

## CHARACTER COUNTS

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: 1 TIMOTHY 3



*Leaders in the church lead by example.*

## The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

### Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

**Pastors must be above reproach.** Some of the instructions that Paul gave Timothy were given to help him watch over the local churches under his care. Timothy helped Paul care for the local churches that sprung up from Paul's gospel preaching. One of Timothy's responsibilities was to establish leaders in those local churches. Paul wanted Timothy to be certain that any man desiring to lead the church be qualified to do so. Nearly all of the qualifications Paul mentioned relate to a man's character. The only qualification that has to do with a man's gifting is that he be "able to teach." Pastors must have very godly character to qualify to lead the church!

**Other leaders (in addition to pastors) and their wives must be worthy of respect.** Not only must the pastors in the church live godly lives, but the other leaders and the wives of leaders 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. He said, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." All leaders must live lives worthy of emulating, and if they fail, they should be willing to yield leadership to others better qualified. Paul also connects godly living with faith in Christ. Although we don't do good works to earn our salvation, good works are a product of our salvation. If a person claims to have faith, but has no works, James says that such faith is worthless and dead (James 1:26 and 2:17).

**The congregation must follow the example of its leaders.** When we read through the qualifications for leadership in 1 Timothy 3, we should not use this to judge our leaders, but to judge ourselves. When Paul summarizes these instructions, he tells Timothy that he is giving them to Timothy so that "people" will know how to behave. He does not gave them just to leaders. Paul's goal is that we all would live godly lives. We are to all set a worthy example for others to follow. It is much easier to lead a godly life if everyone around you is leading a godly life.

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### WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?

*Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in 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.

Jesus, who took on human flesh, was proven true by the working of the power of the Spirit of God. He accomplished the salvation of all men, which is now preached and believed among the nations. When His mission was completed, He was taken up in glory. Though the presentation was poetic, it was the gospel nonetheless.

Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, "I will build My church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." He loves the church, giving His life to save the lost and bring them into His church 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.

### ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

**Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.**

**Bible Passage: Psalm 144:1-4**

#### Connecting the passage to Christ:

The words in verse three are almost identical to the words of Psalm 8:4 and are quoted in Hebrews 2:6. Jesus is the Son of Man spoken of here. Jesus is also our Rock and our Deliverer. Jesus used the title Son of Man to describe Himself on multiple occasions. See Matthew 12:32 and Matthew 26:64.

#### Questions for reflection:

- Where do you see Jesus in Psalm 144:2? (Have your children look at the verse, encouraging them to reason for themselves.)
- What does Jesus deliver us from? (Jesus died on the cross for our sin to deliver us from evil, the bondage of sin, and the punishment of sin.)

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### SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

#### BE A DOER OF THE WORD

*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.*

### ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

*Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?*

#### MEMORIZE QUALIFICATIONS

**Supplies:**

prizes

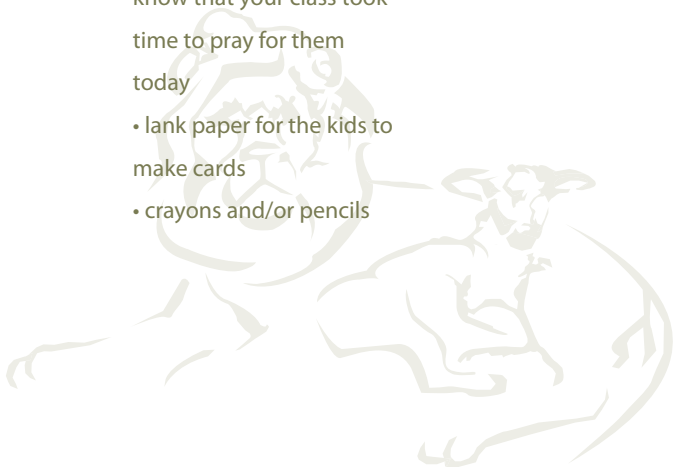
Give the class a few minutes to read through and try to memorize the various qualifications for leaders. Then have them close their Bibles. Take turns calling on boys and girls randomly. Alternate, boy, girl, boy, girl. If the person you call on gets a qualification correct, give his team five points. If he can't think of one, take one point away. The team in the end with the most points wins the prize. Then talk about each qualification and what it means.

#### PRAYER FOR PASTORS

**Supplies:**

- white board
- card (or cards) for your pastors and signed by each child to let them know that your class took time to pray for them today
- blank paper for the kids to make cards
- crayons and/or pencils

Put the names of your pastors and their wives on the board. Take an extended time to pray for them. Encourage the students to pray using the list of qualifications. 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."



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### LEAD BY EXAMPLE

This game is kind of a “follow the leader” game.

Arrange the class in a large circle. Tell the class that you are going to make a sign with your 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. The fun of this game is to see if the last person forms their hand in the same shape that you did.

Then have everyone look up and do the same thing again. They should only copy the hand signal or shape of the person next to them. See how many different hand signals you can send around the circle and how fast. Once you get four or five you can jump in to follow the person to your left and the signals will keep going around and around. Make the signals easy at first then try some more difficult ones.

### FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS

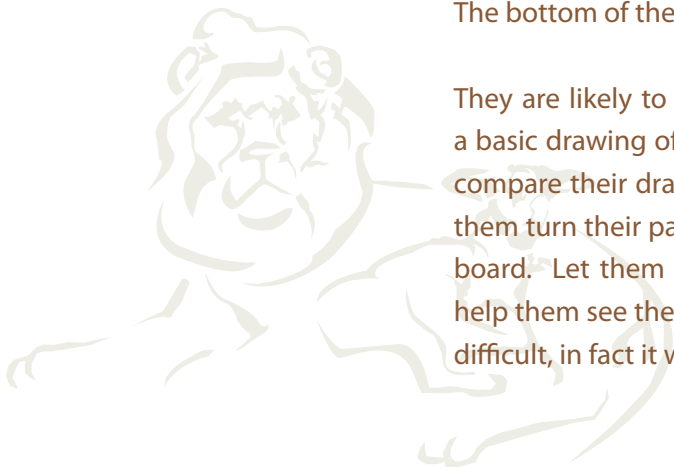
Drawing paper and pencils for the class

This exercise demonstrates that it is easier to follow someone's example rather than to follow written or oral instructions. That is why God gave us leaders who can lead by example.

Read the following instructions to your class and see if one of them can follow them:

Draw an eight inch horizontal line one third up from the bottom of your paper. Starting at the left end of the horizontal line, draw an arc which drops below the line and connects with the other end of the horizontal line. Find the center of your horizontal line and draw a vertical line to the top of the page. Draw a large triangle down from where you ended that line to just above your original horizontal line. The bottom of the triangle should be parallel with your original horizontal line.

They are likely to think this is so difficult. When they are done they should have a basic drawing of a sailboat with a mast and a triangular sail. Have the students compare their drawings. They will be surprised at how different they look. Have them turn their papers over. Then draw a picture of another sailboat on the white board. Let them copy the second boat on their papers and compare. This will help them see the value of leading by example. Although they thought it was too difficult, in fact it was very easy!



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### PRAYER

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

### IN CLASS PROJECT

Make a thank you card for your pastor or other leader in your church to thank them for being a good example of godliness to your church.

### FOR THE OLDER GRADES

#### WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO LEAD?

**Supplies:**

Paper and pencils

Review the qualifications of leadership one by one with your students so that they understand what the qualifications mean. Then have the children write encouragement notes to the pastors and their wives for leading by example.

Draw out the class regarding the challenge of qualifying for leadership. Help the class appreciate the leaders of your church.

Have the class compare this list with the list Paul gives to Titus in 1 Titus 1:6-9.



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### A LITTLE BIT MORE

#### The qualifications for leadership:

- Above reproach – not able to be reasonably accused
- Husband of one wife – not married to two people at once
- Temperate – not rash or quick to judge
- Self- controlled – able to control appetites and desires
- Respectable – orderly and worthy of respect
- Hospitable – enjoys reaching out to guests in the home
- Able to teach – able to communicate and teach God's Word
- Not give to drunkenness – does not get drunk with alcohol
- Not violent but gentle – not given to anger or fits of rage
- Not quarrelsome - a peacemaker
- Not a lover of money – does not love riches or money
- Manage his family well – effectively leads his family in the things of God
- Obedient children – children are respectful and receive correction
- Not a recent convert- should have some experience as a Christian
- Good reputation with outsiders – must be honorable with all men
- Not pursue dishonest gain – works faithfully for the money he receives
- Hold to the truths of the faith - believes sound doctrine

#### Wives

- Worthy of respect – honorable
- Not malicious talkers, but temperate – slow and humble in their speech
- Trustworthy – able to be trusted in everything

