

2 TIMOTHY

THE GOSPEL: KNOW IT



TEACH IT MIDDLE SCHOOL SESSION 4

1. Materials

For this session each student will need—

- the 2 Timothy Scripture sheets
- the student journal page for Session 4
- his or her Bible, pen, and notebook

You'll also need—

- a whiteboard and markers
- colored pencils (at least one color per student)
- a few good news/bad news jokes (We've supplied a couple.)
- optional: a panel of adult leaders to serve as judges for the Taking It Inward activity

2. Session Intro

GOALS OF SESSION 4

As students experience this session, they will—

- discover the meaning of the word *gospel*.
- explore the message of the gospel.
- be challenged to view this message through fresh eyes.

PRAYER

Open your session by praying with your students that God will open the eyes of their hearts and that they will be receptive to what he wants them to see.

OPEN

Good News/Bad News

Begin your session by asking if anyone's heard a good news/bad news joke lately. Here are a couple jokes to prime the pump:

JOKE 1:

Two 90-year-old men, Moe and Sam, have been friends all their lives. It seems that Sam is dying, so Moe comes to visit him.

"Sam," says Moe, "You know how we have both loved baseball all our lives. Sam, you have to do me one favor. When you go, somehow you've got to tell me if there's baseball in heaven."

Sam looks up at Moe from his deathbed and says, "Moe, you've been my friend many years. This favor I'll do for you."

And with that, Sam passes on.

It is midnight a couple nights later. Moe is sound asleep when a distant voice calls out to him, "Moe... Moe..."

“Who is it?” says Moe, sitting up suddenly. “Who is it?”

“Moe, it’s Sam.”

“Come on. You’re not Sam. Sam died.”

“I’m telling you,” insists the voice. “It’s me—Sam.”

“Sam? Is that you? Where are you?”

“I’m in heaven,” says Sam, “and I’ve got to tell you, I’ve got some good news and some bad news.”

“Tell me the good news first,” says Moe.

“The good news,” says Sam “is that there is baseball in heaven.”

“Really?” says Moe, “That’s wonderful! What’s the bad news?”

“You’re pitching Tuesday!”

—from *The Christian Post* (<http://jokes.christianpost.com/5.htm>)

JOKE 2:

Doctor: I have some good news and some bad news.

Patient: What’s the good news?

Doctor: The good news is that your tests showed you have 24 hours to live.

Patient: That’s the good news? What’s the bad news?

Doctor: The bad news is I forgot to call you yesterday!

Transition into the study by sharing—

In New Testament times there was only one way to get your news, whether good or bad—via personal messenger. If the news was good, like the outcome of a victorious battle or the birth of a child, the message was called *euangelion* (yoo-an-GHEL-ee-on), which literally means “good news.” This is the word translated in the Bible as *gospel*—and there’s a reason why the Bible writers called the gospel good news.

3. Digging In

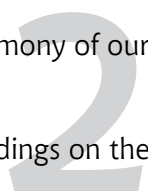
Digging up News

Tell your students—

1. Read 2 Timothy 1:8-2:10 from your Scripture sheets and mark every mention of the gospel.
2. You’ll be looking for phrases such as “sound teaching,” “good deposit,” “things you have heard me say,” and “God’s word” because Paul is talking about the gospel when he emphasizes these things to Timothy.

As you saw in your personal study, the phrase “testify about our Lord” can also be translated “the testimony of our Lord.” This, too, is a reference to the gospel.

After a few minutes ask the group to tell you everything they found related to the gospel. List their findings on the whiteboard.



Info about the Gospel

- Don't be ashamed of it (1:8).
- Paul is suffering for it (1:8).
- Through it Jesus destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light (1:10).
- Paul was appointed a herald, an apostle, and a teacher of it (1:11).
- Paul was not ashamed of it, even though he was suffering (1:12).
- Keep it as the pattern of sound teaching (1:13).
- Guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit (1:14).
- Entrust it to reliable men, so they can teach it to others (2:2).
- Paul defines it as: Jesus Christ raised from the dead, descended from David (2:8).
- Paul was chained for it, but the gospel itself wasn't chained (2:9).

Ask—

How important would you say the gospel is, according to Paul?

If someone asked you what the gospel is and why it's important enough to be chained up for it (as Paul was), would you know the answer?

Point out that when Paul talks about the gospel in 2 Timothy, he's either describing it or giving instructions related to it. Direct the group to the whiteboard, and ask them to divide the list into instructions related to the gospel ("Don't be ashamed of it") and basic info about the gospel.

Because there is no point in trying to follow Paul's instructions if we don't know what the gospel is, share that the rest of this session will focus on unpacking and describing what the gospel is all about—*knowing* it. Session 5 will focus on *doing* the gospel.

4. Cross-Checking

This Just In

Just what is the gospel? Share that, in the next exercise, the group will be putting the gospel under a magnifying glass—examining it from every direction. Tell students that the Colossians passage they'll be reading contains one of the most comprehensive explanations of the message of the gospel. Explain:

As you read the passages noted on your journal pages, jot in the space provided anything specific the Scripture tells you about the gospel. By the way the word *euangelion* can be translated "gospel" or "good news." A good starting point is to find these words in the passage and work from there.

The Scripture references and possible observations are noted below.

Mark 1:1, 14-15

- It's all about Jesus (v. 1).
- It is the good news of God (v. 14).
- It's a proclamation that the kingdom of heaven is near (v. 15).
- To experience it you have to believe it (v. 15).

Colossians 1:19-23

- All of God's fullness dwells in Jesus (v. 19).
- God reconciled all things to himself through Jesus (v. 20).
- God made peace with all things through Jesus' blood (v. 20).
- Through Jesus our alienation from God and the warring factions in our own minds have been reconciled (v. 21-22).
- Through Jesus we are presented holy in God's sight, without blemish and free from accusation (v. 22).

-It holds out hope to us (v. 23).

-It has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven (v. 23).

5. Taking It Inward

Skeptic's Forum

After a few minutes call for the group's attention. Ask a few volunteers to share how they described the gospel.

Then ask—

Why would knowing and believing all this be good news? In fact we're going to explore that question in depth.

Now divide the group into two or three teams. Then ask each team to create a presentation for the rest of the group that explains why knowing and believing all this would be good news. Share the following parameters before the teams begin.

- 1. Imagine you are giving a presentation of why the gospel is good news to a group of people who don't believe anything about God. Maybe they believe human beings are just globs of chemicals that got here by accident.**
- 2. Take five to 10 minutes as a team to form your answer based on the information you uncovered in Scripture.**
- 3. You can be creative in your presentation—artistic, musical, hip-hop, whatever. The goal is to be convincing.**
- 4. Try to avoid “church speak.” Bring a fresh perspective to what the gospel is and what the gospel means.**

After five to 10 minutes of preparation, have the teams make their presentations. You may want to assemble a panel of adult leaders beforehand to serve as judges for the presentations. Have them evaluate the groups based on:

1. Factuality—how much info they incorporate from the Cross-Checking verses.
2. Originality—how successfully they avoid “church speak” clichés.
3. Skeptic-friendliness—how convincing the presentation would be to a skeptic.

You can decide how to conclude the activity. Some ideas are—

- Have the panel of judges ask each group a few follow-up questions after the presentations.
- Have the panel vote on and declare a winner.
- Have the entire group vote on the best team. (No voting for your own team.)

6. Wrapping It Up

World News Today

Emphasize that the point of the last exercise wasn't to learn how to publicly defend the gospel (though that's a worthy pursuit), but to simply understand it better. After all, if we call ourselves Christians, the gospel is what we've said yes to.

Close by having a few volunteers pray for the group, asking God to help each student grasp why the gospel is good news and how it can change the way we live each day.