



What if... We Were Disciples?

Philippians 2:19-30

PPT Title

What if We Were Disciples?

Main Point: We should learn from people who love and follow Jesus.

Key Verse: *Follow my example, just as I follow the example of Christ.* - 1 Corinthians 11:1

Props: White Board and marker

INTRO



Call up a student and play “Mirror” with them. Say: I want you to pretend that I am looking in a mirror and you are my reflection. Everything I do, you have to reflect back. Use big, exaggerated movements that everyone can see. Start off slow, then get a little faster. For fun, do things quickly to trip them up. After a few minutes, thank your volunteer. (You may want to try it with a couple more students if you feel it went well.) When you are done, Ask: What does it take to “mirror” someone? (Have to watch closely.) You also have to be near the person, right? You couldn’t really do this long-distance. Is there anyone who you would love to “mirror”? Anyone you’d love to hang out with, copy everything they do, maybe learn how to do what they are really good at? Is there a favorite ball player or singer or writer? Who would you like to learn from? Leader, share your idea of someone that excels in something you’d like to do. Did you know it’s really Biblical to hang out with someone in order to learn how they do what they do? But we want to be really careful to learn from the right people to do the right things.

BACKGROUND



We have been reading through Paul’s letter to... who? (the Philippians) And where was Paul? (In a jail in Rome) Even though Paul was in jail, he had a good friend nearby. There was a young man named Timothy that had been traveling with Paul for years, and the whole time Paul was in jail, Timothy was right by his side. Let’s back up and see how these two met.

TIMOTHY

Back when Paul first believed in Jesus, God said He had a special job for Paul. The Lord said, “I have chosen this man to work for Me. He will carry My name to those who aren’t Jews and to their kings.” (Acts 9:15) Soon Paul was traveling all over and telling people about Jesus. Paul was an amazing, bold preacher and he was a great encourager to those who believed.



When Paul came to a town called Lystra, in Galatia, he met a young believer named Timothy. Timothy’s mom was Jewish and his dad was Greek. That means his parents most likely believed differently about spiritual things. Paul’s mom and grandmother both believed in God (1 Timothy 1:5). But we aren’t told anything about his father’s faith. This leads us to believe that his dad probably did not believe in the one true God. He very well may have believed in Greek mythology (Acts 14:12). But Timothy was taught the Word of God from the time he was little (2 Timothy 3:15).

After meeting Timothy and hearing really good things about him, Paul invited Timothy to travel with him to tell people about Jesus (Acts 16:2-3). Timothy was probably a teenager when he set off with Paul. (For Older Kids: One interesting thing is that in Lystra, some people who didn't believe in Jesus were so angry at Paul for talking about Jesus that they threw rocks at him! Acts 14:8-19 Timothy must have heard about this, even if he didn't see it, and he still chose to travel with Paul. It seems that Timothy was pretty courageous and that he really trusted that Jesus wouldn't allow anything to happen that He wouldn't ultimately use for good.)



This was Paul's second big journey, but it was Timothy's first. As Paul and Timothy and their friends traveled from town to town, they visited the churches and taught the truth of God's word. "So the churches were made strong in the faith. The number of believers grew every day." (Acts 16:5) One of the first places they traveled to was the city of Philippi!

DISCIPLE/MENTOR

Does anyone remember what "disciple" means? It means "student" or "learner." The twelve disciples of Jesus were students; they were learning all about the kingdom of God from Jesus. Timothy was Paul's disciple. Timothy was learning about the kingdom of God from Paul, day in and day out. Everything Paul did, he taught Timothy how to do. They didn't just meet together every once in a while, so Paul could give his best advice then walk away. No, they traveled together, ate together, worked together, met the same people, did the same things. They were "in the trenches" together. The word for Paul here is "mentor." A mentor is like a private teacher.



As Paul spent time with Timothy, he recognized the things that Timothy was good at—the talents that God put in Timothy (2 Timothy 1:6). A mentor can do that. Paul taught Timothy how to follow Jesus because he wanted Timothy to have the very best life possible. A mentor does that. Paul encouraged Timothy with words like these: "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young. Set an example for the believers in what you say and in how you live. Also set an example in how you love and in what you believe. Show the believers how to be pure." (1 Timothy 4:12) That's the kinds of things that a mentor does.

MIRROR IMAGE

Let's fast forward to Paul in prison. By this time, Paul and Timothy had spent years together. As I read, let's see what we learn about Timothy from the what Paul says. **Teacher, as you read, write the 4 bold phrases from the passage on a white board.**



I hope to send Timothy to you soon if the Lord Jesus allows it. Then I will be cheered up when I receive news about you. I have no one else like Timothy. He truly cares about how you are doing.

All the others are looking out for their own interests. They are not looking out for the interests of Jesus Christ. But you know that Timothy has proved himself. He has served with me like a son with his father in spreading the good news. - Philippians 2:19-22

Let's see how Timothy (the disciple) mirrored Paul (the mentor).

Truly Cares: Paul was a great encourager (Acts 16:40). He was constantly helping the believers to know more about Jesus and the Holy Spirit's power. If they ever got off track or discouraged, Paul would take time to cheer them on. The Bible says "he encouraged the believers in all the towns he passed through." (Acts 20:2) Now Timothy was doing the same thing.

Own Interests: Next, Paul says that Timothy did not look out for his own interests. Instead, he thought like Jesus, just like Paul did. (Remember a few weeks ago, we

heard Paul say he'd love to go ahead and go to heaven because he'd be with Jesus, but he said he would gladly stay alive—even in prison—if he could help and encourage more people.) Paul put others first, and now Timothy did the same.

Spreading the Good News: Paul was a great preacher (Acts 14:21, Galatians 1:11-24). I don't think there's any way to count how many people followed Jesus after hearing Paul preach. There were thousands! Timothy heard Paul preach hundreds of times. He not only learned the information, but he learned how to tell it to a crowd. He saw the expressions on Paul's face, how he changed the volume his voice, and when he paused. Timothy could ask Paul questions, right there, on the spot. Like, maybe, "How do you keep from being nervous when a big crowd starts to gather?" Or, "Why did you say it *that* way?" And from these "in the moment" conversations, Timothy learned and became really good at preaching too (2 Corinthians 1:19).

Son/Father: Paul said that Timothy was like a son to him. Paul was not married, so he didn't have any children of his own. And from what we can tell, Timothy's own father was not a follower of Jesus. So isn't it so cool that God gave them each other? Often, what we lack physically, God gives to us spiritually. Paul became Timothy's spiritual dad and Timothy became Paul's spiritual son. It is amazing how God blesses His people and supplies exactly what we need!

There are many more things Timothy leaned that we just don't have enough time to talk about. All in all, Paul and Timothy spent more than 13 years together. You know why? It takes time to teach someone everything you know. It takes lots of experiences together.

MY MIRROR

Erase the white board and write these bolded words as you discuss them. Let's think about the things that are really important as we try to live out the Kingdom life. Jesus said the most important commandment is to Love God, then Love Others. It's also important that we know how to make good decisions that bring blessings, and how to have great relationships. **Ask older kids for more suggestions. You can ask the group for a consensus before writing down ideas.** For example: "What do you think guys? Is that an important thing?"

Earlier we played the mirror game. Look at this list. Who do you know that is living like this? Who would *you* want to mirror? Are you *willing* to mirror them in order to have the kind of life that you want? It's a great idea to find a mentor who's a bit older than you (Titus 2:3-5). They've already been your age. They know how to do it well. The most important thing is: We should learn from people who love and follow Jesus.

PPT Main Point

PPT Key Verse

Paul once said: *Follow my example, just as I follow the example of Christ.* - 1 Cor 11:1

So look for a person who reads God's word, obeys what Jesus says, and prays to Him all the time. I hope you see these things in your mom and dad. They are the first people God gives you to teach you and train you up. But you know, it's a really good idea to have other mentors, in addition to your parents. Someone who lives outside your home can usually see your situation with fresh eyes and a little different perspective. Maybe you have a godly teacher at your school or a godly family friend. Here, at Grace, you have the leaders in this room, and your small group leaders at Kidzlife. In a few years, you will have a LUG leader, then a d-group leader.

It's especially important to have a mentor as you get a little older, in your teens, and you start making some decisions without your parents. You really want to make sure you are mirroring the right kind of people—those who can bring you closer to Jesus and help you follow His ways. Pray and ask God for the right mentors in your life.