

2 TIMOTHY

THE SCOOP ON GOD



TEACH IT TALK SESSION 2

This talk guide is just that: a guide. It's not intended to be a manuscript to read aloud. It's here to give you ideas, structure, and stories to blend with your personal study (Prep It) as you prepare your talk.

The content complements the other Teach It guides and allows you to give a talk on the same topic students are studying in other settings, such as small groups, without too much overlap.

1. Materials (Optional)

- A ball bearing (available from a hardware store)
- An inflated beach ball
- Something to pop the beach ball

2. Optional Openings

VISUAL ILLUSTRATION

Hold a beach ball while you read the following quotation from Michael Brooke, founder of the skateboarding magazine *Concrete Wave*. Pull a ball bearing out of your pocket when the ball bearing is described.

Concrete Wave wishes to remain a ball bearing—small, hard to find, and continually in the state of being polished. Our goal is to provide readers with a deep impression when they get hit with it. Conversely, we do not aim to be a beach ball—big, seen all over the place, colorful, and yet leaving very little impression when it hits. A beach ball is very fragile indeed and must avoid challenging environments, because it requires so much air to keep it afloat. A weighty ball bearing can withstand both challenging environments along with the pin pricks of adversity.

Continue with—

I'll be honest. I think it would be more fun to be a beach ball. You get batted around. You get to go to the beach or the pool. Life is fun. But then this can happen. (Pop or deflate the beach ball.) You can't do that to a ball bearing.

Time and time again, Jesus reprimanded people for their showy religion. He called them to more action and fewer religious platitudes. Standing on a street corner and praying as loud as you can sure would attract attention. It might even impress a few people. It just might not have much impact. It's a beach ball. You see it easily from a distance, but you can easily brush it off when it hits you.

QUOTATIONS

Share these quotations to introduce the idea that the gospel will call us to live counter to our culture.

Go the extra mile. It's never crowded.
—author unknown

**Remember, a dead fish can float downstream, but it takes a live one to swim upstream.
—W.C. Fields (1880-1946, American comic and actor)**

**Courage is contagious. When a brave man takes a stand, the spines of others are stiffened.
—Billy Graham (1918-present, American evangelist)**

**Two frogs fell into a bowl of cream. One didn't panic, he relaxed and drowned. The other kicked and struggled so much that the cream turned to butter, and he walked out.
—author unknown**

PERSONAL STORY

Tell a story about a time when you were growing up, when you lost some innocence, or when you became jaded in some way. Here's an example:

When I was in the sixth grade, my two best friends were Bobby and Larry. We did everything together—at least everything you could do in the confines of an elementary school day.

I'll never forget, though, the morning I showed up at school ready to do more "everything," and something seemed different with Bobby and Larry. In fact they weren't all that friendly. Later in the day they gave me a note. It was kind of like a Dear John note. They no longer wanted to be my friends. I was devastated. I didn't know you could do that to a friend.

Luckily, this only lasted a few weeks, and before long, we were back to doing everything together. But this experience stuck with me, and I've seen it happen over and over. And I'm sure I kept some of that experience with me as I've gone along in life—bringing it out as a shield for protection when needed.

The loss of innocence has an incredible way of hardening your demeanor. It's easy to put up that hardened shell so that you don't get hurt again. You play life like you're smarter than those who still believe in idealistic views or simple solutions to the world's problems. You become the rain on the parade. But it doesn't stop there. You start to point out not only how clueless other people are, but how unfunny, uninteresting, unfashionable, or unathletic other people are.

Playing it cool is the opposite of innocence. You can't have too much fun at something for fear someone else will let you know that others think the something isn't that fun. You have to sort of hover above it all and play it safe. You curb your enthusiasm. And so you hold back until everyone around you—or at least the people you want to impress—have weighed in on an idea or an opinion or an action. Then you jump in. And ultimately you've become kind of like the beach ball. It requires everyone else to bat it around.

Many of us have decided that we'd rather be cool or part of a group than to go against the established culture. Have you ever noticed that even the radical anarchists that are in every school in America all tend to dress alike? It's just easier to fit in—even if your group isn't a "fit in" kind of group.

Following Jesus is countercultural. It's saying what you mean even when it's not popular. It's refusing to join in the gossip or refusing to waste the gifts and talents that God has given you. It's being the ball bearing—going against the flow and withstanding the adversity.

3. Digging In

Tell your students—

Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 1:6–9 —

For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time.

4. Taking It Inward

ILLUSTRATION

Tell a story that illustrates how God gives us what we need to counter the tough things the world throws at us. Here's an example:

Loann was doing a service project with her church in an urban area of a large city. She made friends with Marie, another member of the church. Marie told her that for several years and as recently as five months before, she had traipsed the same area as a crack addict. Now she was a radically transformed follower of Christ.

Within a few minutes of sharing that story with Loann, Marie found in the dirt a discarded crack pipe—with crack still in it. Although she had no intention of ever doing crack again, Marie's first instinct was to look around to see who was watching her when she found the crack pipe. Her next instinct was to find her boyfriend, who was also participating in the service project. He had been a big support for her during the past months and a huge help as she got her life back together. So she went to find her boyfriend, and he did away with the crack.

Marie later explained to Loann that even though her initial reaction was to be excited about the free crack, really she'd had no intention of sneaking off to smoke the crack. She now saw the world in an entirely different way, which is entirely amazing if you know how crack gets a hold of a person. Marie said she really believed God took the urge for drugs away from her. But her initial muscle memory reaction was, Who sees me? What if? Even though she didn't have the urge, it was still in her face. But she knew she had God and the people he put around her to help her resist any old memory that might tempt her.

Marie has grabbed hold of the grace that God had purposed for her since the beginning of time, the grace that saved her and called her to a holy life.

Living counter to the things the world throws at us won't always be what some would consider fun. Marie's first reaction was that it would be fun to try the free crack. She could even have made a nice rationalization that God must have wanted her to have it since it seemed to have dropped right out of the sky. But God has called us to a holy life—a life that's different than what the world wants to live.

It's not easy to live where these two worlds collide. Paul would even call it suffering. That's why he asks us to join in this suffering. But it's not suffering like boils and disease; it's suffering as in

OPTIONAL MIX-INS

You may want to point out some background on 2 Timothy:

-It didn't take long for the world's first Christians to see that the principles of the gospel run counter to the principles of the world.

-Unfortunately, some of the first Christians weren't ready for countercultural living and stuck with the world.

-Paul's second letter to Timothy was like a giant bullhorn, warning and encouraging young Tim.

-Perhaps the best encouragement Paul gave Tim was the reminder that God had gifted him with everything he needed to counter whatever the world threw at him.

making the right choices when the world wants you to do otherwise. When we go against the world's current, it creates pressure. Have you ever tried to walk or swim upstream or against a current? It's not easy. And if you stay at it for a while, you get tired. Your muscles burn; you're out of breath. In essence, you're suffering.

When we go against the world's current, we experience pressure in many ways: sensing the need to conform, feeling belittled, feeling left out or alone, being labeled as different. In some parts of the world, this suffering will even manifest the same way it did with Paul and result in persecution or imprisonment. In our culture the persecution is less subtle, but very real.

5. Wrapping It Up

Finish with—

We're not called to be beach balls. God didn't give us a spirit of timidity. We're supposed to be ball bearings. We have a spirit of power, love, and self-discipline. We're in a continuous state of polishing. We can be a bit shiny, but the only real light we produce is, in fact, what we reflect. We may already be a little nicked up, but don't let yourself be jaded by the ways that life has scratched or dented you. Use God's spirit of power and love to react the way God expects you to, not the way the world expects you to.

I want to reflect God's light, and I want to impact people's lives because of what he's done in my life. That's how I want to live. I want to live a 2 Timothy chapter one life. He called me specifically to do this, and I believe he's calling you as well.