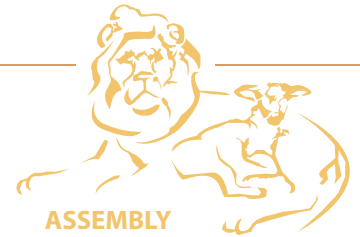


KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE PRIZE

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: PHILIPPIANS 3:12-16



The following are some ideas for creative ways that you can present this material.

LESSON IDEAS**RUNNING THE RACE****Supplies**

- four safety cones
- one four foot length of finish ribbon

Move the tables and chairs of your classroom toward the center of the room and then set up the cones to keep the children toward the outside perimeter of the room. Explain to them that you are going to run two races so you need six volunteers. Take the first three volunteers and have them run around the room twice and see who finishes first. (If you have a very small classroom you may want to do this activity just outside in the hall. In that case you would simply run the length of the hall.) Celebrate the winner. For the second race tell them that the person who finishes last is the winner. (This may certainly be confusing, but help them understand that in the second race you don't want to be the fastest.)

After you are done explain that we are to live our lives like a race. We want to win. That is running for Jesus. We don't want to live our lives like the second race, that is living for ourselves. The person who runs the race to win is the one that wants to store up for himself treasure in heaven not treasure on earth. Our motivation comes from the fact that Jesus has called us to join Him in His mission and has given us each a special job to do.

KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE PRIZE

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PRESSING ON

Supplies

- a spool of thread
- a roll of masking tape
- several lollipops

Tape a line on the floor as a mark. Hang a lollipop from the ceiling by a string. (It would work best for the exercise if you run the string around a light or ceiling tile bracket so that you can raise and lower the lollipop.) Start the lollipop farther out and higher up than the tallest child could reach. Have the children try to reach for it without stepping across the line. Then after all of the children have had a turn, lower the lollipop and try again. When someone is able to reach the lollipop, let him have it and try again until they all have been able to reach for a treat.

Then ask the following questions:

- Was it hard to reach the lollipop? (Yes.)
- Did you have to “strain ahead” (from verse 13) to be able to reach it? (Yes.)
- Why did you want to strain so much to get the lollipop? (Because I really wanted to have it.)
- Why do you think Paul tells us in the book of Philippians that we should strain forward to win the prize? (Each of us has a job to do that God has given us and called us to complete as we follow Jesus. Read Hebrews 12:1 and talk to the children about keeping our eyes on the prize, which in the end is Jesus!)

WHERE IS the Gospel?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

Paul refers to being called heavenward, “in Christ Jesus.” In 1 Corinthians 1:30 Paul says about this life “that Christ has become our sanctification and redemption and our only boast is in him.” The truth is, we have no life apart from Christ.

The very expression of “in Christ Jesus” refers to believing in His atoning sacrifice through which we are saved from death, and the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in us. Paul is able to press on to win the prize because he was called by way of the Gospel to live a new, changed life in Christ.