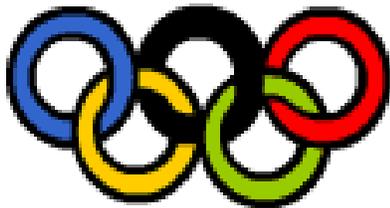




# Christian Olympics



1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade  
Teacher Manual



The apostle Paul said that the Christian life is like running in a race. In this lesson, we will answer the questions, what is the Christian race and who is to run in it? We will also discuss how to prepare, how to run, what happens if you fall down, and what happens when you win.



## Did you know?

Every game has people who:

- Set the rules
- Compete in the game
- Judge the competition
- Give the prize

Who do you think does these in the Christian race?

### **Christian Olympics**

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## **Christian Olympics Teacher's Guide** **Grades 1-2**

### **Lesson Introduction**

#### **Lesson Text**

Have you ever run in a race? Running a race can be exciting, can't it? Did you win? The Bible says that being a Christian is like running a race. Let's learn some more about that race.

Every game that we play has someone who:

- ❖ Makes up the rules
- ❖ Plays the game
- ❖ Makes sure everyone follows the rules
- ❖ Gives the prize

[ Pick a familiar children's game played in school P.E. such as dodge-ball and discuss. Then discuss who does each of these things in the Christian race. ]

### **Get Ready, Get Set**

#### **Key points:**

- ❖ You have to know the rules and play by them.
- ❖ You must be prepared for the race to start.

**Reference text:** Hebrews 10:36, Ephesians 6:10, 1 Corinthians 9:26-27, 2 Timothy 2:5, 2 Timothy 2:15, 2 Timothy 3:15-17, Romans 10:17, Psalm 119:9-16

#### **Lesson Text**

##### **Follow the Rules (page 3)**

Is it hard to play a game if you don't know the rules? The first thing you must do is learn the rules of the game, right? What do you think would happen if we did not know the rules? Are there sometimes people who do not follow the rules or try to make up their own rules? What do we call those people? [ cheaters ] When someone is caught cheating, does he get thrown out of the game or is he allowed to win?

Jesus has a race for us, and he has rules for us to follow. Can you guess where He put His rules? That's right, in the Bible! [ hold up a Bible ] Jesus said if we love Him, we will keep His commandments. Jesus' commandments are the rules of the Christian race. We should always look in the Bible to see what Jesus' rules are.

#### **Memory Verse**

Have the children memorize, John 14:15: "If you love Me, Keep My commandments"



## Crossword Puzzle

### Across

1. If you love \_\_\_\_ you will keep His commandments. John 14:15-23 (Jesus)
4. We should think about \_\_\_\_ things. Phil 4:8 (good)
5. Children should \_\_\_\_ their parents. Ephesians 6:1 (obey)

### Down

2. God wants us to \_\_\_\_ to Him. Ephesians 5:19 (sing)
3. We should \_\_\_\_ each other. 1 Peter 1:22 (love)

### *Fill in the Blanks*

And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. 2 Timothy 2:5

### Activity: Bible-May-I

Play **Bible-May-I**. This is a modified version of the children's game Mother-May-I. Have the children each hold a Bible in their hand for this game and line up. The teacher should have an open Bible in hand. Pick things for the children to do. Teach the children to ask, "Bible, may I" before doing the what they hear.

### Lesson Text

#### **Be Ready to Start (page 4)**

Now we need to get ready for our race. What do you need to do to run in a race? You need to put on your running shoes and line up on the starting line to be ready for the "GO!" signal, don't you?

Jesus told a story about ten women who were preparing for a special "race". Each woman needed to have a lamp lit when the groom showed up to go into the wedding party. They didn't know when the groom would come. Isn't that like starting a race? We don't know exactly when the "GO!" signal will be given, but we must be ready! Jesus says that five of the women were wise, and five were foolish. Can you guess which ones were wise? They were the ones who had what they needed to light their lamps and were there waiting when the groom came. Can you guess which ones were foolish? They were the women who ran out of oil for their lamps, so they could not turn on their lights. They had to go to the store to purchase oil. While they were gone, the groom showed up and they were not there. They were not on the starting line! When they returned, the others had already started the party and the doors were shut. They were not allowed in. How sad they must have been to have waited all that time, but because they weren't prepared, they didn't get to go to the party!

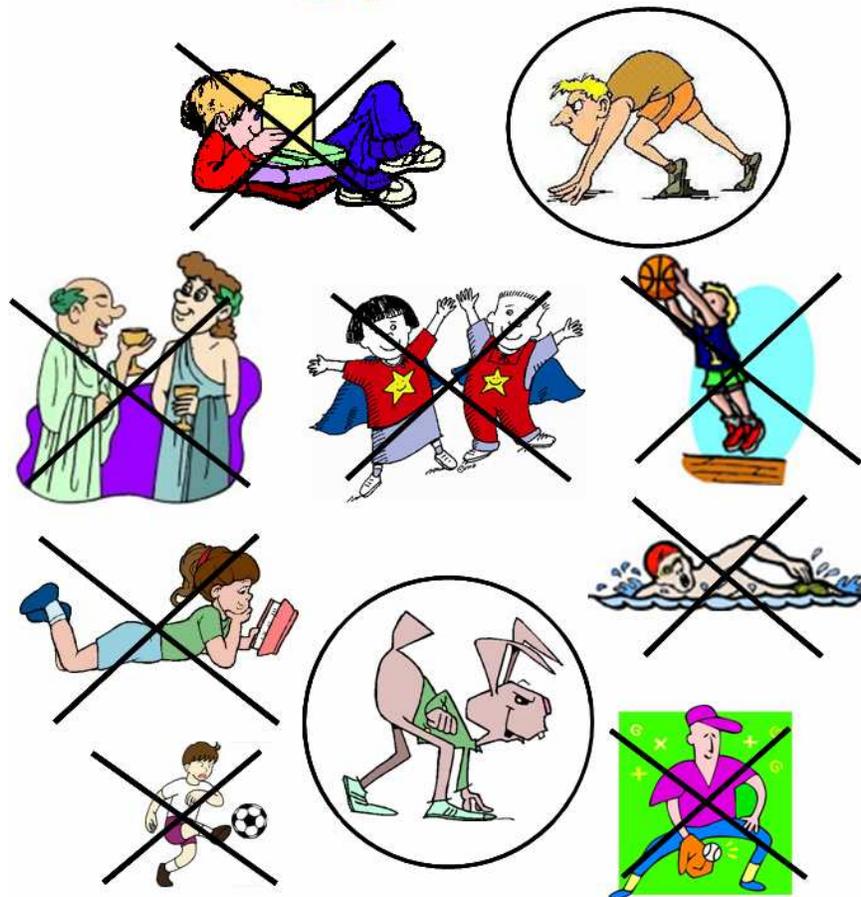


What do you think would happen if you didn't have your running shoes on and were not at the starting line when the "GO!" signal was given? Do you think you would be allowed to start the race? For the Christian race, Jesus says we are to put Him on, much like we put our shoes on, to prepare to run. We need to be like the five wise women and be prepared to run Jesus' special race!

**Which are Ready?**

Have the children draw circles around the cartoon characters on page 4 that are ready to run a race and X's through those that aren't. If they do not have their shoes on or are doing anything other than being at the starting line, they are not ready!

# Which Are Ready to Run?





## Run to Win

### Key points:

- ❖ Winning doesn't happen by accident.
- ❖ We should run with the confidence that we will win.
- ❖ We must have self-control to win.
- ❖ Carrying a lot of weight around will slow us down and keep us from winning.
- ❖ Don't take a break from being a Christian!
- ❖ Press on toward the goal line.

**Reference text:** 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Hebrews 12:1-2, and Philippians 3:14

### Lesson Text

This section is intended for a discussion led by the teacher. Students participate by filling in the blanks on page 5 as each point is discussed

Run believing you will win – 1 Corinthians 9:26. Have you ever watched a baby learn to walk? They fall down a lot, don't they? Babies believe they can do it, so they keep trying. Believing you can succeed will help you get back up when you fall. When you don't think you can do something, do you usually give up and quit?

We are not to run with doubt.

Have self-control – 1 Corinthians 9:27. Self-control is controlling what you do. Isn't it frustrating when you try to do something, but your hands just won't do what you want them to do? Do you think a runner can win a race if his body doesn't do what he tells it to do? Paul says it is important to control our bodies because if we don't, we will be *disqualified*. That means we could get kicked out of the race and not be able to win! When we get upset, do we say bad things? Do we hit or break things? That's not acting the way we should, is it? We need to practice correcting ourselves so that our mouth only says what we know it should say and our hands and feet only do what we know they should do.

We should discipline our bodies and bring them into subjection.

Don't carry a lot of weight – Hebrews 12:1. Just think how hard it would be to run a marathon while wearing a backpack full of rocks! Paul tells us to unload! We need to forgive ourselves when we do bad things. We shouldn't stay mad at other people either. Jesus says we must love each other. If we stay mad at Sally because she broke our favorite toy, then we won't be successful in having love as Jesus commanded.

We shouldn't carry a lot of weight.

Don't lay down on the job – Hebrews 12:1. Remember the story of The Tortoise and The Hare? The hare was winning the race. He thought he was way ahead and decided to take

## *Christian Olympics*



a break and rest. He fell asleep. What happened when he woke up? If we do the same thing, we might not finish the race. We need to start running and keep running until the race is over.

We are to run with endurance.

Keep your eyes straight ahead on Jesus – Hebrews 12:2. Has your mom or dad ever taken their eyes off the road while driving, maybe to look at a house or another car? Did they start to drift off the road? Staying alert and keeping your eyes on where you are going is an important part of driving a car. It is also important in running the Christian race. If we don't keep our eyes on Jesus, we might take a wrong turn and end up somewhere other than Heaven!

We are to look to Jesus.

Press on toward the finish line – Philippians 3:14. What if you decided to go back to the starting line, or to take a side trip through the woods? Would you finish the race? We need to be focused and determined to get to the finish line!

We are to continue to press toward the goal.



## **Good Attitude, Bad Attitude**

### **Key points:**

- ❖ A bad attitude can cause you to lose sight of your goal.
- ❖ A good attitude can keep you going when times get rough.

**Reference text:** Numbers 14, Genesis 3, Jeremiah 36, Jonah 4, Exodus 3

### **Lesson Text**

This section is intended for a discussion led by the teacher. Explain what attitude is and how it affects the way we behave and feel. Simple rules to keep a good attitude are:

- ❖ No complaining. Refresh the children's minds on the story of Israel wandering in the wilderness. No matter how much God did for them, the children of Israel complained constantly (Numbers 14). They were focused on what they wanted NOW and not on what they needed for the future. After all that God had done for them, they said they would rather be slaves again in Egypt!!! Complaining caused them to lose sight of their goal: the Promised Land.
- ❖ No blaming others. Adam and Eve were told by God to not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. They chose to follow Satan and eat what God said not to eat. When God questioned them, Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the serpent. They refused to take responsibility for their own actions, and as a result, they lost their reward: living in the garden with God. Denying responsibility causes us to not fix what is wrong and can keep us from finishing our race and receiving our reward. (Genesis 3)
- ❖ No shortcuts. Jehoiakim was one of the later kings after the kingdom of Israel divided. He tried to take a short cut. He cut out part of God's rules from the scrolls and burned them in the fire. Imagine his surprise when Jeremiah wrote God's words again! (Jeremiah 36) Peter tells us that the word of God endures forever. (1 Peter 1:25) Can we ignore the parts of God's word that we don't like?
- ❖ No pouting. Who knows what pouting is? Let's see some pouting faces! Jonah wanted to be the judge over Nineveh. When he disagreed with God's decision, he pouted (Jonah 4). Did Jonah's pouting help him get what he wanted? God didn't change His mind, did He? Instead, God punished Jonah by causing him to be swallowed by a great fish. God still made Jonah play by His rules, and in the end, Jonah wound up doing what God wanted, but it took him a lot longer!
- ❖ No excuses. Moses was a man of many excuses. He didn't want to do the job God told him to do (Exodus 3). What Moses was supposed to do? How did God respond to each of Moses' excuses? Does God accept excuses today?

Ask the children to give examples of failures they had due to bad attitudes.



Matching (Page 6)

1. Jonah = E. Pouted when God did something he didn't like.
2. Moses = D. Made excuses to not obey God.
3. Jehoiakim = B. Tried to remove the parts of God's rules he didn't want to follow.
4. Israel = A. Complained and was not thankful for what God did.
5. Adam = C. Blamed someone else when he did something wrong.

Find the Words (Page 7)

I P E Q Z M C N M A S H  
T O I X M J I F O Z E S  
J U L X C A L D S P I V  
F T A L L U A H E T P W  
M T U P B G S D S Y S Y  
X A M J M S R E A F W C  
P O J O N A H D E M A L  
C I S R A E L H X U B P  
C A L E B C N C H X A I  
Z J J J Z G K S B U R N  
C A N A A N O N A A S Y  
D W W Z Q J R E W A R D



## **Quitters Never Win**

### **Key points:**

- ❖ You can start the race, but not finish it.
- ❖ Don't let anyone or anything hinder you from finishing.
- ❖ Keep your eye on Jesus so you don't wander off track.
- ❖ Don't give up! If you fall down, get back up and get on with it!

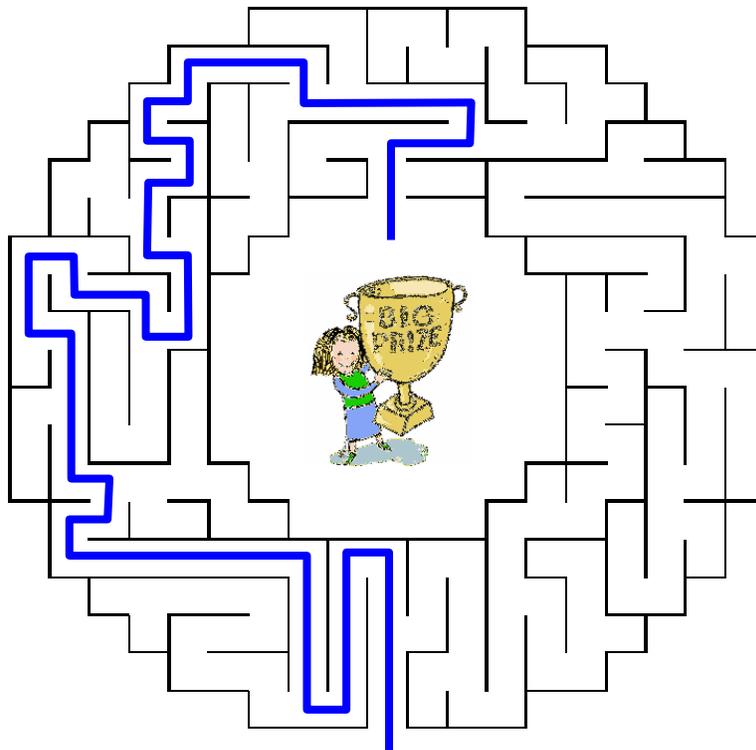
**Reference text:** Numbers 14, Genesis 3, Jeremiah 36, Jonah 4, Exodus 3, 2 Timothy 4:7, 9-10, 2 John 2:8, Galatians 5:7.

### **Lesson Text**

We are warned in 2 John 2:8 to be watchful so we don't lose what we have worked for and as a result, not receive our full reward. We are warned again by Paul in Galatians 5:7 about being hindered in our run.

Discuss the story of Mary Decker Slaney. She tripped, fell, and got discouraged. Rather than get back up and continue the race, she quit. How does that apply to us in the Christian race?

### **Be a Hurdle Jumper (Page 9)**





## **Receive Your Prize**

### **Key points:**

- ❖ God is the One who gives the prize.
- ❖ Our prize is in Heaven, not on Earth.
- ❖ Our prize is an eternal, never ending crown.
- ❖ We will receive the prize if we run until the end of our lives.
- ❖ Everyone will receive a prize according to their own works when Jesus returns.
- ❖ Don't be a Loser!

### **Lesson Text**

In Olympic and other races, there is only one first place winner. This can be sad for those who work hard but do not win. The Christian race is very different: each person competes against himself and is rewarded by God based on whether or not he follows God's rules.

Help the children read the verses and answer the questions on page 10 as a group. Explain the meaning of any words in the scripture that they do not understand (e.g., "diligently"). Have the children write the answers in their own words.

1. To whom does God give the prize? (Hebrews 11:6) Those who search hard for God.
2. What is our prize? (1 Corinthians 9:25) A never ending crown.
3. How long must we run to receive our prize? (Revelation 2:10) Until we die.
4. Who will come and give the prizes? (Matthew 16:27) Jesus.

Read Luke 6:23, Matthew 5:11-12, Luke 6:35, and Matthew 6:1-18. Help the children determine which of these statements are true and which are false.

True      If people are mean to you and lie about you for Jesus' sake, you will have a great reward in heaven.

False      If you love your friends and hate your enemies, you will have a great reward.

False      We are to do good things so others will see us and think we are good people.

True      God rewards us when we do good deeds secretly.



### What did You Learn?

This is a time for review. Each picture shows someone doing something from our lesson. Have the students write in their own words what the person is doing.

The image contains five illustrations and five text labels connected by colored lines:

- Illustration 1:** A person in a purple singlet and green shorts is performing a deadlift with a barbell.
- Illustration 2:** A person in orange shorts is in a starting crouch for a race.
- Illustration 3:** A person in a green singlet is running.
- Illustration 4:** A person in a red singlet is using a handcycle.
- Illustration 5:** A person in a white singlet and blue shorts is running with arms raised in celebration.

The text labels on the right are:

- Not letting anything stop him
- Finishing a race
- Being ready
- Building up strength to run
- Running a race

The connections are as follows:

- Illustration 1 (Deadlift) is connected to "Building up strength to run" (purple line).
- Illustration 2 (Starting crouch) is connected to "Being ready" (orange line).
- Illustration 3 (Running) is connected to "Running a race" (blue line).
- Illustration 4 (Handcycle) is connected to "Not letting anything stop him" (red line).
- Illustration 5 (Celebrating) is connected to "Finishing a race" (green line).