

Discovering God on Route 66

LESSON #48

RUN THE RACE!

PREP: Find an athlete* who has recently been successful and is willing to come and briefly share with the class. *Since the children will be looking up to this person, he/she should be a Christian.*

Read the verses **I Corinthians 9:24 - 27** to become familiar with the lesson.

Print out the Olympic rings w/ the verse for each team. Cut them into pieces and place them in bags or boxes. (*Game 1*)

Print out the methods for the children to use in competing in the race. You will need to print and cut the chart for each team you plan to have. (*An option to just running.*)

Find a prize to give the winners of the racing game. Ideas include: celery w/ ranch or peanut butter, vines shaped into crowns, whiz rings that remind us of Olympic rings, Ribbons or medals, candy, etc.

Copy the handout for Game 2 for about 3 teams. Each team only needs one. You should print extra sheets in case you have time for 4 rounds or need a tie breaker round. A timer is needed.

Copy FUNSHEETS to pass out to the children.

*Another option is to use a video clip from a movie like *Chariots of Fire*. *See Below.*

PRAY: Before the lesson ask the children for prayer requests. Pray that God will guide the children in understanding how to live their lives for His sake.

OPEN: Have a volunteer athlete come to speak with the children. He/She could be from High School or College. He should share first about a winning moment and how great that was. However, most of the time should be spent sharing about how much work, training, practice, discipline, etc. it took to get to the point of winning a prize. *Pictures and/or video tape of the winning event are a plus.*

OPTION: Another option is to play an excerpt from the movie *Chariots of Fire*. One great scene is around 3500 where Eric Liddell falls in a race but then gets up and wins! A second choice would be at about 5600 where the athletes Eric Liddell and Harold Abrahams are training.

BACKGROUND INFO: Summarize the information below to briefly share about what competitions were like in Corinth, the town that Paul was writing to. **DO NOT** read this section to the children! Emphasize how much work and training the athletes put into preparing for the games.

Isthmian Games (*very much like Olympic games*) were held in Corinth in the spring, hundreds of years before Jesus was born. The original prize was a crown of wild celery, but after Corinth was destroyed (146 B.C.), by the Romans and restored (46 B.C.) by Julius Caesar, the Isthmian games were reestablished with a crown of fir as the victor's prize.

OLYMPICS OF ANCIENT GREECE: Although records cannot verify games earlier than 776 B.C., the contests in Homer's *Iliad* indicate a much earlier competitive tradition. The ancient Greek games were held, every fourth summer, at Olympia, in honor of Zeus. They reached their height in the 5th–4th cent. B.C.; thereafter they became more and more professionalized until, in the Roman period, they provoked much censure. They were eventually discontinued by Emperor Theodosius I of Rome at the end of the 4th cent. A.D.

Among the Greeks, the games were nationalistic in spirit; states were said to have been prouder of Olympic victories than of battles won. Women, foreigners, slaves, and dishonored persons were forbidden to compete. Contestants were required to train faithfully for 10 months before the games, had to remain 30 days under the eyes of officials in Elis, who had charge of the games, and had to take an oath that they had fulfilled the training requirements before participating. At first, the Olympic games were confined to running, but over time new events were added: the long run (720 B.C.), when the loincloth was abandoned and athletes began competing naked; the pentathlon (708 B.C.); boxing (688 B.C.); chariot racing (680 B.C.); the pankration (648 B.C.), involving boxing and wrestling contests for boys (632 B.C.); and the foot race with armor (580 B.C.).

Greek women, forbidden not only to participate in but also to watch the Olympic games, held games of their own, called the Heraea. Those were also held every four years but had fewer events than the Olympics. Known to have been conducted as early as the 6th cent. B.C., the Heraea games were discontinued about the time the Romans conquered Greece. The winners of the Olympics (and of the Heraea) were crowned with chaplets of wild olive, and in their home city-states male champions were also awarded valuable gifts and privileges.

"Isthmian games." *The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia*.

© 1994, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003 on Fact Monster.

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BIBLE VERSES: Allow the children to turn to **I Corinthians 9:24-25**. Have 2 volunteers read these verses. Discuss each verse after it has been read. Following are some example questions to ask:

Verse 24:

“When there is a race, how many of the runners get a prize?” (*Only one gets the main prize. Many times the top three winners get something. However, only first prize gets the “title”, the large trophy or their country’s national anthem played, or the most money, etc.*)

“Verse 24 says to ‘Run in such a way as to get the prize’. How do you run that way?” (*Do your best – not just during the time of the race! Train and work hard. Being a great athlete doesn’t just happen!*)

Verse 25:

“What type of ‘games’ is Paul referring to in verse 25?” (*Competitive events like the Olympics or those they had in Corinth called the Isthmian games.*)

“What type of strict training did those athletes have?” (*For at least 10 months, those athletes trained for their events. They worked hard all day. Also, they kept their minds focused on their events by not doing any other type of work. They ate well and got plenty of sleep.*)

“What type of reward would these athletes receive?” (*A crown made of natural materials.*)

“How long would a crown like that last?” (*Not very long. Maybe a few weeks.*)

“What kind of crown could last forever?” (*The crown God gives us in Heaven for being obedient to Him while we live here on earth! It will be beautiful and last forever*)

“How do we run in such a way as to get this prize that will last forever?” (*Obey God! Whenever we do what God wants us to do, we are earning ‘jewels’ for our crown*)

“What are some examples of obeying God?” (*Showing love to others, reading the Bible, coming to church, praising God in song, praying, asking for forgiveness, encouraging others, witnessing, etc.*)

“How many people will get a crown that lasts forever?” (*As many people as choose to become Christians and live their lives for God! It is unlimited by God, only by us!*)

“What types of things must an athlete avoid or not do when training?” (*Junk food, staying up too late, being lazy, not exercising, smoking, drugs, alcohol, etc.*)

“As Christians in our race, what types of things must we avoid or not do when training?” (*People that are a bad influence, bad movies, cussing, sin, never reading the Bible, disobeying your parents, etc.*)

REVIEW: Write **I Corinthians 9:24b** on the board for all the children to see.

Run in such a way as to get the prize.

“What is the one main thing from this lesson that we should remember about the Christian life?” (*What this verse says!! Live our lives for God! Give Him our best!! All Christians will go to heaven, but we will get different crowns according to how we have lived our lives here on earth.*)

Have all the children read this verse aloud together. Erase every other word beginning with “in” and let the children read the verse again. Erase 3 more words. Say the verse again. Now erase the final two words. Say the verse together a final time.

GAME 1: You can’t teach about running a race without allowing the children to compete in some type of race! If possible, let the children compete in this game outside. Be creative in your prizes. Ideas include: celery w/ ranch or peanut butter, vines shaped into crowns, whiz rings that remind us of Olympic rings, Ribbons or medals, ice cream, etc. If you have a prize for everyone to enjoy, then let the winners go first.

PREP: Make one copy of the Olympic rings with verse **I Corinthians 9:24b** for each team. You can have from 4 – 10 children on each team. Then, cut the rings into 4-10 sections, accordingly. You can simply cut the pieces vertically and horizontally! *To keep play fair, make sure that you cut each team’s rings in the same manner.*

PLAY: Divide the children up into equal teams of 10 or fewer. Mark a starting line for the children to stand behind.

On “Go”, one child from each team will run* to the opposite side of the room where the pieces of the “ring puzzle” are located. She should select one piece. Then, run back past the starting line to the other teammates. Now, the next team member should run and select a piece and continue the same

process. When that team has retrieved all the pieces to the puzzle, the entire team should go to the table and put the mystery picture together.

Note: You do not need to tell the children what the picture will be! They'll figure that out and the Bible verse will help.

The first team to put all the puzzle pieces together in the correct order wins.

*Rather than run, you can have team members race in other ways. Pass out the following ways to team members and let the teams decide who will move in which way.

JUMP	RUN
HOP ON 1 FOOT	SKIP
WALK BACKWARDS	CRAB WALK
LEAP FROG	LEAP FROG
WHEEL- BARROW	WHEEL- BARROW

GAME 2: (*This game is played similar to the game of Scattegories®.*) This is a great game because the teams of children must whisper so that other teams won't hear them. It's amazingly quiet!!

To play this game divide the children into 3 groups (*5 groups maximum*) with an adult or older child supervising each group. Be sure each group has a similar amount of older and younger children. Each group will work together to think of a word or words within a category that begin with each of the letters in the word CHRISTIAN.

The three categories are: **1.** Various events that people compete in, **2.** Things you should do in your Christian race, and **3.** Things you should NOT do in your Christian race. **Alternate categories would be:** Prizes people can win or Things you see at a race.

Each group is given 2-3 minutes to think of a word or words to match each letter. The adults/oldest child should write down the answers. If the children cannot think of anything, the adults can encourage them to go on to the next letter and come back. The children need to come up with the answers themselves. It is fine to leave some of the letters blank.

When time has run out, let one child from each group tell his/her answer for one letter at a time. Teams only score if their answer is original and unlike any other team. If the answer is valid for the category and neither of the other two groups said that answer, then that group(s) gets a point. After each answer from letters C through N have been read out, have the teams add up their points for that round. Keep track of points on the board. Then, do the next category.

Before beginning the first round, you should work through an example. Write the word CHRISTIAN vertically on the board. Tell the children the category is "Food". Let them shout out answers. Here are some possibilities:

C - carrots
H - horseradish
R - rice
I - ice cream
S - sugar
T - tea
I - indive
A - apples
N - noodles

CLOSE: Explain the FUNSHEETS to the children.

Close with prayer.

NOTE: Since this lesson is taught 2 weeks prior to Lesson #50 - make copies of the invitations (*found with Lesson #50*) for parents to join their children in observance of The Lord's Supper.

