- crayons or markers
- child-safe scissors
- glue sticks

Easy Prep

• Make a sample craft to show preschoolers.



Make Stacking Cups

Say: <u>God loves every age</u>. He loves babies. Set out the sample cup with the baby picture. He loves kids. Set out the sample child cup. God loves mommies and daddies. Set out the sample adult cup. And God loves grandmas and grandpas. Set out the largest cup. Our craft today can remind us that <u>God loves</u> <u>every age</u> and that everybody is so special and important to him.

• Give each preschooler a handout, and let children color each of the four pictures.

- While preschoolers work, ask them about people they know who are similar ages to the people represented in the pictures.
- Let preschoolers cut out the pictures from their handouts once they've finished coloring.
- Give each preschooler one of each size cup, and have children turn the cups upside down.
- Have preschoolers glue the baby picture to the 3-ounce cup, the child picture to the 5-ounce cup, the grown-up picture to the 8/9-ounce cup, and the senior citizen picture to the 16-ounce cup.

Play With Cups

After preschoolers have finished making their crafts, let them play with the cups by stacking them with the largest cup on the bottom and smallest cup on top and by nesting the cups inside one another.