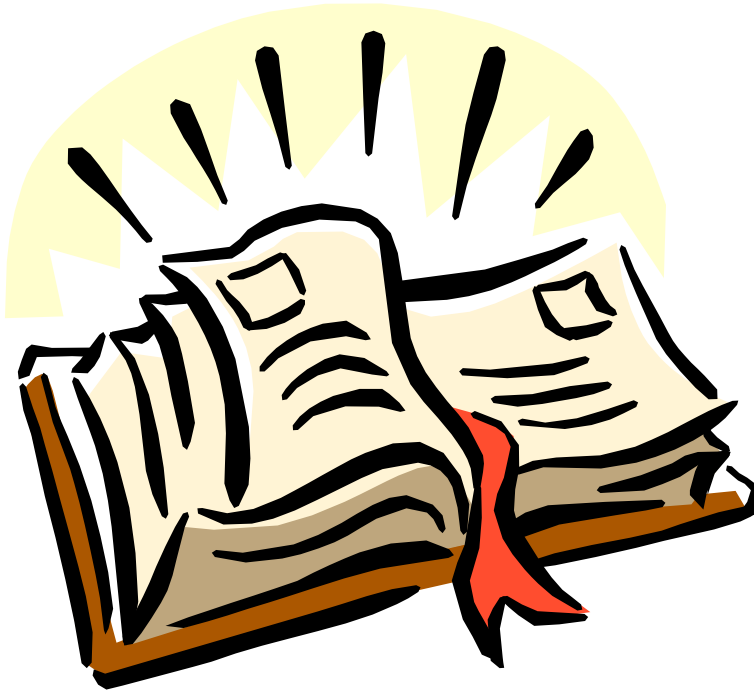


# Bible Time for Kids!



**CHILDREN'S DEVOTIONS FOR THE WEEK OF:**

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**LESSON TITLE: Running the Race**

**THEME: Run the race of faith to win!**

**SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27**



Dear Parents...

Welcome to Bible Time for Kids! This is a series of daily devotions for children and their families. Our purpose is to supplement our Sunday morning curriculum and give you an opportunity to encourage your children to develop a daily devotional life. We hope you and your family will be blessed as you study God's Word together.

This week we learned about Running the Race. The theme was "Run the race of faith to win!

Have you ever prepared for a lengthy race such as a marathon? One of the most important things about a marathon race is the preparation it takes in order for someone to win the race or even to make it to the finish line. In this weeks devotion we will compare our Christian walk to that of one who is preparing to run in a marathon. Discipline and diligence is required to win. There will be many occasions in our race when we will get tired, distracted, or when we become ready to just give up. But through Jesus we can overcome and finish the race!

The section of scripture that we studied was **1 Corinthians 9:24-27**. The following five devotions are based on either the scripture and/or the theme for Sunday's lesson. As a starting point it would be good for you to review these verses with your children.

These devotions are designed to help you reinforce Sunday's lesson throughout the week with your children, provide some more ideas for the application of God's Word in your children's lives and provide a tool to help in family devotions.

Obviously children at various age levels will respond to the devotional in different ways. You may want to add your own ideas to these to make them more age appropriate.

May the Lord bless you as you study His Word together!

# Run to Win!

**Text: 2 Timothy 4:7** - "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

**Also read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27**

Have you or someone you know ever run a marathon? A marathon is a long-distance race where the runners run 26 miles. It requires a lot of preparation, patience and hard work. In order for someone to run in a marathon, he or she needs to get their body in shape. When a person gets their body in shape it means that they have to deny themselves the foods that are not good for them and then exercise every single day, even during those times they don't feel like it. They need to be prepared in order to win the race.

During the race, the runner needs to have a lot of strength and power to keep from getting tired and be able to stay in the race until the end. By training their bodies and minds they will be able to succeed even when they become tired during the race. When someone who is not prepared tries to run in a marathon, most likely they will quit or give up because their body and mind is not able to finish the race. By quitting or giving up, they won't receive the prize that a winner or a finisher would receive after crossing the finish line.

When we ask Jesus to come into our hearts, we begin preparing for our race as a Christian. During our life in Christ, we will experience some bad times and some good times. Like a marathon runner, we will need to be in spiritual shape to endure those bad times. By being in God's Word, denying ourselves the things we "feel" like doing, and following Him, we will prepare our lives for the hard work that lies ahead of us. But as the Apostle Paul tells us there is a great prize that awaits every Christian who finishes this race. Over the next few days we will look at the life of a marathon runner. What it takes to run in a race and how to prepare for it. The stories can be applied to our lives as Christians. We need to run the race of faith to win!

- Have you ever prepared for something that lasts a long time? (a trip, race, or game?)
- What are some things that you would need to do to get ready to run a marathon race?
- What do you need to do to get ready to run the race of faith?

## Kid's Bible Dictionary



**Race of Faith:** Our life as a Christian compared to a race

# Deny Yourself

**Text: Matt. 16:24** – “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”

**Also read Luke 9:23-25**

The big race was in one month! Mr. Johnson and his 13 year-old daughter, Elizabeth, were planning to run in the local Sweetheart Mini-Marathon on Valentines Day. The race was 6 miles long and both Mr. Johnson and his daughter were getting prepared for it. Preparing for the marathon was going to take a lot of work. They both knew they would have to give up certain kinds of foods, like treats and candy along with other things they enjoyed in order to prepare their bodies for the race. If they didn't prepare themselves they wouldn't be able to win the race and may not even be able to finish the race. If a runner isn't prepared they can sometimes get cramps in their stomach, become very tired, or even injure their muscles.

“We need to deny ourselves of a lot of things we enjoyed in the past,” said Mr. Johnson to his daughter. “Yeah, we can't eat candy or have late night snacks like we used to. We also need to get plenty of rest and drink a lot of water,” said Elizabeth. “It's going to be really tough so we need to turn away when the temptation arises to drink a soda or eat a candy bar,” replied Mr. Johnson. “I am ready to deny myself so I can finish the race. Are you dad?” “I sure am. I know it will be very difficult at times but through Christ all things are possible,” dad said with a smile.

Mr. Johnson and his daughter are taking the steps to prepare to run a marathon race. The first step they are taking is to deny themselves the kinds of food and other things that can make their bodies tired during the course of the race. They know in order to win and finish the race their bodies need to be clean and free from junk. In our race as Christians we are looking to that finish line also. We want to finish and receive the reward that God promises us. Our preparation can be similar to that of Mr. Johnson and his daughter. We need to deny ourselves, say no to our flesh and desires, to make sure we are free from all the junk this world has to offer. We must follow Jesus and deny ourselves those sinful temptations so we can finish as a winner! **Continued on Day Three...**

- What did Elizabeth and her father have to give up to run the race?
- Can you think of some ways that we can deny ourselves as believers in Jesus?

## Kid's Bible Dictionary



**Deny Yourself:** To keep from satisfying one's desires.

Day Three

# Stay on Course

**Text: Proverbs 4:23** – “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.”

**Also read 2 Peter 1:5-10**

**Continued from Day Two...** Over the next few weeks Mr. Johnson and his daughter worked out early in the morning and after school. They would wake-up at 5:30 every morning and run 2 miles and then eat a healthy breakfast of fruits and grains. When they returned home from work and school they would stretch-out and run 4-6 miles. After their run they would stretch-out again and ride their bicycles for 45 minutes. They would continue to do this every day until two days before the race. Their bodies were feeling better and their minds were sharp. Getting in shape for the race was difficult but it would pay off in the long run.

Almost everyday Mr. Johnson would receive phone calls from his friends asking him if he could go golfing or play racquetball. Mr. Johnson loved to golf and play racquetball. It was very tempting for him to get off course from his preparation to do something he desired to do. There were also days when Mr. Johnson and his daughter didn't feel like getting out of bed to start the training. They wanted to be lazy and just lie around the house all day, but they knew if they were to get off course that their marathon race would suffer.

As runners in our race of faith for Jesus, we need to be **diligent** in our efforts. Diligence is when we work real hard and do our very best at something. There will be times when we feel like giving up or taking a break. We need to stay focused on the goal of finishing the race. The only way we can do that is by keeping our sights on Jesus. When we take our eyes off of him we begin to panic and sink just like Peter did after he took his eyes off of Jesus after walking on the water (Matthew 14:28-30). With help from the Holy Spirit, we can get through anything that is difficult or that keeps us from running in our race of faith.  
**Continued on Day Four...**

- Are you on course in the race of faith?
- How can you get back on or stay on course for your faith in Christ?
- What are some ways that you can be **diligent** in your relationship with Jesus?

## Kid's Bible Dictionary



**Diligence** – Working steadily and carefully to do my best.

# Struggling to Finish

**Text: Galatians 6:7** – “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.”

**Also read Hebrews 12:1-2**

**Continued from Day Three...** The gun went off with a BANG! The race had begun. Mr. Johnson and his daughter took off running. They didn't start off real fast because they knew this would be a long race. This was the big day they were waiting for. Would all the hard work and discipline pay off? They both were physically and spiritually ready for the race. Would they reap the reward of finishing the race? Maybe they would even win the first place prize. They had gone through both good times and bad times during their preparation time. They had their sights on finishing the marathon and doing well.

After about a half hour into the race, Elizabeth began to doubt her ability to finish. Her father noticed that she was slowing down, so he slowed down too and ran next to her. “Are you okay Elizabeth?” “I can't do this anymore,” she cried. “I am too tired and I have a blister on my big toe.” “Stay focused, Elizabeth”, cried Mr. Johnson. “I have total confidence in you. I know you can finish this race. Follow me!” Mr. Johnson pulled ahead of Elizabeth. Elizabeth focused her eyes on the back of her father's shirt. She vowed not to look away until she finished. Elizabeth's looked intently at the back of her father's shirt for the rest of the race. People were lined up on the streets screaming and shouting for the runners, but Elizabeth wouldn't acknowledge any of them. She was focused on her father and nothing could distract her, and she finished the race!

There are so many distractions in this world. It is so easy for us to take our eyes off of Jesus and put them on the things around us. Satan will try anything he can to cause us to struggle in our race of faith. He will bring distractions into our lives to try to make us take our eyes off of Jesus. When our eyes are off of Jesus, we may get tired and want to give up in the race. But Jesus has already run this race and is with us and right in front of us, like Elizabeth's dad. He is telling us to focus on Him until the race is over. He will help us to finish. Run hard, look to Jesus, and win! **Continued on Day Five...**

- What did Elizabeth do to finish the race?
- What should we do when we get tired or distracted from our race of faith?

## Kid's Bible Dictionary



**Distract:** To draw away one's attention or focus.

# The Reward

**Text: Matthew 25:34** - "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'"

**Also read Romans 8:17**

**Continued from Day Four...** To win a race we have learned it takes hard work, self-denial, and a lot of exercise and preparation. Those who win the race don't watch the race from the grandstand nor do they just jog a couple of laps each morning. They must first be in the race and train their bodies and minds for what lies ahead of them. Mr. Johnson and his daughter went through the hard work of preparation for a marathon race. We read about their training and their difficulties. At times, they wanted to give up but they continued to press on towards the goal of being a winner and finishing the race.

In our lives as Christians, there is a reward waiting for us also. In 1 Corinthians 9:25, Paul tells us that we need to run the race of faith to receive an everlasting crown. Running the race of faith takes discipline and diligence. There will be times when we feel like giving up and times when we get distracted. We need to remember that Jesus in us is greater than the opposition that is in this world. Philippians 4:13 says "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." As a Christian in this race we need strength. We can find all of the strength we need in Jesus.

Bible study, worship, and prayer will get us ready for the race ahead. Remember, when you are faced with discouragement and difficulty to focus on the one who is in front of you, His name is Jesus Christ. We have an everlasting crown, a wonderful eternity with Jesus once we cross the finish line.

- How are you preparing for the race of faith?

## Kid's Prayer Time



This week we have learned about running the race of faith to win. Preparation is one of the most important aspects of running in a race. Getting prepared requires discipline and diligence. As Christians, we are preparing ourselves to win the race of faith. Pray that the Lord will give you strength to continue with diligence and that you won't become distracted in your preparation.

# Memory Verse...

First and Second Grade

"In a race all the runners run but only one gets the prize. Run to win!"

Third Grade and Above

"Do you know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize. Run in such a way that you may obtain it."

1 Corinthians 9:24