



# Christian Olympics



3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</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 3-4**

### **Lesson Introduction**

#### **Lesson Text**

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 specifically address: preparation to run and the importance of practice, how to run and the importance of attitude, not being a quitter, and what is our prize and how and when do we receive it.

Start off the lesson by discussing some general things about competitive games. Every game has people who:

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

Lead the children in a discussion about who does these things in the Christian race.

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

#### **Key points:**

- ❖ You have to know what they are and play by the rules.
- ❖ It takes practice to win.
- ❖ If you don't start, you can't compete.
- ❖ You must be prepared for when the race starts

**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**

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

Stress the importance of understanding the rules of any game you plan to play. What would happen if you did not understand the rules? (2 Timothy 2:5) God has rules for us to follow, and we find those rules in the Bible. (2 Timothy 3:15-17) We should study God's word to learn His rules for us. (Romans 10:17, 2 Timothy 2:15, Psalm 119:9-16)

##### *Crossword Puzzle*

##### **Across**

5. Those who love Jesus will keep these. John 14:15-23 (commandments)

##### **Down**

1. We are to obey these people. Ephesians 6:1 (parents)



2. We should meditate on things that are noble, just, pure, \_\_\_\_\_, and of good report. Philippians 4:8 (lovely)
3. Love one \_\_\_\_\_ fervently with a pure heart. 1 Peter 1:22 (another)
4. We make melody in our hearts to God by doing this. Ephesians 5:19 (singing)

*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

**Practice to Win (page 4)**

Stress that athletes practice to grow strong and be able to endure to the end of the race. What happens when someone doesn't practice? Do they get any better? We should practice too (Hebrews 10:36) and grow strong in the Lord and the power of His might. (Ephesians 6:10) What will happen if we do not practice enough? (1 Corinthians 9:26-27)

Some things a Christian can practice are: having patience, being kind, praying, singing, and teaching others about Jesus.

**Be ready to Start (page 4)**

Stress the importance of being ready. Compare how at the start of the foot race, athletes are given warning of the race start ("On your marks! Get set!"), but you don't know precisely when the judge will say "Go".

Have the students read Matthew 25:1-13. Discuss the five foolish and five wise virgins. Why were the five foolish? What happened as a result of their lack of preparedness? We should always have oil for our lamps and let our lights shine for God.

Phrase: Always be prepared!

## ***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 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 stay focused and get back up when you fall. When you don't think you can do something, are you more likely to give up and quit?

We are not to run with uncertainty (or doubt)

Have self-control – 1 Corinthians 9:27. Isn't it frustrating when you try to do something, but your hands just won't do exactly what your mind wants them to do? Do you think an athlete can win a race if his body doesn't do what he tells it to do? Paul says it is important to control our own bodies because otherwise, we can be disqualified. When we get upset, do we say bad things? Do we hit or break things? Practice, practice, practice is what is needed here.

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 carrying a load of bricks on your back! Paul tells us to unload! Stress the need to forgive ourselves when we do bad things and to not hold grudges against other people. Explain that we are to love each other. If we hold a grudge against Sally because she broke our favorite toy, then we won't be successful in practicing love the way God wants us to.

We shouldn't carry a lot of weight.

Don't lay down on the job – Hebrews 12:1. Remember the tortoise and the hare? The hare was winning the race. He thought he was way ahead and decided to take a break and rest. He fell asleep. What happened when he woke up?

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 a 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 perhaps 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 divided. He tried to take a short cut. He cut part of God's rules of the scrolls and burned them in the fire. Imagine his surprise when Jeremiah wrote God's words again! (Jeremiah 36) Can we ignore the parts of God's word that we don't like?
- ❖ No pouting. Jonah wanted to be the judge over Nineveh. When he disagreed with God's call, he pouted over Nineveh's repentance (Jonah 4).
- ❖ No excuses. Moses was a man of many excuses. He didn't want to start the task God had given to 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?
- ❖ Just do it. Ask the children to give examples of failures they have experienced or seen due to bad attitudes.

### *Matching (page 6)*

Jonah = E  
Moses = D  
Jehoiakim = B

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Israel = A  
Adam = C

*An Important Hidden Message (page 7)*  
Be a winner, not a loser!

### **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!

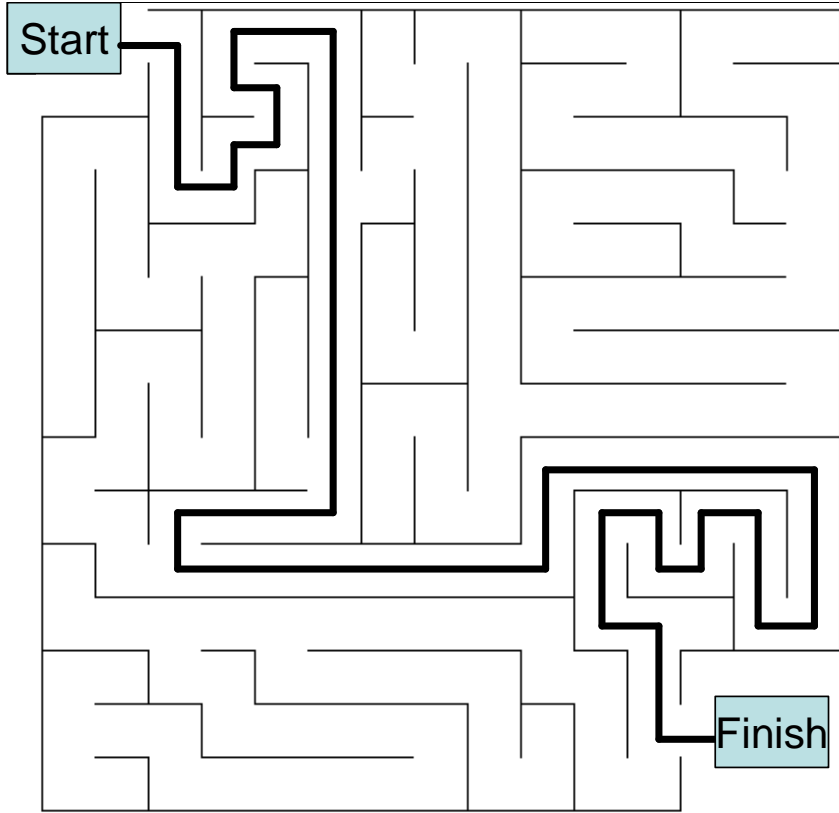
**Reference text:** Numbers 14, Genesis 3, Jeremiah 36, Jonah 4, Exodus 3, 2 Timothy 4:7, 9-10, 2 John 2:8, Galatians 5:7.

#### **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 reward.
- ❖ Our reward is an eternal, never ending crown.
- ❖ We must run until the end of our lives.
- ❖ Everyone will receive a reward according to their own works when Jesus returns.

#### **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.

Have the children read the verses and answer the questions as a group. Have the children write the answers in their own words.

1. Who does God reward? (Hebrews 11:6) Those who diligently seek him.
2. What is our reward? (1 Corinthians 9:25) An imperishable crown.
3. How long must we run to receive our reward? (Revelation 2:10) Until we die.



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4. What must we do to prevent someone from stealing our reward? (Revelation 3:11) Hold fast to what we have.
5. How and when are rewards given out? (Revelation 22:12, Matthew 16:27) Every man will be rewarded according to his own works when Jesus comes again with His angels.

## Receiving Our Reward

### Key points:

- ❖ Our reward is in Heaven, not on Earth.
- ❖ Don't be a Loser!

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. Help them correct the false statements.

True

If men persecute you and falsely accuse you for Jesus' sake, you will have a great reward in heaven.

False

If you love your enemies and give them loans ~~to repay~~ expecting nothing in repayment, you will have a great reward.

False

The ~~early Christians~~ hypocrites did charitable deeds to be seen of men and received a great their reward ~~in heaven~~ on earth.

True

God openly rewards those who do good deeds in secret.

## 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.

1. Practicing
2. Ready to start
3. Running the race
4. Not being hindered
5. Finishing the race