



PAUL'S LETTERS TO US

Run the Race of Faith

Supplies Needed: a ball, a stick or item to hit the ball



TEACHING INSTRUCTIONS

Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 and Hebrews 12:1-2 together. Read it to the children or have them take turns reading. (See student handout)

Say, Paul shared with the church in Corinth all that he had gone through to bring people to Christ, and he encouraged them to live their life the same way. He compared it to athletes racing in a competition, and how difficult their training is. This would make sense to the Corinthians because Corinth had a popular athletic event called the Isthmus Games. The author of Hebrews (some say it's Paul, but no one is sure) makes the same comparison to following Christ being like running a race with endurance, keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus. Let's talk about some more interesting points from this scripture.

Read the "Did You Know?" points together. Read it to the children or have them take turns. Help the children look up the Scriptures mentioned. For added fun, have them say "amen!" when they find it. (See student handout)



Say, “Running this race of faith might seem overwhelming and impossible, like it’s something for the heroes of faith but not for us ordinary Christians. How can we make it? The answer is in Hebrews 12:2. We fix our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith. Another word for ‘Perfector’ is ‘Finisher’. Jesus says in Revelation 22:13 that He is the beginning and the end. He is the start of our faith, and He will make our faith perfectly complete at the end. Our job is to keep our spiritual eyes fixed on Him, like a runner with his eyes fixed on the finish line. We can’t let the eyes of our heart drift to anyone or anything that could distract us.”

OBJECT LESSON

Keep Your Eye on the Ball

Items: a ball, a stick or item to hit the ball

Depending on the amount of space available, you may want to do this object lesson outside. **Say**, “The Bible talks about fixing your eyes on Jesus, but what does it mean to have your eyes fixed on something? Let’s illustrate with a ball and a stick.” Call up a volunteer and give them the stick. Then, stand about 3 meters (10 feet) away. **Say**, “In America, baseball is a popular game, but it can be very challenging to hit the ball. It’s very important to keep your eye on the ball, even as it’s traveling through the air toward you. Let’s try it. I’m going to toss the ball at my volunteer, and he/she is going to hit it.” **Say to volunteer**, “You don’t have to hit it hard or far, just try not to miss by keeping your eye on the ball.” Toss the ball a few times until the volunteer hits it. Then **say**, “Okay, let’s see what happens if you don’t have your eye on the ball.” Have the volunteer focus his/her eyes on someone or something else and toss the ball at them. Most likely, they will miss it. **Say**, “Just like our race of faith, it depends on where you’re fixing your eyes.”



GAMES

Endurance Jog

Run the race with endurance! Have all the players stand together with about one meter (3 feet) of space between them. Make sure you have a timer ready. When you say "GO!", everyone starts running in place. When a player gets too tired, they can give up and stop. The person that runs in place the longest wins. Depending on how fit your group is, this game could last a while. For added fun, play a worship song while the game is going.



**** Optional Memory Verse Game ****

Bop It! -1 Corinthians 9:24

Have kids sit in a circle on chairs or the floor. Give each child a word of the memory verse in order around the circle. Then, go around the circle and 'bop' each child gently on the head. They have to say their word when you bop them. Once you have gotten through the whole verse, say, "change", and they all move one seat to the left. Then, they have to say the word that the previous person sitting in the chair was saying.

Once they get good at it, increase the pace and energy. Eventually, you can sprint around the circle and SCREAM "change!!" after each lap. The key to this game is being quick and intense.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



- 1 What prize are we running to win?
- 2 What did Paul do to run his race well? (1 Corinthians 9:27)
- 3 Name one thing that distracts you from focusing on Jesus.