



Adult TEACHING PLAN

2016
DIXIE JACKSON
ARKANSAS
MISSIONS
OFFERING

Theme verse: 1 Thessalonians 2:8

LESSON PREP

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To adopt Paul's passion as we seek to live the Gospel by praying, giving and going.

GENERAL PREPARATION

- ◆ Read the Planning Guide and Prayer Guide to get an overview of this year's focus and theme. Be prepared to incorporate this information into your lesson.
- ◆ Visit absc.org/dixiejackson and familiarize yourself with all of the resources available for teaching and promotion, including the videos.
- ◆ Read the story of Dixie Jackson, presented in brief in the Planning Guide and in more detail online. Be familiar enough with Mrs. Jackson's story that you could share a summary during the lesson.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

- ◆ Spend time in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to show you how to use this lesson in a way that will speak personally to your class.
- ◆ Gain context for the lesson by reading Acts 16:6-10, Acts 17:1-10 and 1 Thessalonians 1-3.
- ◆ Read the Teacher Devotional.

TEACHER DEVOTIONAL

It is hard to read Paul's letters without noting his passion for the churches. It's very evident in the terms of affection Paul uses in 1 Thessalonians 2:8. Take a

moment to read the verse in your favorite translation. Now, consider how a few other translations render the affection of Paul for the Thessalonians.

- ◆ KJV and ESV – “affectionately desirous”
- ◆ HCSB – “cared so much for you”
- ◆ NASB – “having so fond an affection for you”
- ◆ NIV – “loved you so much”

What incited such a deep love? It certainly was not an extended stay in Thessalonica. Acts 17:1-10 tells us that Paul's time with the Thessalonians was cut short due to the “great opposition” referenced in I Thessalonians 2:2. In fact, his time there was so brief that he feared for the survival of the heavily-oppressed young congregation (see I Thessalonians 3:1-8).

Perhaps this concern was the true source of Paul's affection for them. His commitment to living the Gospel was so complete that he gave his all, “working night and day” to minister to the Thessalonians until he was forced to leave them. His heart stayed with them, though, fighting for them through prayer.

Oh, that we could adopt Paul's passion as we pour into the classes we teach! Oh, that we could be the ones to stir that same passion in the hearts of our fellow church members! The culture and times may be different, but the need in our state is just as great as the need was in Thessalonica nearly 2,000 years ago.

This is why 1 Thessalonians 2:8 offers such a vivid impression of what “living the Gospel” means. As you prepare to teach your class, pray for Paul's passion to grip your heart and the hearts of your class members, that together we may truly live the Gospel in ministry to the lost of Arkansas.

Sharing life, sharing the Gospel, wherever you go.

TEACHING PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Dixie Jackson: Set the stage for the lesson by sharing the story of Dixie Jackson. Adjust the amount of information you share based on the time available to you, either reading the abbreviated story from the Planning Guide or summarizing the more thorough information found at absc.org/dixiejackson.

BACKGROUND

Read or have volunteers read Acts 16:6-10, Acts 17:1-10 and 1 Thessalonians 2:1-2.

Paul did not go to Thessalonica because it was an easy path, nor did he go because he had an automatic welcome. He and his companions had just left a very challenging situation in Philippi, and Acts 17 confirms that more challenges awaited them in Thessalonica. But, when we back up to Acts 16, we are reminded that the Holy Spirit was guiding Paul's travels. This confidence in the leadership of the Spirit fueled his passion and instilled boldness in him, despite the opposition he faced.

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:7-16.

1 Thessalonians gives us a closer look at Paul's time in Thessalonica, filling in details not shared in Acts.

- ◆ Paul saw that these new believers needed nurturing to prepare them for the sufferings they would face.
- ◆ After only a short time of investment, he had to leave them to pursue growth on their own.
- ◆ Even after Paul left, his heart remained passionate for the Thessalonians. 1 Thessalonians 3 shows that he prayed for them and did everything he could to follow up with them to make sure they stayed firm in the midst of opposition.

Turn the focus to the theme verse, 1 Thessalonians 2:8.

If class members have different translations, encourage volunteers to read 1 Thessalonians 1:8 to see how differently this verse is rendered. Before class, prepare copies of the verse in three or four translations, just to ensure variation.

Focus especially on the phrases reflecting Paul's affection for the Thessalonians:

- ◆ KJV and ESV – “affectionately desirous”
- ◆ HCSB – “cared so much for you”
- ◆ NASB – “having so fond an affection for you”
- ◆ NIV – “loved you so much”

Ask: Think back to the story of Dixie Jackson. Although her circumstances were very different from Paul's, in what ways is their passion similar?

(Note: Class members may not be accustomed to speaking in a group setting. Do not be afraid to be silent for a minute or two, waiting for discussion to begin.)

TYING IT ALL TOGETHER

Whether we look at the Apostle Paul or Mrs. Jackson, we see three distinct actions that accompany a life devoted to living the Gospel.

Prayer

Ask: What is prayer? What does it accomplish?

More than just presenting requests, prayer is our method of pursuing a relationship with God and submitting ourselves to His guidance.

- ◆ Through prayer, Paul actively opened his heart to the Lord's leadership, as is evidenced by his presence in Thessalonica. He also prayed specifically for all of the churches, and this prayer infused his heart with a passion for them.
- ◆ Long before Dixie Jackson began the work for which she is now famous, she invested wholeheartedly in prayer and growth through the Word of God. This built in her the passion that fueled her work and continues to fuel Arkansas missions.

Giving

Ask: How would you define giving? What does it look like to have a heart truly opened to giving?

Giving means opening our hands and releasing all the resources God has given us.

- ◆ In 1 Thessalonians 2:9, we see the extent of Paul's giving. Here, "working night and day" refers to the commitment of Paul and his companions to meet their own physical needs as well as the spiritual needs of the Thessalonian believers. Every resource Paul had was surrendered to the ministry of the Gospel.
- ◆ Based on what we know about Mrs. Jackson, her life was also built around how she could give of her resources to serve. Every visible investment she made was for the ministry of the Gospel.

Going

Ask: What can we learn about "going" from what we have discussed today?

In the lives of both Dixie Jackson and the Apostle Paul, we see a full surrender to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. "Going" will look different for each of us. Some will become missionaries like Paul. Others will follow Mrs. Jackson's example, giving their all to whatever role or job God places before them. Either way, "going" means fully submitting our lives to God, to be used as He chooses.

CLOSING

Lead the class in a time of prayer. Encourage members to silently pray through each of the three actions that exemplify surrendering to live the Gospel. Then close with a prayer of commitment.

ADJUSTMENTS

For a 15-minute time slot, use the Teacher Devotional instead of the Teaching Plan.

- ◆ Ask volunteers to read 1 Thessalonians 1:8 in several different translations to emphasize Paul's affection for the Thessalonians.
- ◆ Read or give a summary of Acts 17:1-10 to provide the background for Paul's relationship with the Thessalonians.
- ◆ Share the basic thoughts from the Teacher Devotional.
- ◆ If time permits, close by showing one of the videos available at absc.org/dixiejackson. If video resources are not available, tell one of the stories in your own words.
- ◆ Pray with your class members, and challenge them to desire Paul's passion for ministry in your community, association and state.

For a 30-45 minute time slot, use the Teaching Plan as written, adjusting discussion time as needed.

For an extended time slot, expand the introduction and conclusion:

- ◆ Begin by asking class members to share what they know about ministries supported by the Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering. If any members have participated in some of these ministries, encourage brief testimonies.
- ◆ Choose several videos from the absc.org/dixiejackson resource page. Conclude the lesson time by showing these videos and discussing how your class or church can participate in the featured ministries. (If watching the videos is not possible, be prepared to tell several of the stories.) Choose stories that you know will connect to members of your class.