

LESSON 70

Character Counts

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-7



BIBLE TRUTH

LEADERS LEAD BY EXAMPLE

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read 1 Timothy 3 from the Scriptures or read story 148, “Character Counts,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 15 MIN

Lead by Example

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 15 MIN

Prayer for Pastors

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase markers
- ✓ card(s) for your pastor(s) to let them know that the class prayed for them

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

7. ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 70—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 15 MIN

Remember the Qualifications

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ prizes for correct answers

TOTAL 90 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Those appointed to pastoral ministry must demonstrate a life of godliness—Timothy helped Paul care for the local churches that started from Paul’s gospel preaching. One of Timothy’s responsibilities was to establish leaders in those local churches. Paul knew that leaders had to lead by example. That is the way Jesus led. Jesus told his disciples to “follow me” (Mark 2:14). Paul told the Corinthians, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1). Paul knew it was important to set a good example for the church. Paul wanted Timothy to be certain that anyone desiring to lead the church be qualified to do so. Nearly all of the qualifications Paul mentioned relate to a one’s character. The whole list can be summed up in this one: “an overseer must be above reproach” (1 Timothy 3:2). Paul knew that if a leader led a life of sin, the people following would lead lives of sin. The only qualification, listed here, that has to do with personal gifts is the ability to teach. To lead a church a pastor must have a godly character.

Leaders must be worthy of respect—Not only must the pastors in the church live godly lives, but the other leaders and their spouses must lead godly lives as well. Just as the pastors are examples to the leaders they train, the other leaders are an example to the congregation. Paul understood that we grow, in part, by imitating other godly people. Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, told the Philippians, “Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us” (Philippians 3:17). All leaders must live lives worthy of emulating, and if they sin and do not repent, they should be willing to step aside from their position.

The congregation must follow the example of its leaders—The qualifications for leadership in 1 Timothy 3, should be used not only to judge our leaders, but also to judge ourselves. When Paul summarizes these instructions, he tells Timothy that he is giving them to him so that people “in the household of God” will know how to behave (1 Timothy 3:15). Paul’s goal is for everyone in the church to live godly lives. God is calling us all to live according to these standards because we all have someone looking up to us. Younger siblings look up to older brothers and sisters. Children look up to their parents. Younger men look up to older men and younger women look up to older women. New believers look up to those who are more mature in their faith. It is much easier to lead a godly life if everyone around you is leading a godly life.

Where Is the Gospel? _____

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

At the conclusion of Paul's exhortation to leaders and the church, Paul lists a confession of the mystery, or revealed secret, of godliness. Living godly lives can be a challenge, so Paul gives us the one key piece of information we need: Jesus. "He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory" (1 Timothy 3:16). Though the presentation is poetic, it is the gospel nonetheless.

Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Jesus loves the church and gave his life to save the lost and bring them into his family. He is the chief shepherd, and all the leaders under him must be able to lead by example so that those for whom he died will be well cared for. If it were not for Christ's death on the cross, which brings us redemption, there would be no church and no need for godly leaders.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read 1 Timothy 3 from the Scriptures or read story 148, "Character Counts," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 15 MIN

Lead by Example

This game is like Follow the Leader. Use it to talk about how we learn from example.

Arrange the class seated in a large circle. Tell the class that you are going to make a sign with your right hand. The person to your right should imitate what you do with your hand after he sees you do it. Each person around the circle should do the same. Tell everyone to only look down at the person's hand to their left. Each person should keep their hands on their laps until the person to their left shows the signal. The fun of this game is to see if the last person in the circle does the same sign as the first person did.

Then have the class try again, only this time send two signals around the circle. Then do four. See how many different hand signals you can send around the circle and how fast. Make the signals easy at first, and then try some more difficult ones.

TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2 15 MIN

Prayer for Pastors

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase markers
- ✓ card(s) for your pastor(s) to let them know that the class prayed for them

List the names of your pastors and leaders on the whiteboard. Take an extended time to pray for them. Encourage the students to pray using the list of qualifications from 1 Timothy 3. They could share prayers like, "Help our pastor to be a good husband and father," or "Help our leaders love Jesus more than they love money or possessions."

Pass around the card(s) for everyone to sign.

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 70—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- Tell the children what is written in the heart. Then ask them why God looks at our hearts.
(In our hearts he can see if we love him or the world.)
- What does it mean for man to look at the outward appearance?
(People think what is important is how good you look on the outside, but God knows that you can be dressed in the best clothes and still not love him in your heart.)
- What can we do to learn to love God more?
(We can obey our parents as they teach us about God. We can come to church where our teachers and pastors teach us about God. We can learn to read so that we can read the Bible for ourselves.)

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's Scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 15 MIN

Remember the Qualifications

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ prizes for correct answers

Review the qualifications of pastors from 1 Timothy 3 with your class by repeating the following list five times. The pastor should:

- Be above reproach—not be able to be reasonably accused of unrepentant sin
- Be the husband of one wife—not be married to two people at once
- Be temperate—not be rash or quick to judge
- Be self-controlled—control appetites and desires

Be respectable—be orderly and worthy of respect
Be hospitable—enjoy reaching out to guests in the home
Be able to teach—be able to communicate and teach God’s Word
Not be given to drunkenness—not get drunk with alcohol
Not be violent but gentle—not be given to anger or fits of rage
Not be quarrelsome—be a peacemaker
Not be a lover of money—not love riches or money
Manage his family well—effectively lead his family in the things of God
Have obedient children—have children who are respectful and receive correction
Not be a recent convert—have experience as a Christian
Have a good reputation with outsiders—be honorable towards all people
Not pursue dishonest gain—work faithfully for the money he receives
Hold to the truths of the faith—believe sound doctrine

Ask the class if they can remember any of the qualifications. Give a prize to each student who can remember a new qualification. Continue until they can’t remember any others. Review the list five more times and then do it all again, this time asking for children who have not guessed to provide you with one of the qualifications. Again, award prizes for correct answers. Once the class is well-acquainted with the list, see if they can tell you what the qualifications mean.

