



HEROES OF THE FAITH

Large Group

LESSON 12: LARGE 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.



Introduce the story of the Gospel.
(10-15 minutes)



Play large group games.
(25 minutes)

Prepare



Prepare your heart to teach.
Plan for the lesson.

QUESTIONS

- How can you be praying for the student this week? Are there any specific students or requests you can pray for?
- Are there any changes and additions needed for the Large Group Lesson?
- Is there anything specific you need to communicate to the small group leaders?

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Bible
- Printout 1, 4 copies
- Blank posterboard or white board
- Marker or dry erase marker

Large Group



Introduce the story of the Gospel.
(10-15 minutes)



"Who is Jesus"
Call and Response

WRAP IT UP

INTRODUCTION

Welcome the students to Crossroads and tell them you are glad they came this week.

(Optional) Go through the "Who is Jesus" call and response.

(Optional) As a group, say the memory verse for this week.

Open with prayer for the students.

Say, **As we wrap up our study on Heroes of the Faith, I want to take a moment to reflect on what we've learned. Throughout these weeks, we've explored the lives of men and women who stood out in history—not because of their strength, but because of their faith in God.**

From the unwavering trust of Joseph, to the courageous leadership of Moses, to the perseverance of Paul, we've seen that a hero of the faith isn't perfect, but they are faithful. They rely on God in every circumstance.

Today we will be discussing the importance of discipline. Discipline is learning to follow rules and make good choices so that we can do the right thing, even when it's hard. It helps us grow, stay safe, and work well with others.

Have one leader and two students prepare to do the skit on Printout 1.

Characters:

- Narrator
- Coach
- Student #1
- Student #2

After they complete the skit, have the students list things that would be required in order to train effectively for a race.

Be sure that they mention: sleep, eating right, studying the competition, lifting weights, sprinting, long distance running, learning to pace self.

Write down the students' ideas on a piece of poster board or whiteboard where they can see it.

Say, **The Bible talks about us being in a spiritual race—the race of the life of faith.**

What kinds of training do you think would help us run better in the spiritual race? (Make a list with their ideas.)

We will be discussing these disciplines—or training exercises—in our small groups.

Then dismiss them to their groups.

Games



Play large group games.
(25 minutes)

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- ☐ Chairs

LARGE GROUP GAME: SHIP TO SHORE

Materials: None needed

How to play: The objective is to be the last remaining player by successfully following commands and avoiding elimination. Designate one side of the playing area (e.g., gym or field) as “Ship” and the opposite side as “Shore”.

Players begin standing in the center of the area between “Ship” and “Shore”. The game leader will call out different commands. When the leader calls “Ship”, all players must run to the “Ship” side of the playing area as quickly as possible. The last player to reach the “Ship” side is out. When the leader calls “Shore”, players must run to the “Shore” side. Again, the last player to arrive is out. (Note: the leader can make it interesting by saying “Ship” while pointing to shore and vice versa. The leader can also say “Ship” and then immediately say “Shore” before any player can reach “Ship”. These tweaks keep the players moving and engaged.) In addition to “Ship” and “Shore”, the leader can call out the following commands. The last player (or group) to complete the action will be out:

- **Captain’s Coming:** Players stand at attention and salute. They must hold the salute until the leader says, “At ease.” Anyone who moves before “At ease” is called is out.
- **Hit the Deck:** Players lie flat on their stomachs.
- **Captain’s Table:** Players form groups of four, sit in a circle, and pretend to eat.
- **Crow’s Nest:** Players form groups of three, stand back-to-back, and link arms.

The game continues with various commands until only one player remains. That player is the winner!

Pro Tips

- Encourage students to be aware of their surroundings and maintain a safe distance from others while running.
- Ensure the floor is clear of any objects that could cause tripping.
- Emphasize controlled, but quick, movements rather than reckless running.
- Consider using soft flooring (e.g., mats) in areas where falls are more likely.

LARGE GROUP GAME: FRUIT BASKET TAG

Materials: None needed

Object of game: Be the last player tagged

How to play: Each player will be assigned to be one of the following five fruits—apple, peach, pear, orange, or mango. If you have a smaller group, assign less of a variety of fruit. Then have each team go to one of the four corners of the room. Choose two people to be “it”. The players who are “it” will stand in the middle of the room. Call out one of the five fruits. Those people who are that fruit will have to run to the opposite corner (diagonally) of the room. While they are running, the people who are “it” will try to tag them. If they get tagged, they are out, and will be “it”. The game’s leader may call any fruit or may call, “Fruit Basket Upset,” and then all the fruits run. The leader may also call two or more specific fruits (e.g., apple and orange). To win, a student must be the last player tagged.

LARGE GROUP GAME: FRUIT BASKET UPSET

Materials: Chairs

Object of game: Find a new seat when your fruit is called

How to play: Arrange chairs or carpet squares in a circle, with one fewer than the number of players. Assign each player a fruit name (e.g., apple, banana, orange, kiwi, peach). Make sure there are at least two players for each fruit.

One player starts in the middle of the circle. This player is “it.” The player who’s “it” calls out the name of a fruit (e.g., “Apples!”). All players assigned that fruit must quickly stand up and find a new seat. They cannot sit back down in their original seat or the seat directly next to it.

While the players are moving, the person who is “it” also tries to find a seat. The player left without a seat becomes the new person who’s “it”. Occasionally, the one who’s “it” can call out “Fruit Basket Upset!” When this happens, all players must find a new seat. Players must move quickly but safely. Players cannot push or shove others out of the way. If a player is caught not moving when their fruit is called, they become “it”.



HEROES OF THE FAITH

PRIMARY
Small Group

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.

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



Bible Memory Verse
Games



HEROES OF THE FAITH

INTERMEDIATE
Small Group

LESSON 12: INTERMEDIATE SMALL GROUP

Running the Race

MAIN IDEA

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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 4, 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).
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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.

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.**

Pass out Printout 4 to each student. Turn to James 1 in your Bible. Read out loud a paragraph or two; if you have more time read several paragraphs. Help teach students how to read and study the Bible for themselves. Use the questions below to help them learn from James 1:1-11.

- **What happened in the story or passage?**
- **Can you tell me what the main point was?**
- **What does this teach us about God or Jesus?**
- **How did God show His love, power, or wisdom in this passage?**
- **How can we use this in our lives?**
- **Is there something we should do differently after reading this?**
- **Is there something you can pray about from this story?**
- **What could we ask God to help us with based on what we read?**

When you are done going through James 1:1-11, talk to the students about the importance of spending quiet time with God every day.

Say, **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, even if it's just a few verses. 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

We've learned that faith often calls us to step outside our comfort zone, to face challenges with courage, and to trust that God is at work even when we can't see the full picture. These heroes remind us that we are part of a greater story—God's story—where ordinary people can do great things through faith.

But this study isn't just about looking back. It's about the present and the future. You and I are called to be heroes of the faith in our own lives today. The world needs people who are willing to live boldly for Christ, to trust God in every situation, and to reflect His love and truth wherever they go.

So, as we leave this series, remember that you don't need a title or position to be a hero of the faith. You just need a heart that says "yes" to God. May we all be inspired to live with that kind of faith—one that shapes the world around us and leaves a legacy for those who come after.

Let's commit to walking in faith, as the heroes before us did, knowing that the same God who was with them is with us now.

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 your small group 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. Try out some Bible Memory Verses Games.

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



Bible Memory Verse
Games

Memory Verse Cards

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

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Printout 1A

LARGE GROUP SKIT

Narrator: The coach invites both students to enter a marathon, and both students say that they want to.

Coach: It will require a lot of training and discipline on a daily basis. You will need to eat the right foods, exercise, get plenty of rest, and drink lots of water. You will have to give up time with your friends to devote to practicing. Are you committed to this?

Narrator: Both students insist that they are committed. The coach exits the scene.

Student #1: Well, let's get started with some stretches.

Student #2 (laughing): Forget that! I'm going to the China Buffet! See you tomorrow at school!

Narrator: The next day . . .

Student #1: I'm so sore! I practiced so hard for this race.

Student #2: They had crab rangoon at the China Buffet.

Student #1: Well, would you like to go running after school today?

Student #2: No, man, I got to go back to the crib and play video games.

Narrator: Both students leave. The next day . . .

Student #2: Hey, what's up? I cleared Level 5 on Super Mario Brothers last night!

Student #1: That's cool. I ran 8 miles, and I'm sooo tired!

Student #2: Too bad for you!

Student #1: Hey, that race is coming up. I think you better start training. Do you want to go lift weights with me today?

Student #2: No way! My favorite show is on TV tonight.

Narrator: The students exit. The next day . . .

Student #1: Wow! I had a great workout last night! You missed it.

Student #2: My show was awesome! The guy I was cheering for totally won!

Student #1: That's nice, but you should really do some training. You're never going to reach the goal otherwise.

Printout 1B

Student #2: Whatever! I'll be fine.

Student #1: Well, the race is tomorrow, so make sure you get a good night's sleep.

Student #2 (laughing): You're such a baby! I don't need sleep. I have to go to my friend's sleepover tonight.

Student #1: Okay, I'll see you at the race tomorrow, then.

Narrator: The next day . . .

The coach reappears and asks both students if they're ready, and they both insist that they are. The coach offers them some water.

Student #1: Thanks! (drinks it)

Student #2 : No, thanks, I just drank two liters of Mountain Dew.

Narrator: They get set on a starting line.

Coach: Go!

Student #2 drops to the ground after one step, and student #1 finishes victoriously.

Printout 2



Printout 3

DAILY TRAINING

Do you do any of the things your small group mentioned as daily practice for the life of faith?
Also, write any things you plan to do in the future:



- Go to Crossroads every week!
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-

What did some of our heroes do to prepare for the life of faith?

Printout 4

JAMES 1:1-11, NLT

¹This letter is from James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am writing to the “twelve tribes”—Jewish believers scattered abroad.

Greetings!

²Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. ³For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. ⁴So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

⁵If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. ⁶But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. ⁸Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do.

⁹Believers who are poor have something to boast about, for God has honored them. ¹⁰And those who are rich should boast that God has humbled them. They will fade away like a little flower in the field. ¹¹The hot sun rises and the grass withers; the little flower droops and falls, and its beauty fades away. In the same way, the rich will fade away with all of their achievements.

1. What happened in the story or passage?

2. What does this teach us about God or Jesus?

3. How can we use this in our lives?

4. Is there something you can pray about from this story?