

2 TIMOTHY

MAIL CALL



TEACH IT COFFEEHOUSE SESSION 1

ONE WEEK OUT

Challenge your gang to read 2 Timothy before the first session; it's a short book. Explain why they'll be studying 2 Timothy and why it's relevant to teens or young adults today. Paul and Timothy experienced many of the same frustrations we face—daily stuff that can get under our skin, friends falling away from the faith, non-friends belittling us because of our faith, and much more. The great thing in 2 Timothy is that God shows how we can follow him and overcome in all of these situations.

You may want to send reminder notes to let students know the time and place the group will be meeting. Some coffeehouse chains, including Starbucks have a “send an email invite to a friend” feature on their Web sites; this may be fun to use. Remind your students to bring food and tip money, unless you're buying.

As you prepare for the first session, don't forget to allow time to gather any of the following materials. (See Materials.)

Most importantly, recruit a team to pray specifically for this Bible study. Supply them with helpful specifics, such as names of students, when you're meeting, and the subject matter you'll be covering.

1. Materials

For this session each student will need—

- his or her own Bible
- optional: journal page for Session 1 (Using the student journal page is optional in the coffeehouse setting because table space may be limited.)

You'll also need—

- pencils with erasers
- images of Dynamic Duos from the Web, printed or digital (If using printed pictures, cut the duos apart so students can match the partners.)
- optional: a few spare Bibles for students who forgot to bring one

2. Session Intro

GOALS OF SESSION 1

As students experience this session, they will—

- uncover the purpose of this letter by discovering the writer and recipient of 2 Timothy.
- look into the close relationship between Paul and Timothy and see what a source of encouragement they were to each other.
- be challenged to develop spiritual relationships similar to Paul and Timothy's.

PRAYER

Once the group has gathered, thank them for being a part of this study. Remind them that whenever we set out to dig deeply into God's Word, we can expect to grow closer to God. But remind them that we can also expect the Enemy to try to knock us off course. As a group, pray that the students will stand firm in the will of God throughout this study—and that they'll discover what God has to say to them through this specific book of the Bible.

OPEN

You've Got Mail

To get things rolling have the group brainstorm these questions:

What's the best letter or email you've ever received and why?

- Love letters are great.
- Letters with money in them are always appreciated.

What's the worst letter or email you've ever received and why?

- No one likes break-up letters.
- Disciplinary letters are awful to receive.

Describe a time when you—

- sent an inappropriate email to the wrong person?
- wish you had an "unsend" button?

What's the first thing you look at when you get a letter, email, or text message?

You look at who sent it.

3. Digging In

Writer Recon

Tell the group that 2 Timothy is a letter exchanged between two of Jesus' followers within 100 years of his ministry on earth. Since it's part of God's Word, we can also take it as a letter from God to us.

Have your students read 2 Timothy 1:1-18 and 4:6-9 from their Bibles. And tell them—

- 1. Underline lightly in pencil every mention of the writer of the letter.**
- 2. Don't forget that pronouns, such as *I, me, and my*, count.**
- 3. If you are hesitant about marking in your Bibles, you can write lightly so the markings can be erased. If you're still not comfortable, it's okay. Just remember any references to the writer of 2 Timothy.**

When most have finished, work together to create a profile of Paul, the author of 2 Timothy. Prompt the group with the following questions to draw out details of the passages.

How was Paul's Christian walk described?	What was Paul's situation when he wrote this letter?
Chapter 1 -He was an apostle of Christ by the will of God (v. 1). -He served God as his forefathers did—with a clear conscience (v. 3). -He was a prisoner of the Lord (v. 8). -He was saved and called to a holy life (v. 9). -He was appointed a herald, apostle, and teacher of the gospel (v. 11). -He was not ashamed because he knew whom he had believed (v. 12). -He was solid and sold out about what he believed (v. 12).	Chapter 1 -He was suffering (v. 12). -He had been deserted by some close friends (v. 15).
Chapter 4 -He had fought the good fight, finished the race, and kept the faith (v. 7). -A crown of righteousness was waiting for him (v. 8).	Chapter 4 -He was being poured out like a drink offering (v. 6). -The time had come for his departure (v. 6). -He wanted Tim to come to him quickly (v. 9).

Note: The info in the chart is taken from the *New International Version* (NIV) of the Bible. If your students are using a variety of Bible translations, you may want to discuss how the various translators used different words to describe Paul and his circumstances.

Now have the students think about Paul. So far they don't know much about him. But ask the following question and have students write down their answers if you are using the optional journal pages.

What are three things that stand out to you about Paul—things that may be important to know if you're going to understand his letter?

He's an apostle. He's bold. He's solid in his faith despite suffering. He's giving it all he's got.

Paul is nearing the end of his life, and your gang may feel like they're just getting started. But ask—

Is there anything in Paul's life that parallels yours?

Recipient Recon

Next have the group do a similar search for facts about the guy who received this letter. Ask them to read 2 Timothy 1:1-6 again from their Bibles. As they read they should lightly circle every mention of the recipient.

Then ask them to share as much info as possible about the person who received Paul's letter. You'll be eliciting information such as:

RECIPIENT

- His name is Timothy (v. 2).
- He's Paul's dear son (v. 2).
- He's remembered in Paul's prayers (v. 3).
- He shed tears—maybe he was sensitive (v. 4).
- He has a sincere faith and heritage (v. 5).
- He has a gift of God in him through the laying on of Paul's hands (v. 6).

Now ask the group to assess the relationship between Paul and Timothy. Ask—

How well did these two know each other?
They knew each other very well and for a long time.

How would you describe their relationship?
They were very close.

Do you think it was a peer-to-peer relationship or a mentor-to-follower relationship?
It was a mentor-to-follower relationship.

4. Cross-Checking

Background Check

One way to discover more about Timothy and Paul is to explore other Bible references to them. Have your students read the following verses from their Bibles to learn as much as possible about Timothy and his relationship with Paul. (The optional student journal pages provide space to write down this info.)

Acts 16:1-4
Philippians 2:19-22

After most students have finished reading the passages (it's okay if some haven't), help them process what they read about Timothy. Ask—

If we were to steal Timothy's identity, what good information would we now have about him?

Let students volunteer information, but try to elicit the following information as much as possible:

What was Tim's hometown?
His hometown was Lystra.

What was his mom's nationality?
His mom's nationality was Jewish.

Was she a believer?
Yes.

What was his dad's nationality?
He was Greek.

Was his dad a believer?
Apparently he was not a believer.

How did people speak of Timothy?
They spoke of him well.

In 2 Timothy Paul called Tim "my dear son." Was Tim Paul's biological son?
No; Tim's father was a Greek. Paul spoke figuratively of the father/son relationship in Philippians 2:22.

What kind of home life did Timothy have?
It seems that his mom was a believer, but his dad wasn't. Mom and the kids must have gone to church while Dad stayed home, possibly praying to Zeus, a Greek god prominent in the city of Lystra.

How would you describe Timothy?
*-He was spoken well of and respected by his elders even when he was young.
-He was trustworthy and unselfish.*

What traits of Timothy would you like to imitate?

4

5. Taking It Inward

Mentor and Follower

Show a few printed or digital pictures of mentor/follower Dynamic Duos. Present the members of these duos separately, and ask students to match each of them with the right partner. After all the duos have been matched, ask students to share their favorites and tell why. Here are some examples:

- Professor Bunsen Honeydew and Beaker (*The Muppets*)
- Doc Hudson and Lightning McQueen (*Cars*)
- Batman and Robin (*Batman*)
- Shaggy and Scooby (*Scooby-Doo*)
- Obi Wan Kenobi and Luke Skywalker (*Star Wars*)
- Mermaid Man and Barnacle Boy (*SpongeBob SquarePants*)
- SpongeBob and Patrick (*SpongeBob SquarePants*)
- Mario and Luigi (*Mario Bros.*)

Ask—

Which of these duos most resembles the Paul-and-Timothy duo?

Draw out the mentor/follower aspect of the relationship as seen in duos, such as Batman and Robin or Obi Wan Kenobi and Luke Skywalker.

Encourage your students to think for a minute about the people who are important to them. Ask the following questions, and have your students write down their answers if you are using the optional student journal pages.

Are there any Pauls in your life—people you respect and can look to for spiritual guidance and teaching? Who are they?

Are there any Tims in your life—people you can help along in their spiritual walk? Who are they?

6. Wrapping It Up

Rev up a Relationship

Ask your group why they think Paul wrote this letter to Timothy. Based on the info they've uncovered so far, they should have a fairly good idea. Ask them—

What level of stress do you “hear” in Paul’s voice?

What things did he mention that might give us a clue?

The answers to these questions will point your students to the purpose of the letter—and identifying Paul’s purpose will help them understand all of the promises, the commands, and the hope they’ll be uncovering in this short but powerful book.

After some discussion steer the group to these conclusions:

-Paul is encouraging Timothy to stay strong in the faith.

-A lot of people have deserted Paul and stopped following Jesus; perhaps Paul doesn’t want Timothy to bail out or quit like the others.

Wrap up the session by asking your students to write on a napkin or coffee sleeve a few specific, doable goals regarding a Paul or Timothy in their lives. If they’re short on ideas, prime the pump with the following suggestions. If you’re using the optional student journal pages, space is provided to write down these goals.

I will text _____ this week.

I will send an ecard to _____ this week.

I will do _____ for a pastor or youth leader this week.

As you close in prayer, remind the group that God doesn't expect us to live the Christian life on our own. He provides the Pauls and the Timothys. It's our job to work on the relationships.