

The Faith Hall of Fame: Run the Race

Lesson 1

LESSON OVERVIEW

Key Point: ⇒ Real winners in life are not the strongest or the fastest, but those who fully follow Jesus.

Bible Story: Ahimaaz (akh-ee-mah'-ats) runs to bring news to King David.
2 Samuel 15:10, 14; 17:17-22; 18:23:27-29

Challenge Verse: Hebrews 12:1—“Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily ensnares us, and run with endurance the race that lies before us” (HCSB)

Younger Version: Hebrews 12:1—“Let us lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily ensnares us, and run with endurance the race that lies before us” (HCSB)

ITEMS NEEDED

Each class needs the following:

- About 15 balloons, depending on your class size.
- About 15 crackers, depending on your class size.
- About 15 pieces of bubble gum, depending on your class size.
- About 15 marshmallows, depending on your class size.
- 4 pieces of bread
- 1 Racing Flag for each student
- Signs that say *Absalom—King David’s Son, Ahimaaz, and King David*

BEFORE CLASS

- Pray for each student by name.

AS STUDENTS ARRIVE

- Greet each student by name as they enter.
- Give each student an attendance sticker for the attendance chart, and feel free to add guest names to the chart. This will give them a sense of belonging.
- Get to know any guests and help them fill out a guest form.
- Be sure to smile—Your smile and attitude sets the atmosphere as students enter.

OPENING ACTIVITY

Control Tool

Anytime you say, “Ready, Set, Go” students should shout back, “Run the Race for Jesus!”

Leader: Ready, Set, Go—Kids: Run the Race for Jesus!

Have a competition to see if the girls or the boys can be louder.

SAY: Today is Race Day and to begin our time together we are going to have a couple of races...

(NOTE: There are three times in today’s lesson when your class will do races, so save some of the ideas for later.)

Choose from the following fun race ideas or create your own races to fit your room and your students. Also, you can do races where everybody competes or where just a few volunteers compete.

IDEAS:

- Have a running race—outside (if the weather is good).
- Who can walk around the room the fastest? But if you run, you’re out.
- Who can skip or gallop from one wall to another the fastest?
- Who can crab or bear crawl the fastest?
- Who can eat a piece of bread the fastest?
- Who can tie their shoes the fastest?
- Who can do 10 jumping jacks the fastest?
- Who can blow up a balloon and tie it the fastest?
- Who can eat a cracker and then whistle afterwards the fastest?
- Who can chew up a piece of bubble gum and blow a bubble the fastest?
- Who can eat a marshmallow the fastest?
- Who can say the alphabet the fastest?
- Who can say the alphabet backwards the fastest?
- Who can touch three colors in the room and come back to your seat the fastest?
- Who can wad up a piece of paper and shoot it in the trash can the fastest and the most accurate?

After each race section, SAY: Let’s see who can be the fastest back to their seats.

Control Tool

Leader: Ready, Set, Go—Kids: Run the Race for Jesus!

BIBLE SKILLS

Ask the students

- **How many of you have ever run in a race?**
- **Do you think that you are a fast runner?**
- **What is the longest race that you have run?**

SAY: The Bible compares the Christian life to a race.

Ask the students—**Who is a Christian?** (*Anyone who has given his life to Christ; a person who has been saved.*)

Ask the students—**What do you think “the Christian life” means?** (*This is talking about how a Christian, or one who knows Christ, should live.*)

Ask the students—**The last time you ran in a race, what was your goal?** (*To win; to be the fastest.*)

KEY: In running races, you try to be the fastest. That’s how you win. But in life you win by following Jesus. “Winning” the Christian life isn’t about being the strongest or the fastest, but about faithfully living for Jesus every day.

Control Tool

Leader: **Ready, Set, Go**—Kids: **Run the Race for Jesus!**

CHALLENGE VERSE

*Tell your kids to get ready for a Bible drill.
Get ready... Hebrews 12:1-2...Go!*

Read Hebrews 12:1-2 from your Bible

Ask the students—**Who do you think the Bible is talking about when it says that you are surrounded by a “cloud of witnesses”?**

Choose six volunteers—Tell one that he is the runner. Have the others surround him.

SAY: At a major race, the stands are full of cheering people. These people are cheering the runners on.

Ask your volunteers—**If you were going to cheer for him in a race, what do you think it might sound like?** (Have them act it out. “Cheer him on! Cheer him on!”)

SAY: For you, there are a great number of people who have lived faithfully for God in the past. In fact the whole previous chapter of Hebrews (chapter 11) talks about some of these faithful people. They weren't perfect, but they lived a life of faith. These people are cheering you on to keep living for Jesus.

Ask the students—**Who else is cheering you on to live for Jesus?** (Your parents? Grandparents? Friends? Your teachers? Ministers? Angels? Everyone else who is following Jesus?)

Choose another volunteer—one who has shoes that tie.

SAY: I want to see how fast you can run and touch that wall and come back.
Ready...set...go!

Let him run.

SAY: Now I want to change the race a little. (*Hand him something from your room that is big or heavy, but safe, with which to run.*)

Let him run again.

Ask the students—**How did carrying that slow you down?**

SAY: I want to change the race a little again. (*Take the object from him and instead, tie his shoes together.*)

Let him run again.

SAY: No runner would ever race with their shoes tied together. They would trip. They couldn't win a race that way. Listen again to our verse today. (*Direct them to the Challenge Verse Poster.*)

SAY: The Bible says to lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily ensnares or trips us up.

Ask the students—**These things would hinder you in a race, but what are some things that can hinder you from living for Jesus?** (*Sin—any sin, big or small, will trip you up. Also any baggage—i.e., self-image, things from the past, friends that try to get you to do wrong things, etc.—that makes it easier for you to stumble into sin or to slow down or stop following Jesus.*)

SAY: Just like you would take a weight off your ankles if you were getting ready to run a race, God wants you to remove anything from your life that hinders you from fully following Him.

Control Tool

Leader: **Ready, Set, Go**—Kids: **Run the Race for Jesus!**

BIBLE LESSON

Today we're going to meet a "runner" from the Bible. He was a messenger and a young priest.

Choose 1 volunteer—Give him the *Ahimaaz* sign

SAY: Meet Ahimaaz (akh-ee-mah'-ats). This is a Bible character that many people know very little about because his name only shows up a couple of times during a difficult time in the life of King David.

Choose 2 volunteers—Give one the *Absalom—King David's Son* sign and the other the *King David* sign

Call up several other volunteers to be secret messengers.

SAY: King David's son, Absalom was plotting to take over the kingdom. He sent secret messengers (*send the messengers to different corners of the room and send your Absalom volunteer to a far wall*) to all the tribes of Israel saying that as soon as they heard the ram's horn, they were to say, "Absalom has been crowned king in Hebron" (2 Samuel 15:10). Others joined him and before long a messenger arrived in Jerusalem. He said, "All Israel has joined Absalom in a conspiracy against you!"

Have King David repeat after you, "Then we must flee at once, or it will be too late! If we get out of the city before Absalom arrives we will be spared from disaster" (2 Samuel 15:14).

SAY: King David and those loyal to him fled the capital city and the Bible says that everyone cried loudly as the king and his followers passed by (15:23). *Have everyone in your class cry loudly.*

SAY: But wait! Even though David didn't understand what was going on, he still trusted God. David was a man of faith. He said, "If the Lord sees fit he will bring me back...let him do what seems best to him." *Send your David volunteer to the opposite side of the room from Absalom and ask Absalom's messengers to have a seat.*

SAY: But David also had a plan. He told Zadok the priest to go back to Jerusalem with his son Ahimaaz (*ask your Ahimaaz volunteer to raise his hand and have everyone cheer for him*) and that he send Ahimaaz and Jonathan, another priest's son, as messengers to him with a report of what was happening.

SAY: Absalom entered Jerusalem. (*Move your Absalom volunteer to you.*) He made plans with his advisors about how to attack King David, but one of his advisors was secretly David's spy. He sent word of their plans through Ahimaaz to the king.

SAY: It's such a good story, I want you to hear it straight out of the Bible. But first I want to assign you some parts:

- *When you hear the name Absalom, say, "Boo!"*
- *When you hear the name Ahimaaz say, "Run and tell the king"*
- *When you hear the name David, say, "Yeah!"*

Read from your Bible 2 Samuel 17:17-22

Or you can read the story below from the New Living Translation (NLT):

Jonathan and **Ahimaaz** had been staying at En-rogel so as not to be seen entering and leaving the city. Arrangements had been made for a servant girl to bring them the message they were to take to **King David**. But a boy spotted them at En-rogel, and he told **Absalom** about it. So they quickly escaped to Bahurim, where a man hid them down inside a well in his courtyard. The man's wife put a cloth over the top of the well and scattered grain on it to dry in the sun; so no one suspected they were there.

When **Absalom's** men arrived, they asked her, "Have you seen **Ahimaaz** and Jonathan?"

The woman replied, "They were here, but they crossed over the brook."
Absalom's men looked for them without success and returned to Jerusalem.

Then the two men [**Ahimaaz** and Jonathan] crawled out of the well and hurried on to **King David**. "Quick!" they told him, "cross the Jordan [River] tonight!" And they told him how Ahithophel had advised that he be captured and killed. So **David** and all the people with him went across the Jordan River during the night, and they were all on the other bank before dawn.

Race Break

If your students are a bit wiggly, give them a few more race challenges. If not, then continue with the story and save the rest of the races for the end of the lesson.

BIBLE LESSON Continued...

SAY: Absalom pursued the king and there was a great battle, but King David's army won. (Ask you Absalom volunteer to have a seat.) Ahimaaz said to the commander, (*have your Ahimaaz volunteer repeat after you*) "Let me run to the king with the good news that the Lord has rescued him from his enemies."

SAY: But the commander said no. He said, “You can be my messenger another time.” And he sent another man who bowed and ran off. But Ahimaaz continued to plead to go also. “There will be no reward for your news,” the commander said. “Yes, but let me go anyway,” he begged. (*Have your Ahimaaz volunteer repeat after you.*)

SAY: So the commander let him run and he ran and he must have been a fast runner because he passed the other messenger and arrived first. When the king’s men saw him coming, they said, “The first man runs like Ahimaaz.” Apparently he was known for how he ran. When he arrived, he cried out to the king, “Everything is all right!” (*Have your Ahimaaz volunteer repeat this—Then have him yell it out.*) “Praise to the Lord your God, who has handed over the rebels who dared to stand against my lord the king.”

SAY: Then David asked about Absalom, but Ahimaaz hadn’t been sent with the message. So, he said, “...There was a lot of commotion. But I didn’t know what was happening.” Soon the other messenger arrived to deliver the full news of what had happened.

KEY: Ahimaaz didn’t run to King David for a reward. He probably wanted to run for the pleasure and satisfaction of bringing good news to the king he loved. He didn’t run to NO REASON. And we don’t live for no reason. He ran with a purpose and we live for a purpose. Our purpose is not to be the fastest or the strongest, but to live faithfully for Jesus each and every day.

SAY: Today each of you will leave here with a racing flag. Put this flag somewhere you will see it often and let it remind you that you are in a race in life and to live for Jesus every day.

Re-read today’s challenge verse and challenge your kids to get rid of anything that might hinder them from fully following Christ.

PRAYER TIME & WRAP-UP

Control Tool

Leader: **Ready, Set, Go**—Kids: **Run the Race for Jesus!**

Ask your students if they have anything they would like to pray for and list their requests below:

List Prayer Requests Here

Be sure to pray specifically for each request above.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Try to come for the next 5 weeks so you don't miss any of the fun that we'll be having during this special series.
- Give each child a **Racing Flag** as a reminder of what he learned today.
- Next week is **Donut Day**.

EXTRA TIME

Use any extra time to RUN SOME MORE RACES and help your students memorize the verse for today. Between each race, have them repeat it after or with you.



“Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily ensnares us, and run with endurance the race that lies before us.” Hebrews 12:1 (HCSB)



“Let us lay aside every weight
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