

1 Vision Area

1 Older

The Big Picture

Today's lesson focuses on the importance of older individuals and the lessons and examples they are for those who are younger. Similar to Lesson #4, the main point of the lesson is not so much what the Biblical text tells us about older individuals, but what those individuals actually teach us throughout this lesson.

Biblical Text

Titus 2.1-5 (NIV)

Materials Needed

Old Photograph, *if used*
Children's Book, *if used*
Index Cards, *if used*

Preparing for the Lesson

My hope is that this week you will be able to have an "older" person in your group "teach" the lesson. We will not have a specific lesson, per se, that they select (similar to the children. See Lesson #4.), but will allow an older person to share aspects of his or her faith journey. If your group has no older individuals, reflect on how older individuals have shaped your lives. If your entire group is made up of older people, spend time allowing everyone to share the things discussed below, relating them to what you see in younger people today.

This week you will want to prepare your "older" people in advance for the lesson to come. Ideally, you will be able to ask them to help you with this lesson, but do not expect to be able to just drop this idea on them moments before the discussion begins. To help them mentally prepare, ask them to be thinking about the following questions:

What sort of things did you enjoy doing when you were young (our children's age)?

Did you grow up in church? If not, what brought you to faith? What is different about church today than when you were young?

What Bible verses or stories have meant the most to you during your life?

In what ways do you try to live out what we see in Titus 2.1-5 for younger believers?

One more note. You may have to adapt this lesson more than any of the others you have done to this point. Trying to write for multiple groups with multiple age ranges can be a challenge. I want to be able to leverage the unique situation we have with intergenerational groups while at the same time recognizing that each group is made up vastly different age ranges. I hope I have provided enough different material to give you a foundation on which you can build, keeping the needs of your group in mind. Remember that the goal is not the completion of this piece of paper, but the sharing of life together within your group.

Possible Lesson Outline

One great way to begin your group time is to do the “How Much Was It” exercise listed below in the Lesson Activities section. Have everyone fill out their paper, and then go back around asking for people’s answers. You might pick someone out to answer first then ask others if they think the answer will be lower or higher. You will probably have individuals who share personally anecdotes about the cost of things in their childhood (I remember buying a pack of gum at the 5 & Dime... type stories.) Allow people to share these as it helps create an awareness of how our age differences also include having experienced life in a different way. (Children are often shocked to think someone could buy a Coke for a nickel!)

If you are going to have the older individuals pray for the next younger individual and you do not do the above activity, another option for an ice-breaker could be to have the individuals in your group discover who is the next older and the next younger person.

Introduce the lesson time by reading the Titus passage and mentioning that Paul is instructing Titus on how to teach many different ages, but we are going to focus on what he says about the older individuals to whom Titus is ministering.

If you are not going to have an older individual share their story, you will want to use the questions for a discussion time or be prepared to include all of your individuals in the discussion of the things listed in the Preparing for the Lesson section.

If you are going to have an older individual share, you might still ask a question or two from the Discussion Questions section to help remind people of the things Paul brings out to Titus.

Spend most of your group time visiting with the older individual in your group. You can just allow them to share some of their experiences or you can ask them the specific questions listed in the Preparing for the Lesson section. Be sure to ask the children in your group if they have any questions for this person.

If you chose to do one of the photograph activities, introduce it along with any specific instructions you might have for your group.

Close your time with a prayer, using either the prayer ideas below or have the older person offer a prayer for the entire group.

Lesson Activities

Dear Photograph

Like many web sites I stumble across, I am not exactly sure where I found this site, but www.dearphotograph.com caught my eye and made me immediately think of this lesson. The web site has a simple premise: take a photograph of an old photograph using the location of the original photograph and holding it (the original photograph) in such a way so as to be a seamless part of the new photograph. (Go over to the site to see exactly what I mean!)

Photographers then post their photo with a simple comment, which are often very poignant. Many of them include family members and the photographer’s memory of that moment or the action represented in the photograph. I am especially drawn to those pictures of older individuals (grandparents, for instance) who are shown in the pictures.

Your assignment is to create one of these photographs, along with a comment, to share with your group. Using a picture with a family member who is an “older” to you, take a new picture. Why is this photograph so important? How have things changed since the photograph was originally taken? What parts of the original photograph continue to be a part of your life now? What characteristics or traits of that “older” individual are now demonstrated in your own life?

Lesson Activities (cont.)

Recreate a Photograph

The “Recreate a Photograph” activity was actually inspired by the Dear Photograph website. Instead of simply using an old photograph in its original setting, however, I thought it would be really cool to see people recreate an old photograph. It can happen in the same location, using different people, or it can be completely recreated in a new, but similar looking setting.

Here are the key ideas you are trying to accomplish. Your photograph recreates a photograph containing someone who is older than you (grandparents, for instance.) Your photograph also somehow links you to both the older photograph and the newer photograph. The new photograph carries with it some of the same significance as the older photograph.

For instance, if you have a picture of you sitting on the dock of the family lake house with your grandfather, perhaps you go back to that same dock and have a picture taken—in the same pose—with your own grandchild. Or if you have a picture of you playing the guitar as a young child, then you have a picture taken of your child playing a guitar, perhaps even the same guitar, if it is still around.

I recognize many of the original photographs may be impossible to recreate (a structure that no longer exists, the original picture was taken in a different state or it is too difficult to arrange travel to a different location) so try to accomplish this as best you choose to do, given the understandable limitations.

Once you have recreated your photograph, print off the photograph to bring to group next week and show everyone. Another possibility is to scan the photographs (or take digital pictures) and then either email them to your group members or arrange a way to use a computer/television to show them to the group next time you meet. As you share these photographs, tell the story behind the original photograph and why you chose to recreate it.

How Much Was It?

Depending on the age of the older individuals in your group, some of them may have been alive during a time when common items were considerably cheaper than they are right now. Using the “How Much Was It?” sheets at the end of this lesson, ask those in your group to guess how much each of the listed items were in the years listed? (NOTE: I have included one page for you to copy, cut, and pass out to individuals. The other page is to provide the answers I found according to www.thepeoplehistory.com. I have also included a listing of things that happened during these particular years, again, for your reference.) As you go through and give the answers, open the conversation up for discussion, allowing people to tell what they remember in these particular years.

Interview

Allow someone to interview the oldest individual in your group (or an older individual.) It would be especially neat to see a younger individual—or several younger—do the question asking. If your older individual would be willing, videotaping the interview would allow your group to have a record of the conversation.

Use the questions listed in the Preparing for the Lesson section for starters and then add any additional ones you might think of. Allow the children, if they are doing the interview, to come up with some questions on their own.

For the Kids

If your group spends time allowing the “olders” from your group to share their stories, I think your children will find this fascinating and there will be no need for a special time just for the children.

If you would like and an older individual from your group is willing, you could also spend some time allowing the older individual to read a Bible related children’s story to your children. My guess is that if you have children, you also have a book they could read.

Spiritual Formation / Worship

In the same way that spending time mentoring a younger person is crucial for spiritual growth, spending time with an older individual is as well. The experience that an older person has—especially one whom you consider faithful—is something that can help you face challenges and situations in your own life.

If you do not have an older individual you spend regular time with, find someone who is older and wiser and ask them out for a cup of coffee. Just spend time visiting—but mostly listening—about life and the things they have been through. I promise you will be blessed because of that time.

For Next Week

This week complete one of the photograph activities listed in the Lesson Activities section. Determine how you will share this with the rest of the group (Email to everyone? Sharing on a computer or just using paper during your next meeting?) and let them know so they can be prepared to share with one another the next time you guys meet.

Prayer Ideas

One possible idea for your prayer time would be determine all of the ages of every individual in the group (everyone capable of saying a prayer, that is.) Then, have everyone pray for the next older person in the group. These prayers do not have to be in-depth or complicated, just a request that God would bless the life of that specific person. Ask the oldest to conclude the prayer by praying a prayer of blessing for the entire group and all its members. (NOTE: This exercise would probably work best in a group where everyone is comfortable praying with one another. If half your group does not wish to pray, it may be too complicated to keep track of who is to pray next.)

Another idea, similar to the one above, is to use index cards, and have everyone in the group put their name on their card. Have everyone in the group determine the next oldest person in the group and pass their card “up” to that person. (This could be the ice-breaker for your group this week.) Everyone in the group would then be responsible for praying this week for the person they have on their card.

Discussion Questions

1. Paul gives an example of what Titus should teach older men. Given what he says, what sort of things do you envision this older man doing if he attended South Plains?
2. And in the same way, describe the older woman Paul describes if they too attended at South Plains.
3. What sort of things, if any, do we “teach” our older individuals today? Compare this to what we see in the book of Titus. Why the difference, if any?
4. In what ways do we fail to recognize the importance of older individuals? In what ways do we do a good job? How can we do an even better job?
5. If you are an “older” person, what is your reaction to Paul’s words here?
6. If you are an “older” person, what do you wish the “younger” people knew or could be told? How can you go about telling them?
7. Paul’s instructions to older individuals are actually a part of a list where he instructs all of the various ages groups (younger/older) and roles (slaves) to whom Titus is ministering. Why is it important for us to teach and instruct each age group in a unique way?

For Further Reading/Study

Web sites referenced in this lesson:

<http://www.thepeoplehistory.com/>

<http://dearphotograph.com/>

What's Next

Next week we will begin looking at 1 Home Bible Study and will begin this study with a look at Deuteronomy 6.

What did things cost in...

	1930	1960	1990
Gallon of Gas	_____	_____	_____
New Car	_____	_____	_____
Dozen Eggs	_____	_____	_____
Bananas (lb)	_____	_____	_____
Bacon (lb)	_____	_____	_____
Sugar (5 lbs)	_____	_____	_____
Soup (can)	_____	_____	_____

What did things cost in...

	1930	1960	1990
Gallon of Gas	_____	_____	_____
New Car	_____	_____	_____
Dozen Eggs	_____	_____	_____
Bananas (lb)	_____	_____	_____
Bacon (lb)	_____	_____	_____
Sugar (5 lbs)	_____	_____	_____
Soup (can)	_____	_____	_____

What did things cost in...

	1930	1960	1990
Gallon of Gas	_____	_____	_____
New Car	_____	_____	_____
Dozen Eggs	_____	_____	_____
Bananas (lb)	_____	_____	_____
Bacon (lb)	_____	_____	_____
Sugar (5 lbs)	_____	_____	_____
Soup (can)	_____	_____	_____

What did things cost in...

	1930	1960	1990
Gallon of Gas	_____	_____	_____
New Car	_____	_____	_____
Dozen Eggs	_____	_____	_____
Bananas (lb)	_____	_____	_____
Bacon (lb)	_____	_____	_____
Sugar (5 lbs)	_____	_____	_____
Soup (can)	_____	_____	_____

What did things cost in...

	1930	1960	1990
Gallon of Gas	0.10	0.25	1.34
New Car	640	2600	16000
Dozen Eggs	0.18	0.55	1.05
Bananas (lb)	0.05	0.10	0.48
Bacon (lb)	0.38	0.79	1.24
Sugar (5 lbs)	0.25	0.38	0.99
Soup (can)	0.06	0.15	0.33

What happened in the 1960s?

Vietnam War

The Cold War is at its height.

John F. Kennedy assassinated.

Martin Luther King came into prominence and was also assassinated.

Man first lands on the moon.

The Smiley Face

John Wayne, Elizabeth Taylor, Paul Newman, Elvis Presley some of the movie stars.

The Beatles and the Rolling Stones gain popularity.

Computer mouse, CDs, portable calculators introduced.

What happened in the 1930s?

The Great Depression

Wearing sunglasses became popular.

Big Band or Swing music became popular.

Wizard of Oz and Gone with the Wind were released.

Superman comic seen for the first time.

Clark Gable, Shirley Temple, Will Rogers, Fred Astaire, and Ginger Rogers were movie stars.

Joe DiMaggio begins his baseball career.

Jet engine introduced.

Audio tapes introduced (Reel-to-Reel)

What happened in the 1990s?

The Gulf War

Mobile phones go from relatively new technology to a fact of life.

Michael Jordan and the Bulls win 6 NBA titles.

The Cowboys win 3 Super Bowls.

Mark McGwire sets new home run mark (albeit chemically enhanced!)

Growth of the World Wide Web and introduction of the first PC.

Seinfeld began and ended during the 90s.

The Reality Show genre become popular on TV.