

Sketches of a Student

Travelling with Timothy

To find out about some characters in the Bible we have to become detectives, putting bits and pieces together. Timothy was a figure in the New Testament who features in the book of Acts and several of the letters - including two letters addressed directly to him. These character sketches include several clues about Timothy and where to find them in the Bible.

Paul travelled on to Derbe and Lystra, where a Christian named Timothy lived. His mother, who was also a Christian, was Jewish, but his father was a Greek.

All the believers in Lystra and Iconium spoke well of Timothy. The men who were taking Paul went with him as far as Athens and then returned to Berea with instructions from Paul that Silas and Timothy should join him as soon as possible. (Acts 16:1-2)

How would people be able to find out about you?

Timothy's family came from different backgrounds, this made no difference to his faith.

In what way *are* peoples' family backgrounds important?

Why do you think that Timothy was travelling around with Paul and Silas who had been Christians for much longer?

Would this be a good way to learn about faith?

Lord of us all,

You have made us all to be special in our own individual ways.

Help us to use our own gifts to the best of our abilities and to recognise and celebrate the gifts that others have been given.

Amen

Paul is a famous traveller in the New Testament who knew Timothy well and wrote many of the letters. In one of them (Galatians) he writes '...there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free people, between men and women; you are all one in union with Christ Jesus...' Is this understanding of diversity a good example to everyone?

Can you think of any current situations in which 'no difference' could be very important in reconciling people to each other?

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Do you like to be *part* of a team? Why?

Timothy, my fellow worker, sends you his greetings; and so do Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, fellow Jews. (Romans 16:21)

Do you like to *lead* teams? Why?

For this purpose I am sending to you Timothy, who is my own dear and faithful son in the Christian life. He will remind you of the principles which I follow in the new life in union with Christ Jesus and which I teach in all the churches everywhere. If Timothy comes your way, be sure to make him feel welcome among you, because he is working for the Lord, just as I am.

(1 Corinthians 4:17 & 1 Corinthians 16:10)

To think about:

Timothy has become a good student of the Christian faith. He has moved on and is now trusted to support Paul's own work. Timothy's gifts and abilities are recognised by Paul and the others—his background truly makes no difference.

What are you good at? Are you a practical person or do you prefer thinking activities?

Are there things that you feel you could teach others? What are they?

Paul writes of Timothy 'working for the Lord'.

Do we see people working for God today? What sorts of work do they do?

Do you ever work for God?

Lord our Teacher,

Thank you for the opportunities that we have to learn.

Help us, in our learning, to follow carefully the guidance of our teachers so that we, like Timothy, will be able to pass our learning on to others.

Amen

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Responsibility

Have you ever been trusted with a responsibility?
What was it?

We sent Timothy, our brother who works with us for God in preaching the Good News about Christ. We sent him to strengthen you and help your faith...
(1 Thessalonians 3:2)

How does it feel to be able to do something for yourself for the first time?

... I had to send Timothy. I could not bear it any longer, so I sent him to find out about your faith. Now Timothy has come back, and he has brought us the welcome news about your faith and love. He has told us that you always think well of us and that you want to see us just as much as we want to see you. *(1 Thessalonians 3:5&6)*

To think about:

Timothy comes back to Paul with good, welcome, news.

What is it like to hear good news?

What is it like to tell good news?

Do some people find it difficult to hear good things?

Why do you think that this is?

Are there things *you* believe that you feel are very important to share with others?
Is it easy to talk about what we believe?

Lord God,

As we find out more about Timothy we can see someone becoming more mature and firmer in their beliefs.

Guide us all as we grow so that we will understand our own beliefs better and learn how to appreciate the beliefs of others.

Amen

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Becoming a leader

Does age matter? If you have the skills and knowledge for a task should you always be encouraged to carry it out?

Do not let anyone look down on you because you are young, but be an example for the believers in your speech, your conduct, your love, faith, and purity. Until I come, give your time and effort to the public reading of the Scriptures and to preaching and teaching. *(1 Timothy 4:12&13)*

Do not neglect the spiritual gift that is in you, which was given to you when the prophets spoke and the elders laid their hands on you. Strive for righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness. Run your best in the race of faith, *(1 Timothy 4:14)*

Who do you look to as an example for how to behave?

To think about:

Timothy is encouraged to read and teach as a way of him building up his faith

What sorts of things do you do to make your understanding, or faith, grow?

How are you an example to others?

What do you think that a spiritual gift is?

What sorts of things might lead to righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness?

Are these the same as the fruit of the Spirit?

Dear Lord,

We pray that you will help us to accept ourselves as the people that you have made us to be.

Give us faith, love and endurance so that we can be gentle with one another in everything that we do.

Amen