



Honoring God

Goal: To give thanks for people who help us grow in faith.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In 2 Timothy 1:1-14

Timothy was an important early church leader. He was chosen to accompany Paul and Silas on their journeys to tell churches about the decisions of the council of Jerusalem (Acts 16:1, 4). Timothy endeared himself to Paul. In the second letter of Paul to Timothy, he is called “my beloved child” (2 Timothy 1:2). Gratitude to God is expressed for Timothy’s “sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you” (v. 5).

Timothy’s name means “honoring God.” Timothy seems to have lived up to his name. What influences helped Timothy become a person who honored God? He had those who encouraged him in his Christian faith. His mother and grandmother must have been the sources from whom Timothy heard about the grace and love of Jesus. They would have nurtured and encouraged him as he grew to become a fellow worker with the apostle Paul.

All of us need those who lead us in the ways of faith and help us grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. It is important to recognize who these special persons are, thank them, and thank God for them. In gratitude to God for this grace, we, too, can be encouragers and helpers to others as they grow in faith.

. . . In Your Children’s Experience

Children grow and thrive in their development with encouragement and support. As they grow in their abilities, as they try new things, they gain confidence. The same kind of confidence is needed in the spiritual formation of our children. They can be leaders in the church in witness and service to others, in worship leadership as adults share their lives with them.

Some children are fortunate to have families that are faithful in both church participation and helping their children grow spiritually. In addition to their families, children need church members to call them by name and encourage their gifts in ministry, especially so for those children whose parents or caregivers are not actively involved with any religious organization.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Sometimes all it takes is for someone to notice a child, to encourage her, to invite him to try something new. Today’s story challenges us to remember Timothy and those who helped him become one of the leaders of the church. As you prepare to tell the story of Timothy with the children, recall the children you lead and the leadership abilities you see in them. Like Paul, you can assure the children and their parents or caregivers of your daily prayers for them. Be ready on Sunday to greet them and name the ways each one is a leader in your church.

O God, I am thankful for the people who have helped me know you through your Son, Jesus. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies
(MM) 2023–2024

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) i–iv, 6, 15, 17, 20

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

story audio (see p. vii)

candle

green cloth

invited guest

ball

Responding

Claiming

biblical costumes

Praying

card-stock copies of
Grace Notes (GN) 1

Offering

children's Bibles

Extra

copies of **GN 2**

GATHERING IN GOD'S GRACE

Post **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule,” to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii–iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG** **T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

Before the session, invite a church member who would feel comfortable talking and interacting with the children as well as sharing some of their faith journey and people who taught them about Jesus. They will participate in “Preparing to Hear the Story” and “Reflecting on God’s Grace.”

“Offering God’s Grace” requires more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing



Greet the children by name and with the words “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.”

Invite the children to help prepare the worship space. Ask the children to include a Bible, a candle, and a green cloth.

Have the children draw pictures of their families, including parents, grandparents, caregivers, and other caring adults. Encourage them to talk about their pictures and then place them on the worship table.

Ask some children to help prepare today’s “Responding in Gratitude” activities. Suggest that one or two prepare to lead today’s singing. Invite a volunteer to practice the Scripture reading for today.

Singing

Gather around the worship table. Invite the children to name people, places, and things for which they thank and praise God.

Play “Praise God, Praise God”—**MM 7**; **SCM 15**. Encourage the children to sing along as a way to praise God.

Praying

Turn on the candle, reminding the children that the light represents Jesus the Christ and the light he brings into the world. Invite the children to repeat after you as you pray:

Be with us today, God. /
Quiet our minds so we can hear your voice. /
Open our hearts so we can receive your love. /
Create in us grateful hearts that care for your world. /
In Jesus’ name. /
Amen. /

LG *Focus on the children as gifted members of your community. Look for opportunities for them to express generosity, such as passing things out, holding visual aids, helping other children, or serving as the example in games and activities.*



Preparing to Hear the Story C M

Welcome your guest. Invite them to sit with the children in a circle to play a name game. Tell the group that they will hear a story about a young man named Timothy who remembered those who told him stories about Jesus. Explain that the game will help everyone think of people who have told them about Jesus. Begin by rolling your guest a ball and having them say their name. They then roll the ball to a child and the game continues. Encourage the children to roll the ball to someone who has not yet had a chance to play. There are three rounds:

- ▼ The first round: Ask everyone to say their name when they receive the ball.
- ▼ The second round: Ask everyone to say the name of a friend.
- ▼ The third round: Ask everyone to say the name of someone who has taught them about Jesus.

Make sure each child receives the ball and has a turn to answer each question if they wish.

Tell the group that the name *Timothy* means “honoring God.” Invite them to listen for ways Timothy honored God as you read the story.

Hearing the Story C

Invite one of the children to find 2 Timothy in the Bible. Have a couple of volunteers read 2 Timothy 1:1–14. Conclude the reading by saying, “Word of wisdom, Word of grace,” and prompt the children to say, “Thanks be to God.” Place the open Bible on the table.

Invite everyone to stand when they hear the name *Paul* and sit when they hear the name *Timothy* as you read the story again from **SCM 6** or listen to the story audio.

Reflecting on God’s Grace B C L

Invite your guest to say something about their faith life and the ways they have participated in the church. Encourage them to name some of the ways they have lived out their faith in the community. Encourage children to ask questions of your guest.

Explain that we know about Jesus because someone told us. We can tell others about how God loves us all. Invite the children to think about one person with whom they might share their faith over the next week.

Singing

Sing “Tell Me the Stories of Jesus”—**MM 16; SCM 17**—and celebrate how it is that, by hearing the stories of Jesus, we may tell them to others.

Thank your guest. Turn off the candle.



Today’s story can be found in *Growing in God’s Love: A Story Bible*, edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim (Louisville, KY: Flyaway Books, 2018), www.pcusastore.com.



T *For children who struggle with transitions, consider a quick physical activity—such as doing chair push-ups, squeezing hands together, and stretching.*

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and the time available.

Claiming God’s Grace

A B C L

Invite the children to dress up in biblical costumes and to work together to create a play about Timothy, Lois, Eunice, and Paul. You might want to begin by brainstorming different situations. Suggestions could include Paul and Timothy meeting for the first time, Lois and Eunice teaching Timothy about Jesus and God, or Timothy and Paul on a long journey to one of the other churches. Wonder:

- ▾ What advice might Lois and Eunice have given to Timothy?
- ▾ What might Lois and Eunice have talked about?
- ▾ What kinds of conversations might Timothy have had with Paul?
- ▾ What do you think Timothy would have been like as a friend?

Celebrating God’s Grace

M B

Play “I’ve Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy”—**MM 22**. Invite the children to take turns pretending to follow Jesus, leading the other children around the learning area while the music plays. Pause the music to signal the children to stop moving. When the music stops, the game leader tells how he or she follows Jesus.

After answering the question, that leader selects another child to be the leader.

Begin the music again, asking the children to follow the new leader until you pause the music again.

Continue playing until all have had a chance to be the leader.

Praying God’s Grace

LG

Give children the pictures they made in “Welcoming and Preparing.” Ask each child to say one thing she or he appreciates about someone in her or his picture. Suggest that, in the coming week, children make a point of showing that person they care about them by sending a card of appreciation.

Hand out card-stock copies of **GN 1**. Have the children fold the paper in half to make a card with the cross and banner on the front of the card. Invite them to decorate the front of the card.

Brainstorm together messages of appreciation and write suggestions on a sheet of newsprint for all to see and use to write inside the card. Assist with writing messages on cards as needed. Some ideas might be:



- Thank you for keeping the faith alive and passing it on to us.
- God loves you and so do I.
- Thanks for telling stories about God.

Close with a prayer:

Dear God, we are so glad you sent people like Lois, Eunice, Timothy, and Paul to share their faith with us. Help us to share God's love with (*each child names a person to whom he or she will give a card*). Bless us all as we share our faith with others. Amen.



Offering God's Grace

LG B

Before the session, arrange to have the children visit a group of younger children in the church.

Recall that Timothy had the support and encouragement of older people of faith—Paul, Eunice, and Lois. Tell the children that they can be like Eunice and Lois and tell younger children the stories of Jesus. Together visit the nursery and pair the children with younger children. Invite them to use the **SCM** stories or children's Bibles to retell some of the Bible stories they may know.

- *Providing opportunities for children to speak in front of others can be a fun way to learn from one another and can build children's confidence. However, it can also provide opportunities for unwanted behavior such as bullying or fidgeting. Help children focus on respecting others and being polite.*

Extra Activity

LD

Hand out copies of **GN 2**. Ask for a volunteer to read the word. Tell the children that they will write or draw an acrostic poem to help people know more about Jesus.

For this acrostic poem invite the children to use the first letter in each line. Suggest that younger children write a word or draw a picture that begins with each letter and tells a little about Jesus. Challenge the older children to write a phrase beginning with each letter. If the children need help, brainstorm words together then have the children work with the collected words.

For more of a challenge, turn the page over and make another poem, writing "Praise God" vertically down the page, then using those letters to make an acrostic poem.



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so you can send the Grace Sightings link, or invite them to visit www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads. Remind the parents and caregivers about the story audio (see p. vii).

LOVING AND SERVING GOD

Invite the children to help you clean up your space.

Celebrate together by singing “A Child of God”—**MM 21; SCM 20**. Ask the children to name one way they can honor God in the next week. One way they can honor God is by thanking their parents, grandparents, caregivers, and other adults who have taught them about Jesus. Invite them to find opportunities to do this in the coming week.

Bless each child as they leave, saying, “(Name), go out to share the love and grace of Jesus with everyone you meet.”












