

LESSON 70

Character Counts

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-7



BIBLE TRUTH

LEADERS LEAD BY EXAMPLE

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

SUPPLIES: twenty sheets of paper with a big red “S” drawn on each one

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: *The Gospel Story Bible* (story 148)

3. BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION 5 MIN

Where Is the Gospel?

SUPPLIES: Bible (ESV preferred); Review “Where Is the Gospel?” to prepare

4. SNACK QUESTIONS 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: snack food and beverage

5. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5–10 MIN

6. ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS (CHOOSE ONE OR MORE) 20–30 MIN

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES: coloring page for NT Lesson 70—one for each child; markers or crayons

Learning the Requirements

Praying for the Pastors

SUPPLIES: a photograph of each of the pastors serving at your church; a greeting card for each of the pastors

7. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

TOTAL 60–75 MIN

THE LESSON

OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

In today's lesson the children will learn that pastors are to lead by example.

For this introductory activity you will need twenty sheets of paper with a big red "S" drawn on each one.

Open class by saying that God tells us that anyone who wants to be a pastor needs to obey God. That way if the people follow him they will be following God too. To illustrate this point, do the following exercise with the children.

Place several sheets of the prepared paper on one side of the room to delineate one area of sin. Then place several more sheets of paper on another side to delineate a second area of sin. Explain to the children that if they step on a sheet of paper they need to pretend to be stuck. Demonstrate by placing your foot on a sheet of paper and then pretending that you can't move it. Have a couple children give that a try.

Now have all the children line up behind you like a train, placing their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them. Tell them you are going to show them how a pastor who obeys God leads people away from sin. Start on one side of the room and very carefully and slowly lead the group around the areas of sin. Then, lead them erratically back and forth and have a helper watch to see if any of the children step on the papers. If they do, tell them to pretend they are stuck. After several of the children are stuck, stop and have the children look around. Then ask the following questions:

- Why did some of you children get stuck in on the paper—stuck in sin?
(They tried to follow you, but you were leading them through the areas of sin and they got stuck.)
- Why do you think God tells us that pastors need to be a good example to the people?
(So they don't lead the people into sin.)

Take time to pray and thank God for the men God has provided to your church as pastors. Pray for the remainder of the class time before moving forward with the lesson.

BIBLE STORY **10 MIN**

Read story 148, “Character Counts,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION **5 MIN**

After reading the story, use the following questions to involve the children in a discussion:

- **Why do pastors need to have a godly character and lead their families well?**
(If they can't lead their own family, how can they lead a whole church family?)
- **Can you remember any of the qualities we read?**
(If the children cannot remember, review the story and ask them again.)
- **Why did God give us pastors?**
(God gave us pastors to teach us his Word and show us by their example how we should live it out.)

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

SNACK QUESTIONS **10 MIN**

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

- **Do you think these qualities are only for pastors?**
(No, they are first for pastors, but they are also for us as we follow the pastors.)

- **Do we need to wait to see a pastor do these things before we do them?**
(No, these godly characteristics are ones we should aim for, whether or not we see the pastor doing them.)

- **If we are poor examples, lacking self-control and being greedy, would we be setting a good or bad example for our friends and brothers and sisters?**
(We would be setting a bad example. So, although these qualities are for pastors to follow, they are also for all of us to follow.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY **5-10 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.

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS **20-30 MIN**

Coloring Activity

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, Why does God look 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.)

Learning the Requirements

Go through the list of requirements below and help the children understand what they mean. (This may seem a bit advanced for preschoolers, but their older brothers and sisters will be learning this passage and parents will be following up with *Old Story New*, the companion family devotional, so going over these terms in class will help them later in the week when their families go through family devotions.) Create a motion for each of those listed, and have the children learn them to help them understand. Go through them slowly at first, and then mix them up and see how many can get them correct.

- Above reproach. (Explain that this means having clean hands—having no reason to be guilty. This motion could be brushing off the hands as you might do on the beach to get the sand off.)
- Husband of one wife. (Show the index finger in the “number one” position.)
- Sober-minded. (Explain this as steady, not falling into foolishness, and have the children put their hands out like a surfer balancing.)
- Hospitable. (Giving food and kindness to those who visit them. Have the children offer an open palm as though they were offering a handful of candies to a friend.)
- Able to teach. (Have the children place their hands beside their mouths as though they were calling loudly to someone far away.)
- Not violent, but gentle. (Have the children do a motion like they are petting a dog.)

Explain to the children that God wants pastors to set a good example so the people can follow them. If pastors lived sinful lives they would set a bad example for the people in the church.

Praying for the Pastors

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a photograph of each of your pastors
- ✓ a greeting card for each pastor

Show the pictures of the pastors and see if the children can get all their names correct. Once they know their names, mix the photos up and then test their memory. See if the children can also name the general job descriptions, e.g., senior pastor, youth pastor, etc. Ask the children if they can think of ways that your pastors set an example for the people to follow.

Remind the children that pastors need our prayers so they will be able to follow God's standards for their lives. Go through the list of names and pray for each of them.

Along with your class name, help each of the children sign a card that says "We prayed for you today."

CLOSING PRAYER **5 MIN**

Take time at the end of class to thank God for what you learned today. Include parts of your Bible lesson in your prayer as a way for the children to remember today's lesson.

