

1st – 5th GRADE

JULY 18 – Unit 34.4

RUNNING THE RACE

MEMORY VERSE:

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.

Acts 1:8

PARENT BIBLE STUDY

While Paul sat in a Roman prison from AD 60 to 62, he wrote letters to churches he had started or visited on his missionary journeys. Despite his circumstances, Paul's letter to the church at Philippi is filled with joy. Philippians reveals Paul's heart as a devoted follower of Christ. It is full of practical advice about how to live for Jesus and love others.

In the third chapter, Paul wrote about knowing Christ. He said that his relationship with Jesus was the only thing that mattered. This was in stark contrast to his priorities before becoming a believer. As a devout Jew, Paul had been proud of his status: He was circumcised according to the Law, he belonged to the Israelite tribe of Benjamin, he was a faithful Pharisee, and he obeyed the Old Testament law. Now, as a Christian, Paul considered these accolades to be worthless.

Paul set an example for the Philippian believers. They had been distracted by false teachings. He encouraged Christians to press on through difficulties by essentially keeping their "eyes on the prize." He set himself up as an example for the Philippians to imitate. Paul was motivated by God's promise to stand before the Lord, meet Him face-to-face, and know Him completely. Paul's journey toward Christian maturity involved figuring out God's call on his life and carrying it out.

Our perseverance in the race reminds us of Jesus' enduring the cross, which provided forgiveness of our sins and salvation. Because Jesus fixed His sight on the victory that awaited Him, we persevere, fixing our gaze on the hope that one day we will be glorified with Him.

As you teach kids, help them think about the Christian life as a race. We don't want to get distracted or give up running even though it is hard. We can encourage one another toward the finish line. The Lord will help us, and He promises a wonderful prize: life with Him forever.



ACTIVITY LIFELINES

WHAT YOU NEED:

Paper, pencils

WHAT YOU DO:

1. Distribute paper and pencils. Encourage family members to make their own timeline of their lives.
2. Ask them to write their birthdate at the beginning of the timeline and today's date with a continuing line.
3. Think about some significant things that have happened in your family's lives (moved, started going to your church, started school, joined the swim club, etc).
4. Encourage each member to draw pictures or write in some of those things on the timeline.
5. For family members who have already made a profession of faith or been baptized, ask them to add that to their timeline.

DISCUSSION:

Say • God wants us to live our whole lives to bring Him glory. He is our wonderful prize! Every day in our lives, every special event, can be used to share Jesus' love with others and tell people how to have eternal life with Him.

BIBLE VIDEO:

Play the Bible Story Video that goes with this lesson!



DISTRIBUTE BIBLES AND HELP FAMILY MEMBERS FIND PHILIPPIANS 3.

- Point out Philippi on the New Testament Mediterranean Map.

DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS TOGETHER:

1. What did Paul say is more important than Jesus? (*Nothing is more important than knowing Jesus; Phil. 3:8*)
2. What example did Paul give to help us fully know Jesus? (*Paul said to look ahead to the future and run after the goal of knowing Jesus; Phil. 3:13-14*)
3. What is the prize of running this race? (*eternal life with Jesus Christ, Phil. 3:14*)
4. How can we know that Paul really valued following Jesus? *Guide kids to discuss the changes that God produced in Paul's life. Paul went from hating believers to preaching the gospel. Paul gave up his old life and faced all kinds of trials and pain so that he could obey God and know Jesus more. His actions proved his words.*
5. Have you lost or given up anything to follow Jesus? *Encourage kids to answer honestly. Some may feel like they haven't given up anything to follow Jesus, and others may have a lot of things they feel they have given up. Remind them that following Jesus means giving up our sinful desires like selfishness or laziness in order to live like Jesus.*
6. When does following Jesus feel the most difficult? *Help kids think about situations they face that make them feel tempted to sin. Maybe it is a sibling who irritates them; a chore they don't want to do for their parents; or a video game, movie, or TV show they want to consume that isn't honoring to God.*

Say • **Following Jesus is like running a race for a wonderful prize.** Jesus gave up His power and glory in heaven to come to the earth and die on the cross in our place. It's only through Jesus' death and resurrection that we can be forgiven. We must press on to fully know Jesus and share eternal life with Him.

Following
Jesus is like
running a race
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prize.

PRAY as a family
before you close
your time
together!