



LESSON 12: PRIMARY SMALL GROUP

Running the Race

MAIN IDEA:

Just like athletes preparing for competition must train their bodies through discipline, so Christians must run in the life of faith and train through spiritual discipline.

BIBLE PASSAGES:

- Matthew 25:36–44
- Luke 5:16
- Mark 1:45

MEMORY VERSE:

“Jesus told him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.’”

John 14:6, NLT



Prepare your heart to teach.
Plan for the lesson.



Connect with the kids and make them feel heard and cared for. (15 minutes)



Facilitate activity and study to help kids know and love Jesus. (20-25 minutes)



Lead kids to live out the mission of the Gospel. (5-10 minutes)

Prepare



Prepare your heart to teach.
Plan for the lesson.

QUESTIONS:

- How can you be praying for the students this week?
- Are there any specific students or requests you can pray for?
- Are there any adaptations that you can make to the lesson this week to better serve the kids in your small group or make your small group more effective?
- How can you connect with the students outside of the club over the next few weeks?
- Is there a sporting event or performance you can go to? Can you plan a casual park or fast-food meet-up with them and their families (as a group or individually)?

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Bible
- Name tags
- Snacks, 1 per child
- Printout 2, 1 per small group (cut prior to club)
- (Optional) Hacky Sack ball or other small ball
- (Optional) Balloon
- Printout 3, 1 per child
- Pens or pencils, 1 per child
- Memory Verse Cards, 1 per child

Connect



Connect with the kids and make them feel heard and cared for.
(15 minutes)

Small Group Session 1

ICE BREAKER:

Distribute name tags and snacks. Choose one of the following icebreaker activities to do together while children eat their snack:

- Option 1: Ask the children to share their highs and lows (the best and worst things that happened to them either today or from the past week).
- Option 2: Ask the children to take turns sharing how they're feeling today using the "How Are You Feeling?" chart (from the CKC Games Bag).

PRAY TOGETHER:

Collect prayer requests from the students. The leader or a student can pray for the entire group or a leader can pair up students and invite them to pray for one another.

ACTIVITY: PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Have your small group stand up and get into a circle. Share with the group instructions for playing Hacky Sack. Some students may not be familiar or good at this game, so encourage everyone to try for a few minutes.

Instructions: One player starts by tossing the hacky Sack into the air and lightly kicking it with their foot. The goal is to keep the hacky Sack off the ground for as long as possible, using any part of your body except your hands and arms. Use your feet, knees, chest, or head to tap the hacky sack to keep it in the air. Try passing the hacky Sack to other players in the circle. Each player takes a turn trying to keep it going without letting it hit the ground.

If you want, keep count of how many times the hacky Sack is hit before it touches the ground. The group can try to beat their previous record of consecutive hits.

If you believe this may be too challenging for the age of your small group, a balloon or beach ball can be substituted. Have students use their hands to keep the balloon from touching the ground.

Look at the questions below, and choose several you believe would be best in leading your students to understand the importance of discipline.

Ask:

- **Do you have a favorite athlete?**
- **Who is your favorite athlete?**
- **What do athletes need to do to get better at their sport?**
- **How do you think practicing every day helps them improve?**
- **What would happen if an athlete didn't practice or train?**

- **How does skipping practice affect their ability to win or do well in a game?**
- **How do you think being disciplined helps athletes win races or games?**
- **Do you think it's easy or hard to stay disciplined? Why?**
- **What can we learn from athletes about discipline that we can use in our own lives, like in school or at home?**
- **What do you think the Bible says about being disciplined?**
- **How does being disciplined in reading the Bible or praying help us grow closer to God?**

Say: This year we have been focusing on heroes of the faith, people who loved and obeyed God. They were not perfect, but they are great examples for us to follow.

We look up to athletes, but every athlete we know has worked hard and spent hours, days, and years practicing their sport. Today we want to talk about the importance of running the race of faith. We can't be lazy. We need to be disciplined, which means working each day to learn and grow in our faith.

In our lesson today, we will get a brief picture of what discipline looks like.

Close in prayer for students before dismissing to Large Group or Games.

Heart



Facilitate activity and study to help kids know and love Jesus.
(20-25 minutes)

Small Group Session 2

Review the main idea of the lesson with the students:

Say: **Just like athletes preparing for competition must train their bodies through discipline, so Christians must run in the life of faith and train through spiritual discipline.**

Ask: **What things do you think would be good practices to train for growing your faith?**

Make a list of these things. Help students to include some of the following things as they are common spiritual disciplines: prayer, Bible reading, Bible study, going to church, silence/quiet, solitude, fasting, devotional reading, singing, attending worship services, journaling, service, guidance, and confession.

HELPFUL HINT

If you would like, feel free to share with the students about how you personally incorporate some or all these disciplines into your life.

ACTIVITY: THE HABIT OF STUDY

Say: **Today I want us to focus on habits that we can build into our lives that draw upon several of these disciplines.**

Read James 1:1-11 out loud for students. Consider reading a paragraph or two at a time. Have students look through the pictures in Printout 2 to match up with each paragraph as you read. Consider making this a game but giving tickets or some other prize to the first student to find the picture and answer the question.

- **Who wrote this book of the Bible?**
- **Who was James writing to?**
- **What does James say about troubles?**
- **What are some troubles that you struggle with?**
- **What is wisdom, and how can you get more wisdom?**
- **How can being poor be a blessing?**
- **How can being rich be a bad thing?**
- **What was the main point of this passage in your own words?**
- **What could we ask God to help us with based on what we read?**

It's important to spend quiet time with God every day. One of the ways that you grow in your faith is reading the Bible. This allows you to know who God is, what he has asked you to do, and how you can live to obey and honor him.

Challenge them to try reading the Bible for themselves for one month or ask if a parent could read to them, even if it's just a few verses each day. If they don't have a Bible, consider how you can get a Bible for your students.

Hands



Lead kids to live out the mission of the Gospel.
(5-10 minutes)

Small Group Session 2

WRAP IT UP:

Pass out Printout 3 and allow about five minutes to write or draw. Discuss the questions once everyone finishes.

- **Do you do any of the things we mentioned as daily practice for the life of faith?**
- **What are some things you plan to do in the future?**
- **What did some of our heroes do to prepare for the life of faith?**

RESPONSE & REFLECTION:

Print out the memory verse. Memory Verse Game Ideas.

Practice the memory verse for this unit (John 14:6).



Bible Memory Verse
Games