

TIMOTHY: COMPANIONSHIP AND ENCOURAGEMENT

Team time topic talk

There are two things that stand out about Timothy. First, he has a dual heritage, with a Jewish mother and a Greek father. Second, he is incredibly young to be Paul's companion on his travels and sharing his first imprisonment in Rome. Paul shows his deep regard and love for Timothy as a current and future leader of the church as he writes two letters to him in prison, encouraging him in his ministry and calling him 'my beloved son'.

Paul's support does not mean that it was all easy for Timothy in his ministry. To make Timothy more acceptable to Jewish Christians, Paul had him circumcised as a young man – a painful and dangerous operation. By doing this, he hoped that Timothy would be more acceptable as a leader in the burgeoning Jesus movement for those who were uncomfortable with Gentile Christians.

We also learn that Paul sent him to Ephesus to lead the church, and to deal with some of the elders who were teaching things Paul did not approve of. Paul's letter to him acknowledges Timothy's struggles to get others to respect his leadership because of his age – even when he has Paul's explicit backing.

It seems the more things change, the more they stay the same. In our churches, we often try to downplay difference so that others who are disturbed by it are placated. We often talk about our young folk being the future of the church, ignoring they are already our present and must be treated as such. Those of us in authority in the Church would do well to ponder how we often unwittingly downplay rather than celebrate diversity, and how we often try to entertain our young people rather than taking them seriously. How often do we downplay difference rather than celebrate diversity in our churches?

- a) How seriously do we take young people in our local church? Is our aim to entertain them, or to take them seriously as people with needs, aspirations and opinions of their own?
- b) What are our own struggles with accepting difference? How can we overcome our own fears about accepting others as an equal co-heir of grace?
- c) What do we say to other people who are uncomfortable with difference? It can be hard to adjust our thinking and realise we haven't always been fair to others. How could you help someone to change their thinking and attitudes so they are fairer to others?

Take some time to pray together, for God to help you listen to and learn from the children in your holiday club session today, to help you to enable them to hear God's word and share it through your conversations together. Ask God to help you to avoid being a stumbling block that hinders children coming to God, but rather to be an enabler, an advocate, an encourager. Confess any difficulties that you have with accepting difference, and be renewed by God's forgiveness.



Detectives' den

Arrival activity

Make a cheerleader's pom-pom by sticking strips of scrap paper around one end of a cardboard tube.

Wave it in the air and cheer as each new person arrives. You could even make up a group cheer.

Case file update

For activities, see urc.org.uk/holiday-club



Detective Briefing

Timothy: Companionship and encouragement

Sketch – Timothy speaking to the children

Characters – Timothy, Eunice and Lois

You will need to make the badges that he shows.

As Eunice and Lois give Timothy badges, they can make a fuss over him, and get the children involved in giving him the badges and cheering each time.

Timothy can be very proud but lose his confidence – the children can encourage him to keep going.

Timothy: Hello. My name's Timothy, which means Precious to God. (He is wearing a badge – Precious)

I live here with my grandmother Lois and my mum Eunice. (They enter with a basket of badges for him)

I'm a Christian. My mum and nana have taught me about Jesus and how to live the way he wants me to. Even though I'm still very young, I'm going to teach others about God too.

Lois: Timothy, I'm so proud of you, you are so kind and helpful. (Badge – Kind and helpful)

Eunice: I love you, Timothy; you love God and others can see it. (Badge – Love God)

Lois: Everyone looks up to you, you are such a good example. (Badge – Good example)

Eunice: You are a natural leader too – you are going to do great things. (Badge – Leader)

Lois: I know you are such a good friend to people; Paul is very impressed with you and wants you to help the new Christians. (Badge – Helper)

Eunice: Paul has some big jobs for you to do. You will go to faraway places, and teach others about God. (Badge – Missionary)

Timothy looks at all his badges

Timothy: Wow, thank you so much everybody, look at all these amazing badges. I feel ready for anything now. Right, here I go... I'm going to go out and teach people about God. I'm going to love them and help them and be a good leader, even though I'm only young. Wish me luck everybody!

Timothy leaves the room, and quickly returns, looking stressed and unhappy.

Eunice and Lois ask him what happened

Eunice and Lois: Timothy, what's wrong, what has happened?

As Timothy speaks, he removes the badges and throws them in the bin.

Timothy: It was really hard. When I spoke, the people didn't listen to me. They said, 'Why should we listen to you? You are just a kid.' I forgot my words when I was speaking, and I got angry and upset, and sometimes I shouted. I don't know why I even tried. I should have known better. I'm just a child. God can't use me. I can't be a leader or a good example. I'm not doing it. I give up.

Eunice and Lois get the children involved in giving Timothy encouragement and reasons to not give up...

Eunice: Timothy, yes, you are young, but you mustn't let that stop you. Do you remember what Paul wrote to you? Do not let people look down on you because you are young, but show them how strong you are in how you live your life. Be an example. Come on children, let's give Timothy some encouragement.

As the children encourage Timothy, he can be given his badges to put back on

Timothy: Thank you everybody, you are right. I'm not going to give up. I'm going to keep going and if I can do it, so can you. Let's all go out and be the best we can be. Loving God and loving others. CHEER



Bible Verse: 1 Thessalonians 5:11 'So comfort each other and give each other strength.'



Video

Timothy's story by Crossroads Kids www.youtube.com/watch?v=w4GSFluzBSA

Detectives investigate

Games: Mini challenges

Have a basket of mini challenges. Each person in turn chooses one and does it, as everyone else cheers them on. The challenges could be things like do ten push ups; juggle; do 50 keepy-uppies; limbo under a pole; move the Maltesers from one plate to another using a straw; sit still for a minute.

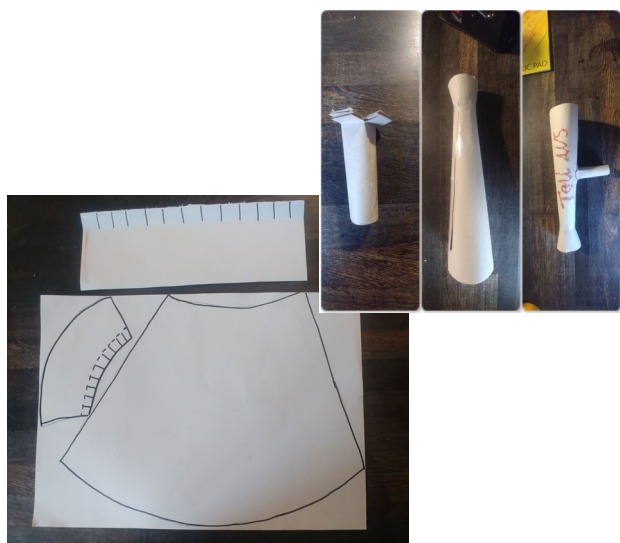
Craft: Loud Hailer

You will need:

- A large square piece of card or stiff paper (the inside of a wrapping paper roll is ideal)
- Kitchen roll inner or tube of cardboard

What you do:

Mark out a cone shape for the main body of the loud hailer, and a much smaller one for the mouthpiece. Cut out the large cone shape and tape together.



To make the mouthpiece, cut out the small cone shape and fold the inner edge, snipping around the edge to create tags to secure the mouthpiece to the body. Roll it into a cone, and measure it in the

body before taping together. Once it is the correct size, place tape to the tags and secure in place; tape it to the main body inside and out for security.

Use a kitchen roll inner or cut out a rectangle of card and roll it up to create a handle. Snip down about 1cm to create tags, and secure to the main body with tape by flattening the tags against the body and taping it in place.

Decorate it.

Reflection

Timothy is a young person called by God to lead a church, even when older people grumbled about it. God blessed Timothy with the skills he needed to do God's work, encouraged by his older friend Paul.

- Like Timothy, how important do you feel to your church?
- Who encourages you?

Small group prayer activity

In our investigations, we haven't taken any fingerprints yet. Our fingerprints are unique to each of us. Each one of us is made as an individual – there is nobody in the world like us – and we all have our part to play in God's plan. We should be encouraged by this. Use your fingerprint to make pictures of the people you want to encourage, and ask God to use your unique skills to help them.

Recipe: Friendship biscuits

You can buy digestive biscuits, prepared icing, and decorations. Get the children to put two different toppings on to signify a friend they have. Otherwise, you can make the biscuits and the icing. This recipe should make 16 biscuits.

Ingredients

- 110g (4 oz) butter
- 55g (2 oz) Fairtrade sugar
- Few drops vanilla extract
- 2 1/2 tablespoons water
- 175g (6 oz) plain flour (gluten free, if needed)
- Chocolate chips
- Fairtrade sultanas



Directions

- Preheat the oven to 150°C / Gas mark 2.
- Add butter and sugar to a bowl, and beat well until light and fluffy.
- Add the vanilla and the water, and mix.
- Add the chocolate and the raisins, and then add the flour and mix well.
- Roll out to about 5mm on a floured work surface. Cut into shapes and place on a greased baking tray.
- Bake for 25 minutes, or until golden brown. If they are mini biscuits, about 15 minutes or less.

Detective update

Interviewing the suspect: MG interviews Timothy

MG: Oi! Hello, who are you then?

Timothy: I'm Timothy, 19 years old and I live with my mum and my nana. Who are you?

MG: I ask the questions round here! What's your story then? What do you do?

Timothy: I'm a leader. I run a small church. Have you heard about Jesus? Are you a believer?

MG: I ask the questions. Aren't you too young to be a leader?

Timothy: Well, that's what some people say, but I do my best.

MG: Do you like being a leader, then?

Timothy: Yes, but not all the time. Sometimes I feel I'm not good enough.

MG: Perhaps you are not good enough; aren't you scared of what people might say?

Timothy: I try to be brave. God gave me this job to do.

MG: What are you going to do then?


Timothy: Well, I guess I need to be the best I can be, and remember all the advice and kind things people have said to me over the years.

MG: Are you ready to be a leader?

Timothy: Yes, no, oh I'm not sure, but I know it's what I'm supposed to be doing. So I'm going to try my best, remembering that God is with me.

MG: Now I can see, I know who you are. You're one of us!

Song




Hints are everywhere we look as we investigate this book
We must search to see if we can find the truths
With a magnifying glass, and the right amount of sass
We will be a group of modern supersleuths
At the time when his adventure just begun
And when he answered God's call, it was helping his friend Paul
He showed courage and encouraged him
To share God's love with all

Interviewing the detectives

MG asks questions of the detectives or holds a quiz to find out what they've learned and what conclusions they've come to.

Closing prayer



Every child is given a paper strip on which is written the name of another child within the holiday club. They are asked to write or draw something nice/encouraging about that person. The strips of paper are formed into a paper chain and placed in a circle in the middle, the last strip of paper forming a loop which joins both ends together.

God, help us to support each other and build each other up so that together we can all be encouraged. Amen

