Preschool–Grade 6

Timothy

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: You are not too young to know God's Word and live it. Faith is passed on, and God gives power, love and a sound mind, not fear.
Bible passage: 2 Timothy 1:1–7 and 3:14–15, with Acts 16:1–2. Students read them out loud themselves.
Memory verse: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." *2 Timothy 3:15 (KJV)* and "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." *2 Timothy 1:7 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read Acts 16:1–3, 2 Timothy 1:1–7, 2 Timothy 3:14–17 and 1 Timothy 4:12. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses.

1. Opening game: Too Young? (5–10 minutes)

Read each one and let students vote with a thumb up (a kid can do this), a thumb down (only adults) or sideways (not sure): 1) Memorize a whole chapter of the Bible. 2) Lead a prayer in class. 3) Tell a friend about Jesus. 4) Be an example to grown-ups. 5) Read the whole Bible. Ask: *Why do people think kids are too young to take God seriously?* Read 1 Timothy 4:12: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." Say: "Paul wrote that to Timothy. Today we read more of Paul's letters to him."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Read out loud: Acts 16:1–2, then 2 Timothy 1:1–7 and 3:14–15. Students take turns, a verse or two each. Old words in these passages:

- **Timotheus** (Acts 16:1): Timothy; **well reported of** (16:2): people spoke well of him
- **an apostle** (2 Timothy 1:1): one Jesus sent to preach; **dearly beloved** (1:2): much loved
- **without ceasing** (1:3): without stopping; **remembrance**: remembering
- **mindful of thy tears** (1:4): remembering your tears
- **unfeigned** (1:5): real, not pretend; **dwelt**: lived; **I am persuaded**: I am sure
- **wherefore** (1:6): so; **stir up**: wake up, keep it going
- **a sound mind** (1:7): a mind that thinks clearly and right
- **continue thou** (3:14): keep on; **assured of**: sure of
- **wise unto salvation** (3:15): wise about how to be saved

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Look closer. Point out these details with the class:

- **A spiritual son.** Timothy's father was a Greek (Acts 16:1), but Paul called him "my dearly beloved son" (2 Timothy 1:2). Paul wrote elsewhere that Timothy served with him "as a son with the father" in the gospel (Philippians 2:22).
- **Three generations.** The faith "dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also" (1:5). Faith lived first in his family, but each person had to believe for themselves: "in thee also."
- **Not fear.** Paul remembered Timothy's tears (1:4) and then wrote 1:7. God "hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."
- **Who taught you matters.** "Knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (3:14). Timothy knew the people he had learned from.
- **Scripture's purpose.** The holy scriptures make us "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (3:15). Read 3:16–17 too: all scripture is given by inspiration of God.

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. Why do you think Paul started by telling Timothy he prayed for him "night and day" (1:3)?
2. What does "unfeigned faith" (1:5) look like in a young person? What does pretend faith look like?
3. Lois and Eunice believed first. Why did Timothy still need his own faith ("in thee also")?
4. What makes young people afraid to live for God? How does 2 Timothy 1:7 answer that?
5. Who are the people you have learned God's Word from (3:14)? What did they do that made you trust it?
6. What is one step you can take to know the scriptures better this month?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words: **thou hast known** means you have known, **the holy scriptures** means God's Word, and **wise unto salvation** means wise about how to be saved. In 2 Timothy 1:7, **hath not given** means has not given, and **a sound mind** means a mind that thinks clearly and right.
Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say 2 Timothy 3:15 this week; keep working on 2 Timothy 1:7 next week too.

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5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "The scriptures make us wise unto salvation, so let's hear what they say. God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the Holy Ghost, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5). Faith can be taught at home, but every one of us has to obey the gospel for ourselves."
Pray with the students, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. Who has been a "Lois" or "Eunice" to me, passing God's Word on? What would I like to thank them for?
2. What am I afraid of when it comes to living for God? Write 2 Timothy 1:7 under it.
3. Write a short plan to read or learn God's Word this week (when, where, how long).
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: read 2 Timothy 1 at home, and thank one person who taught you God's Word.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. Thank You for the people who passed Your Word on to us. Make our faith unfeigned, give us power, love and a sound mind instead of fear, and help us know Your Word all our lives. In Jesus' name, amen."

Teacher note: this lesson leaves out that Paul circumcised Timothy (Acts 16:3). Students will read "by the putting on of my hands" (2 Timothy 1:6); the passage doesn't say what the gift was, so don't add to it. Some students have no believing family. Say plainly that a teacher, a pastor or a friend at church can be their "Lois and Eunice", and never shame a student's family.

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