



On your marks

Many children's leaders have found the style of storytelling that has been developed within Godly Play to be a very helpful and effective way of opening up the Bible with children. In the Barnabas Ministry Team we have been experimenting with some additional stories from scripture presented in this style, which we have used at Barnabas events and on Quiet Days. We are making them available so you can try them out with your children's group and we would be interested in any feedback on how they were received. Remember to tell the story slowly, focusing on the objects and on the story itself, not on the children who are listening. When you have finished telling the story, leave a short space and then use the wondering questions written out for you at the end of the piece.

Get set

Young Timothy came from Lystra, which St. Paul visited on his first missionary journey (see Acts 14). On Paul's second visit (Acts 16) he joined the apostle on his travels further west. We know from one of Paul's later letters (2 Timothy) that this young man's spiritual roots were first nourished by his mother and grandmother - Eunice and Lois respectively. They gave him a good grounding in the Jewish scriptures, which no doubt helped him to receive the good news of Jesus when he first heard Paul preach. His mother and grandmother had opened up the door to faith - a faith that was nurtured by Paul, who took him under his wing like a son, and which came to maturity through service as Paul's co-worker, messenger and trouble-shooting pastor for the church at Ephesus. Some of Paul's most tender and personal words were written to this young leader.

This story is an example of the faithful care of the women in Timothy's life, who helped him become a mature man of God; or as he might have said himself about what they did for him, 'Thank you, Mum'. The story below is based on what we know or can infer from the New Testament about Timothy's life.

You will need some simple but carefully chosen props to tell the story:

- A long rolled-up piece of red felt as a base cloth, which you unroll (from right to left) slowly as you tell the story, placing on it the 3D objects that go with each part.
- Wooden figures for Lois, Eunice, young Timothy and Paul
- Pieces of card, one with Hebrew, one with Latin and one with Greek writing on them
- A map of the Mediterranean to show the extent of Paul's travels
- Two small pieces of stone to represent the tablets on which the 10 commandments were written
- A cross; some small stones; one larger scroll and some smaller toy scrolls; a small money bag; a chain; a final piece of opened scroll

Go!

- **Thank you, Mum: The story of Timothy**
- *Unroll the red felt just enough for the first items to be placed down on it carefully and slowly.*

After each section of the story, unroll the felt a little more for the next objects

- In the beginning the baby was born. They called him 'the one who honours God', which in their language is Timothy.
- *Place on the felt the figures for Lois and Eunice*
Timothy's grandmother was Lois and his mother was Eunice. Eunice chose his name because she knew that honouring God was the most important thing anyone can do.
- *Place on the felt the card with the Greek writing and then the one with Latin writing*
- Eunice came from Palestine but Timothy's father was from Greece, which is why he taught his son to read and speak Greek. They lived in a town called Lystra where there were also people from Rome and so Timothy learned to speak Latin too.
- *Place the figure for young Timothy down on the felt*
- Timothy wasn't a very strong child. He was often ill and he was very shy. His father had great hopes that he would become someone important one day but his mother just hoped that he would honour God.
- *Place on the felt the stones that represent the ten commandments and the card with the Hebrew writing on it*
- Eunice believed in the one true God. She had learned about God from her mother Lois and she longed to pass her faith on to Timothy. The stories of the people of God in the desert and about the ten best ways to live and about the Temple were all very important to her. Whenever she could, she shared them with her son.
And Timothy grew. He used to listen to his mother's stories but he wasn't sure they were really for him. He was half Greek after all and had never become a proper Jew.
- *Place the figure representing Paul on the felt. Put down the cross on the felt next to him* When he was a teenager, a preacher came to the town. His name was Paul and he told everyone about Jesus. Jesus had come as the sort of King no one had expected. He had lived and he had died and then he had come back to life again. He was God's special rescuer, who now invited all people to belong to the people of God.
- *Cup your hand reverently above Timothy*
- As Timothy listened to Paul, God came so close to Timothy and Timothy came so close to God that he knew what God was saying to him. God wanted him to know that he was loved. God had a special work for him to do. As a follower of Jesus, he would honour God.
- *Place a pile of small stones down near Paul*
- Timothy listened carefully to what Paul said and also watched what he did. Even when the people of the town chased him away and stoned him so he almost died, Paul did not stop believing in Jesus.
- *Place the large scroll next to Timothy* When Timothy's own father died, Lois his grandmother and Eunice his mother also became followers of Jesus and all three together used to read the stories in God's special book. There they learned that God's promises about Jesus were for the whole world.
- *Place a map of the Mediterranean, showing Paul's travels on the felt*
- Some time later Paul visited Lystra again and invited Timothy to join him on his journeys. He would be helpful because he could speak and write so many languages. Paul became like a second father to Timothy and together they travelled to Athens, to Corinth and to Ephesus.

- *Place the small moneybag on the felt*
- Once he even went to Jerusalem with Paul, taking some money they had collected in Greece to help the people in Jerusalem who were suffering from the famine. Timothy learned how to follow Jesus from watching Paul.
- *Place a set of smaller scrolls on the felt*
- Paul gave Timothy special jobs to do, like taking letters to the churches Paul had started. Sometimes people would not listen to Timothy because he was still so young and because he wasn't very confident. But God used him and he learned to trust in the Holy Spirit, who gave him love and power and self-control.
- *Put down the small chain onto the felt and move the figure of Paul next to it*
- When Paul went to Jerusalem for the last time, he left Timothy in charge of the church in Ephesus. He was to be its leader and help them grow strong in God. He was very scared but God helped him. In Jerusalem Paul became a prisoner and was taken to Rome. Paul wrote a letter to Timothy advising him how to be a good leader. He called Timothy his true child in the faith.
- *Place the final opened scroll that is Paul's last letter onto the felt. When you mention Timothy's mother and grandmother, touch each figure reverently and also touch the large scroll of the scriptures and finally the cross*
- When Paul reached Rome he spent a long time in prison and he wrote his last letter to Timothy, encouraging him to remember how God had come so close to him and given him a special work to do. He should remember how his mother and grandmother had helped him understand God's story in the Bible and how they had passed on the faith to him. He hoped that Timothy would visit him.
- *Reverently remove Eunice and Lois. After a pause, lift up the figure of Timothy and then replace him at the end of the unrolled red felt to your left*
- By this time Timothy's mother and grandmother had died. How proud Lois and Eunice had been of young Timothy. He really had grown up to honour God.
- In this last letter Paul told Timothy to be strong in Jesus and to continue passing on the message to others just like his mother and grandmother had passed it on to him.
- Timothy did go to Rome. He even ended up in prison for while. But after Paul had been killed, Timothy was released. He continued the job that Paul had started. Because of Timothy many others became people who honoured God.
- I wonder which part of this story you like the best?
I wonder which part of this story is the most important?
I wonder where you are in this story or which part of this story is most about you?
I wonder if there is any part of this story we could leave out and still have all the story we need?