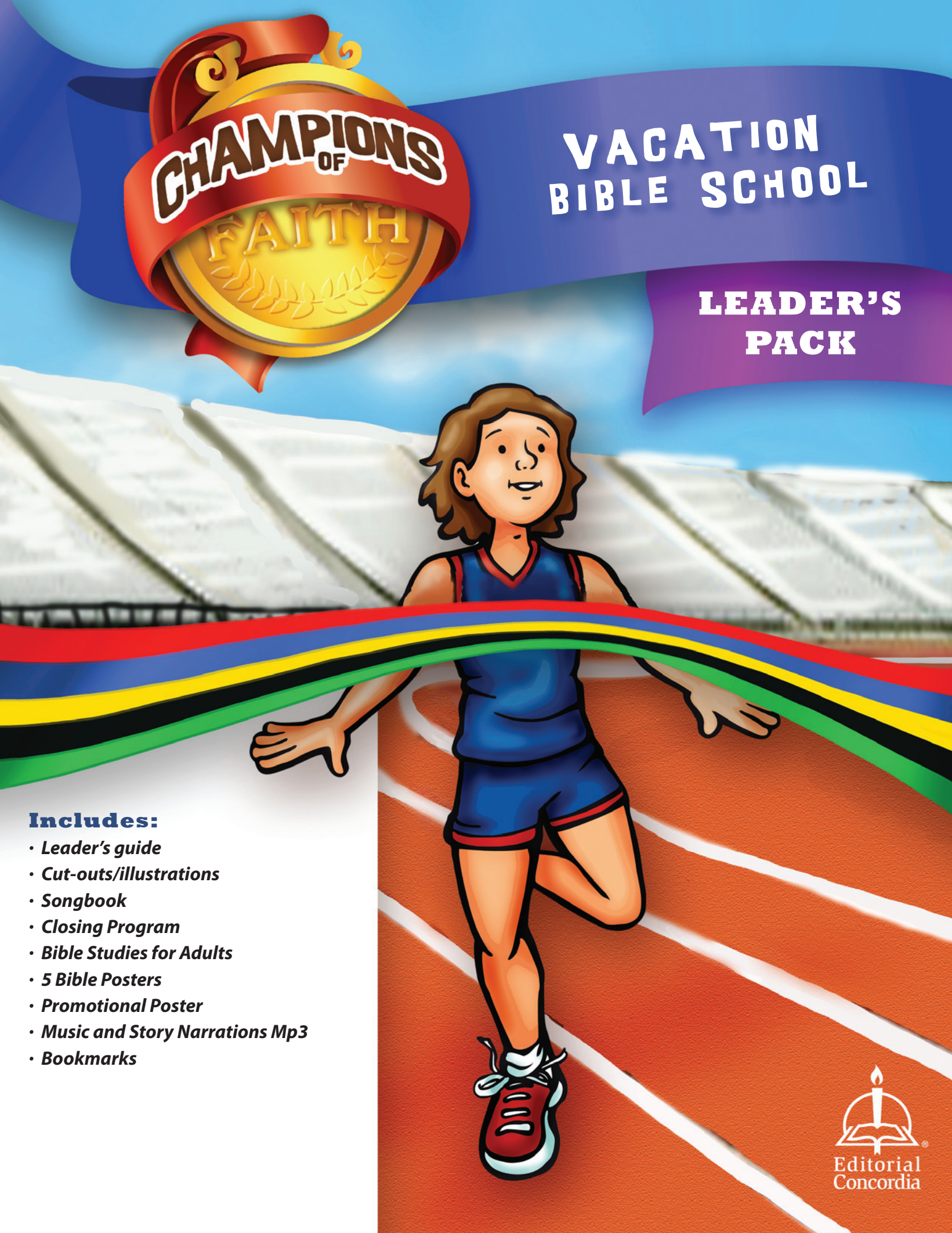




CHAMPIONS
OF

FAITH

**VACATION
BIBLE SCHOOL**

**LEADER'S
PACK**

Includes:

- *Leader's guide*
- *Cut-outs/illustrations*
- *Songbook*
- *Closing Program*
- *Bible Studies for Adults*
- *5 Bible Posters*
- *Promotional Poster*
- *Music and Story Narrations Mp3*
- *Bookmarks*



**CHAMPIONS
OF
FAITH**

**VACATION
BIBLE SCHOOL**

EVENT MANUAL

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL FOR
CHILDREN, TEENAGERS, & ADULTS**



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DAY LESSON	TOPIC	GOAL	BIBLE STORY
1	JESUS LISTENED TO THE COACH	That the participant might rest and rejoice in the step of obedience Jesus made at His baptism	THE BAPTISM OF JESUS
2	JESUS STAYED FOCUSED	That the participant might celebrate and rejoice that Jesus was willing to pay the price to win his/her salvation	THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS
3	JESUS KEPT THE RULES OF THE GAME	That the participant might receive the perfect righteousness offered in Christ	JESUS PRAYS AT GETHSEMANE
4	JESUS MADE IT TO THE FINISH LINE	That the participant might celebrate that Jesus opened for way for us to reach our goal	JESUS RISES FROM THE DEAD
5	JESUS LETS ME RUN WITH HIM	That the participant will actively enjoy the gift of salvation in Jesus Christ	PETER HEALS A MAN CRIPPLED FROM BIRTH

BIBLE STORY	MEMORY VERSE	SONG
Matthew 3:13-17 (Proverbs 4:18-27)	By the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. Romans 5:19b	My Beloved Son
Matthew 4:1-11	For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." Romans 10:11	I'm a Champion with Him
Matthew 26:36-46	... even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ— by grace you have been saved— Ephesians 2:5	Through Jesus
John 20:11-18	I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:14a	I Have Seen the Lord
Acts 3:1-16	(Philippians 3:8-14) let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, Hebrews 12:1b-2a	A Light That's Brightly Shining



Dear teacher:

Champions of Faith is a Vacation Bible School program that teaches about the great love God showed to mankind by the life, death, and resurrection of his Son, Jesus. The setting is an Olympic competition where the participants will discover Jesus, The Great Champion, who overcame all obstacles to win the final victory. God shares Jesus' triumphs over sin and death with each one of his creations and encourages them to stay focused on their course until they receive the final prize in heaven.

WHY PUT ON A VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL?

- Because it involves the whole congregation in a n evangelical program.
- Because it is a valuable tool for mission outreach.
- Because you can grow in the Word and it gives the opportunity to witness about the Savior.
- Because the church opens the church to the community.
- Because it is during vacation time when people usually have more free time.

HOW SHOULD YOU PREPARE?

Meet with available volunteers to work on different tasks such as preparing the space, passing out invitations, preparing materials, or decorating.

Meet with the teachers to show them how to use the materials.

Remember that is especially important for them to study the lessons, internalize the theological concepts behind the lessons, and to become familiar with the contents and the lesson plan for each class, anticipating student responses or possible problems. For example, in some congregations all the teachers and volunteers act out the VBS in practice so they can be well prepared to handle situations that might come up during classes.

Champions of Faith is simple to use in a five-day program, two hours per day not counting snack time. The material is flexible and may be used on consecutive or alternating days.

HOW IS EACH DAY ORGANIZED?

Each day will include the following sections:

Welcome, prayer and praise, 20 minutes.
Telling the Bible story, 15 minutes.
Divide into groups according to age to develop the lesson, 1 hour 15 minutes.

Before each class, read carefully the teacher's preparation material. Begin each day, meeting with the whole group. Note the date on the attendance chart.

Set aside time for prayer, motivating the students, and singing. Read one chapter of the story each day. Use the cut out drawings from the pp. 78-90 on the English side and pp. 88-112 on the Spanish side. We suggest that the teacher or a teen helper act it out as part of the program. You may also use the recorded story (Spanish only).

Divide the participants into four groups according to age to continue with the suggested activities.

Group 1: 3-5 years old
Group 2: 6-8 years old
Group 3: 9-11 years old
Group 4: 12-14 years old

Always have a Bible at hand so the participants can see that the stories are taken from the Word of God.

ATTENDANCE CHART:

It is important to record attendance every day.

The attendance chart is a useful tool. Let the children mark their own attendance (according to age; some may need help from a teacher).

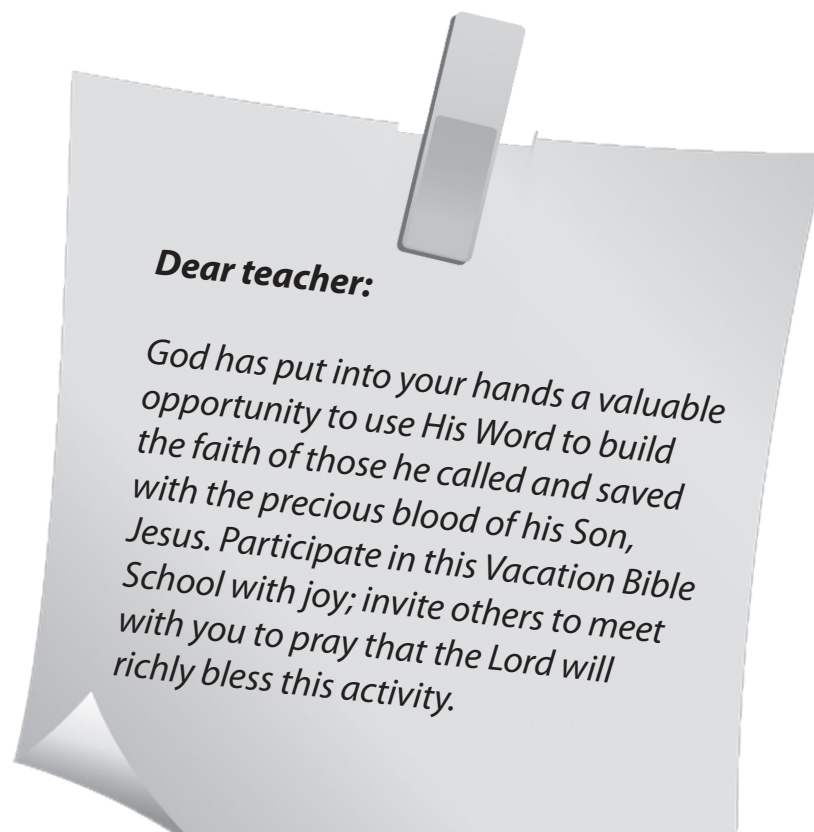
For this VBS there is an individual attendance sheet for each participant in the design of an empty clothesline where the participant will hang a different shirt for each day's attendance (cut-outs, p. 83, English side). The child will write his/her name on the shirt of the day then glue or tape it to the clothesline. The cord on the clothesline could be fine rope, string, or yarn.

REPRODUCIBLE MATERIALS YOU WILL FIND AT THE END OF THIS GUIDE:

- Invitation cards to share with children from the church and the neighborhood.
- Participation certificates to hand out on the last day.
- Cutout images to use on the indicated day.
- Outlines for the closing service of celebration at the end of VBS for the whole congregation.
- New songs for children with words and music.
- Bible studies for adults.

OTHER MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED:

A way to play the music (optional: computer with video projector), Bibles, dry-erase boards with markers or chalkboards with chalk, etc. Each lesson has a list of specific materials needed for each level.



SUMMARY OF THE STORY:

John Carreras is a young athlete participating in the international olympic games for the first time. He learns the difficulties of staying focused on his goal and understands how important it is always to listen to your trainer. Staying in the race also means knowing the rules and following them.

SETTING AND SCENERY:

The Olympic Stadium:

Make the grandstands by cutting out rectangles and circles to represent the rows of seats and the heads; use colored flags, the Olympic rings (five different colored rings representing the continents). Other different sports elements you might use: rackets, balls, basketball hoops, soccer goals, etc. The podium could be made from boxes on different levels. (On the last day you could use the podium to take photos of each child as the winner of the gold medal.)

A poster with pictures of three or four athletic bodies with a space cut out so the child can stand behind with his/her own face showing. The athletes will have crowns of laurels on their heads.

Flashy colored pennants that cross from one side to another.

Lighted torches.

Trophies.

A field with posters along the side saying:

Listen to the trainer.

Stay focused.

Follow the rules of the game.

Make it to the finish line.

Run with Jesus.

Story Chapters

INTRODUCTION

The sun peeked out, warm and bright, like any other summer day.

But for John Carreras, it was not like any other morning. That morning was the beginning of a great story. John jumped out of bed as soon as his alarm went off. His travel bag was ready. Before going to bed he had hung his team uniform on the chair. That day he wore for the first time the beautiful team colors.

John was an athlete who trained from an early age, and for the first time he would be participating in the international olympic games.

When he finished his morning routine he looked around his room one last time to be sure he wasn't forgetting anything. He smiled happily and headed for the airport. John thought, "This will be unforgettable!"

Chapter 1

STAY ALERT

John arrived at the airport hoping to see someone he knew, and before he got through the door he heard familiar voices calling his name. They were Peter, Luis and Maria, the other members of his team. Mr. Santiago Viña was near the baggage handlers getting everyone's luggage checked in. He saw John from a distance gave him an approving smile.

Everyone shook hands, wanting this to be a successful trip. They got on the plane imagining landscapes, people, and many victories.

During the journey that lasted several hours they had time to chat among themselves, get to know each other better, and to rest.

The competitors told about their past experiences. Peter had already participated in the Olympics. For Maria, this was her third time. She hoped to see some of her friends she knew from before.

Luis had competed in the games with another team.

But for John it was the first time. He couldn't contain his excitement.

"Calm down, John," they said. "It's a great experience in your career and it won't be your last time."

Just when it seemed the trip would never end, a voice came over the loudspeaker: "Ladies and gentlemen, this is your Captain speaking. Welcome to Veracruz, site of the olympic games."

A huge smile shone on the faces of all the competitors. At last his chance had arrived to show off what he had learned during training and practices.

A little while later they arrived at the Olympic Village, a special place prepared for the athletes to live in during the games.

Before the trip they had talked about the details like signing in at the Olympic Village, and schedules for training and resting. John was amazed by it all. For him it was a totally new experience.

"Maria! Maria!" Turning around, Maria felt a big hug. It was Stephanie Seven, a competitor from another country. They met during the last games and had become great friends. Maria asked permission from the coach, Mr. Viña, to spend a few minutes with Stephanie in the dining hall.

Luis and Peter decided to rest in their room. And John...John just couldn't get over his amazement. He wanted to do everything all at once: look around the facilities, buy souvenirs, go to the dining hall, and make friends... Mr. Viña was an experienced coach and knew that John could win lots of medals, but only if he kept his eyes on the prize and didn't lose focus.

"John," called the trainer. "We've talked a lot about this. This time I want you to listen carefully and remember what I tell you. You know I will be with you during this important event. Every one of your competitions will be hard but not impossible. Don't worry about what will happen. Run your race with spirit to the end and you'll reach your goal."

John listened without saying a word. John was sure the coach had faith in him.

Chapter 2

DON'T GET DISTRACTED

"How are you, John?"

"Hey John, will I see you later?"

"John, do you want to train together?"

Only one week had passed since he arrived and John seemed to be the man of the hour. Truly John had a good personality. He could talk easily about a lot of different things and he made good jokes. He had never received this kind of attention - not in his home town, not on his team, not even in his own family. This week was a dream for John.

Peter only saw him during training and John never stopped talking about all the people he met, how everyone thought he was sure to win medals, and about all the money he would make.

"Is it just me, or are you not training as much as you should?" Luis asked John one day.

"Could be," agreed John. "I'm meeting lots of people and talking with the other competitors to get to know what their teams are like and how they train. I can't do everything!"

"What does Mr. Viña have to say about all this?" asked Luis curiously.

"He just notices I'm a little tired during training," said John while thinking about what he was saying. "Is all this training really necessary? It's good to meet new people, right?"

Soon the day of the first competition arrived.

The participants were on the field and John was busy signing autographs because he was the youngest competitor.

"Hey John! We'll be in the front row so you can see us as you go by!" said his new friends.

The loudspeakers were calling the runners into position and John appeared, running through the crowd.

"Here I am, Mr. Viña, here I am!" John repeated excitedly.

The last words of the trainer were, "Don't get distracted!"

In each lane of the track was a runner. John took his place in his own lane.

The sound of the starter's pistol rang out in John's ears. His legs moved faster and faster. There were three laps to run around the track. John knew how to do it, but he'd never run in front of such a big crowd before. Although he saw that some were leaving him behind, John ran with all his might to finish the final lap. On one of the turns, voices he could not clearly recognize caught his attention. He couldn't stand the curiosity and

while he was running with big strides he looked to the side at the grandstand. While he was waving with his right hand, he turned his left ankle and had to shorten his strides. He lost the race by only one second. John remembered the words of his trainer just seconds before the race - "Don't get distracted!" John would not forget this lesson.

Chapter 3

PLAY FAIR

William Smith was an experienced coach with a famous well-trained team known as The Cheetahs. John had heard great things about Mr. Smith and wanted to meet him. However, John only earned a few points in the last race and didn't want to lose sight of his goal.

Every morning he woke up with the first rays of the sun, ate breakfast and worked out with his teammates. Mr. Viña also admired the instructor of The Cheetahs, although he was not acquainted with his method of training.

Arriving at the Olympic Village, the coaches had each received a list of the rules about what was allowed inside the property. Each coach carefully taught his team the rules down to the last detail. The Village was peaceful compared to the noisy stadiums full of people and noise.

Many of The Cheetahs won important medals. John paid close attention to their performance; The High Jump, the Long Jump, agility; races of 100, 400 and 1,000 meters, John tried to copy their techniques to improve his own moves.

Mr. Viña saw the effort of his student and decided to fulfill one of John's dreams. He arranged an interview with the famous coach, Mr. Smith, so John could get to know him and spend some time training with him. "That's great!" exclaimed John when he heard the news.

John got a notebook so he could take notes during his interview with the famous coach and thought of all the questions he would ask.

The time came for the meeting. The young athlete was so nervous and excited that the seconds seemed like hours, even days. Suddenly, at the end of the long hall that joined the dining room with the training field, he could make out the figure of the coach. With slow, sure steps he came close to John and with a loud voice he greeted John roughly,

"You're John, right?"

"Yes, sir," John answered somewhat timidly.

The coach seemed willing to help the young man. He began to speak kindly to him. Smith took John to where The Cheetahs were training. John watched carefully every move they made.

"This practice looks the same as any other team," commented John, sounding like he knew what he was talking about.

"You said it, boy. It looks the same as any other team," said Smith. But John, carefully observing the athletes, asked, "One thing puzzles me. How can your team rest just a few hours and get such great results in the competition? I ask because in the Olympic Village people say that they party until late at night and don't get much sleep."

"John, I'll tell you, because you are an intelligent young man, ready to learn."
Smith cleared his throat and continued with his explanation.

"When one is young, he is irresponsible and it's hard to keep all the rules. I prefer not to argue with the members of my team. So, after whatever practice they've had, before each race I give them a drug that helps them have an advantage."

John didn't know what to say. The trainer he admired was talking about changing the rules of the game to suit himself and his players. He was cheating! What a disappointment!

After a few minutes John understood that his meeting had come to an end.

"John, whenever you want, I can share my secret with you," said Mr. Smith as John was leaving.

John didn't know if he should tell someone about what he had heard. Would anyone believe him? When Mr. Viña saw John he asked him how his much anticipated meeting with the famous coach had gone, but hardly a word came out of John's mouth. All he said was, "Fine..."

John kept on training every day for his third competition. He kept on thinking about following all the rules.

"Others cheat..." thought John. His thoughts turned. "The difference is that I know it's wrong."

On the day of the race every team was in the starting blocks to run the first relay race. The coaches went to each team giving their last-minute instructions.

John listened to Mr. Smith, who, smiling and scoffing, said to his group, "We have the race already won!"

Mr. Viña heard him and said to his team, "Come on, team, you know... follow the rules..."

John was surprised to think that Mr. Viña perhaps might know all about the cheating.

Now they are on the track. Peter is running. "He's doing it perfectly! Peter passes the baton to Luis who keeps on running with sure steps toward John who is convinced that The Cheetahs will win. Luis successfully passes the baton to John. It seems the race will never end. The crowd cheers the runners on. The whole stadium is on their feet shouting at the top of their voice.

Nearing the finish line the runners from the two teams are side by side, but as everyone expected, the runner from The Cheetahs crosses the finish line first. The deafening shouts of the crowd keep them from hearing clearly what the field announcer is saying.

"What? How?" No one understands how this could have happened. The runners, the coaches, the crowd, everyone feels like they've been fooled.

"We repeat," says the voice of the announcer for the third time, "The Cheetahs have been disqualified along with their coach, Mr. Smith, for not following the rules of the game."

Imagine the satisfaction of John and his friends as they step up onto the podium to receive their medals!

John hugs his coach and says, "Thank you for your good advice!"

Chapter 4

RECEIVE THE REWARD

A few weeks have passed since John arrived at the Olympics.

In his bag he has lots of souvenirs for his classmates, his friends, and his family. Ah! John also has in his bag the medals he won in different races.

Mr. Santiago Viña has become the favorite after what happened after The Cheetah's tricks were discovered.

John remembered every day what he had learned during the games, and always listened to his coach, keeping his eyes on the prize, following the rules.

The team trained many hours a day. Many of their admirers came to watch their outdoor practices. John improved.

John had run many races and won prizes. But he hadn't won the race of all races. It was not the most difficult, or the longest, or the most complex, but it was the one he wanted most to win, the one he had waited for the longest.

The morning of the final race everything was ready. The flags of the countries flashed their colors through the stadium. The stands began to fill early with happy people, full of noise in every language, surrounding the track. The best places were reserved for the sports authorities and the delegations from the different countries.

Meanwhile the competitors were waiting in the locker rooms, resting, reviewing techniques with their coaches. John's friends were with him. They wanted to wish him good luck.

The routines were repeated from runner to runner: tie your shoes, check your shirt, fix your hair.

The loudspeaker called the finalists to their posts in the lanes of the main track.

The crowd broke out in shouts and applause when they arrived.

"John! John! John! John! He will win the gold!" That was the chorus that echoed in the stands like a burst of fresh air for our hero.

Everyone's legs were trembling. John's legs, yes, they were trembling, too. The finalists shook out their arms and legs and took their positions in the starting blocks.

"On your marks, get set..." Breathing quickened, muscles tensed, and the sports center exploded with emotion.

Passionate hearts beat in rhythm with every step toward the finish line.

Every turn required more effort than not all the athletes could give.

Some dropped out of the competition. Others seemed to shorten their strides, but John kept running, sustained by the support of the spectators.

The announcer sped up his story. "The race is in its final stages. This is it! Just a few meters separate the winner from his trophy!"

The shouts were deafening.

"Applause for the winner!" said the voice over the loudspeakers.
John won first prize! Mr. Viña ran to hug him.
"You did it, John! You did it!" he said, smiling through his tears.
Camera flashes were all that John could see as he stepped up onto the podium.
His national anthem was played and he received the gold medal.
"It's not a dream! It's real! It's the prize that comes at the end of the long training."
The gold medal is the greatest reward every dedicated athlete hopes for.

Hurray for John and for his coach who was always with him!

Chapter 5

SHARE THE STORY

Remember John Garcia packing his suitcase to compete in his first Olympics?
Over the years John Garcia became a distinguished athlete.
The whole world knew about him. Shirts, headbands, pennants, shorts, hats with his name, could be found in stores everywhere.

John kept on learning year by year, and continued to be guided by his long-time coach, Mr. Viña. He won many prizes that he displayed proudly in a showcase in his home.
There comes a time when the athlete should stop competing. This time arrived for John but he did not lose his joy or enthusiasm because of it. What did our friend do? John began to teach all the children and young people that if you have a good coach and are dedicated to preparing yourself for the race, the prize that crowns your effort is not far off.

"Who can run?" "When should you be training?" were some of the questions he answered in his last press conference for television about a week ago.

John answered each question.

"Everyone can run and compete. The age at which you begin training is not what makes one athlete better than another. An athlete who wants to be in good condition is always in training. Listen to your coach. Be obedient. And share everything you learn.

Pay attention.

Follow the rules of the game.

Don't lose sight of your goal.

Share your joy with others who are running the same race.

John worked with different teams training children and young people. He never forgot what he learned when he was competing in his first Olympics, and he passes on his experience to his students.
And he never forgets the Bible verse he learned when he was a little boy: "Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us." (Hebrews 12:1).

Bible Stories

LESSON 1

Matthew 3:13-17

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him.

¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented.

¹⁶ And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, ^[a] and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; ¹⁷ and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, ^[b] with whom I am well pleased."

LESSON 2

Matthew 4:1-11

¹ Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread. ⁴ But he answered, "It is written,

"Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple ⁶ and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

"He will command his angels concerning you; and

"On their hands they will bear you up,
lest you strike your foot against a stone."

⁷ Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

⁹ And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."

¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written,

"You shall worship the Lord your God
and him only shall you serve."

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

LESSON 3

Matthew 26:36-46

³⁶ Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here, while I go over there and pray."³⁷ And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled.³⁸ Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch^[a] with me."³⁹ And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."⁴⁰ And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour?⁴¹ Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."⁴² Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done."⁴³ And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy.⁴⁴ So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again.⁴⁵ Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Sleep and take your rest later on."^[b] See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.⁴⁶ Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand."

LESSON 4

John 20:11-18

¹¹ But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. ¹² And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. ¹³ They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."¹⁴ Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away."¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic,^[a] "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). ¹⁷ Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"—and that he had said these things to her.

LESSON 5

Acts 3:1-16

¹ Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.^[a] ² And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms of those entering the temple. ³ Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms.⁴ And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." ⁵ And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. ⁶ But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" ⁷ And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. ⁸ And leaping up he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. ⁹ And all the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰ and recognized him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

¹¹ While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's. ¹² And when Peter saw it he addressed the people: "Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant^[b] Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. ¹⁴ But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, ¹⁵ and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. ¹⁶ And his name—by faith in his name—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus^[c] has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.



A dark grey, shield-shaped graphic with a white border. Inside, the word "Lesson" is written in a white, sans-serif font, and below it, the number "1" is written in a larger, bold, white, sans-serif font.

JESUS LISTENED TO THE COACH

Topic: Jesus accepts the call to take my place.

Goal: That the participant might rest and rejoice in the step of obedience Jesus made at His baptism.

Bible Story: The baptism of Jesus.

Scripture: Matthew 3:13-17 (Proverbs 4:18-27).

INTERPRETATION

When we first look at the story of the baptism of Jesus, the picture presented seems very pleasant. Of course, it is not just because of the courtesy behind the discussion between Jesus and John the Baptist, but fundamentally for what the other persons of the Trinity did with this baptized Jesus: The Father broke the ancient silence and opened the heavens to express his pleasure with Jesus and to reveal Jesus' worthiness and divine identity by declaring Jesus His Son. The Spirit, coming to rest on Jesus (as Irenaeus, one of the church fathers from the 2nd century, said) seemed to be seeking to become accustomed to living anew in mankind.

Although the story of the baptism of Jesus gives this pleasant impression, in truth, it was not a pleasant moment for Jesus. Being baptized meant being installed once and for all in the office of the "suffering servant" spoken of by the prophet Isaiah: the one who would bear the pain and sin of His people. The voice of the Father, "this is my beloved servant", more than a spontaneous word of joy and satisfaction, is the formal declaration with which the Father committed to His Son the sins and condemnation of all humanity (Isaiah 42:1; 53:1-9). Being baptized meant being anointed and moved by the Spirit, not to reach "success" in a human sense, or to do important works, but finally to arrive at the purpose for which he had come: the cross. (It is precisely this that the Spirit did with him immediately after He was baptized - Matthew 4:1). Submitting to this baptism, "to fulfill all righteousness," as he called it in his discussion with John (Matthew 3:15), meant accepting the immense commission the Father had given him from eternity (Matthew 26:43; Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4-5) that was being renewed here in the voice from heaven.

Matthew doesn't tell us this as the story of bad fortune suffered by this righteous and holy one, Jesus, so that in the end we feel sorry for Him. This is the story of the great step of obedience of the Son to the voice of the Father, the story he tells us so that we might celebrate the concrete realization of God's plan. Now, yes, because His baptism was what it was, our own baptism can mean all that we were first thinking. Our baptism now represents the heavenly voice with which the Father says He is pleased with us and adopts us as His own. In our baptism, now the Holy Spirit comes to rest on us to make us what we could not be. In our baptism the Son is made ours and we are made His. And all this happens through that baptism in the Jordan, in which this great athlete, the only one qualified and capable of carrying out the plan, was willing to obey the voice of the heavenly coach and compete in our place.

APPLYING THE LESSON TO LIFE

It is only natural for us humans, when we think about our relationship with God, to think that we must discipline ourselves, make ourselves strong, and run the race according to the instructions of the Divine Coach (God's Law). What can be more unstable, insecure and discouraging than our "wearing ourselves out as God's athletes"? Jesus in his baptism was obedient to the voice of the Father. He is not merely an example or a model for us to follow, one that leaves us more and more certain that we are inadequate to live up to the divine demand of perfect righteousness. Only understanding and receiving the blessing offered in the baptism of Jesus, the gift of having the best athlete run our race for us, allows us to rest in the certainty that our sin, real and problematic to the extreme, was what caused Jesus to be baptized in our place.

Note: Since this is a VBS about the Olympics, when the children are divided into their various groups, you can begin with some physical exercises, such as in a training camp. You may wish to run together to the meeting room, or do an obstacle course, etc.

If it is necessary and possible, invite medical professionals to check each participant at the start of the program

Words to be spoken by the teacher are in bold print.

Also, see note on page 49.

LESSON 1 LEVEL 1

WHAT DO I NEED?



- The lesson poster (The baptism of Jesus).
- Images from the story of Jesus' baptism, from the section of cut-outs (pp. 88-91, Spanish side).
- Sheets of styrofoam to hold up the student handout.
- Old pencils or skewers to affix the cutout circle.
- A mirror, so students can see their faces inside the circle.

ACTIVITY



The first game in this lesson plan can be used for Levels 1 and 2.

Organize the children in a circle. The teacher will be in the center, and will go around the circle giving orders. The goal is simple.

Pay attention to my voice and do whatever I ask you to do.

The teacher will begin with a normal tone of voice and will ask the children, for example, to march in place. The instructions should be related to some physical exercise. Continue with the same tone of voice asking the students to do exercises that are easy to perform: jumping, hopping, and rolling, among others. Each time the children complete a command, the teacher encourages them saying, for example, "Great job. Way to go! That's it! Good listening!"

After giving four or five commands, lower your voice using the softest whisper possible that is still audible. You can alternate by using a loud then a soft voice several times.

The children may find the surprises funny as you change from loud to soft.

The game should last approximately ten minutes.

BIBLE LESSON



Have the children sit in a circle, and share with them the Bible story from Matthew 3:13-17. Remember to always have the Bible open and close at hand, so that the children understand that the story comes from there.

Use the images from the section of cut-outs.

Tell the story of Jesus' baptism in simple words.

John had heard about Jesus the Savior of the world. He began to tell everyone this good news of salvation. John baptized everyone who believed in Jesus, in Jesus' name. One day, while John was baptizing, Jesus arrived. John was surprised. He did not expect to see Jesus there. It was not necessary for John to baptize Jesus, but he did so anyway. When Jesus obeyed the will of his Father, God himself spoke saying that he was very proud of his Son's obedience.

Sin, lying, cheating, using dishonest words, fighting, bullying, and other things take us far away from God, because God does not live where there is sin. Jesus obeyed the command that was given by God. In this way, he brought us close to God.

Now we can be confident that if we believe in Jesus as our Savior and obey God's word that guides us, he will accept us as his children.

God speaks to us and says what is expected of us. Let us listen to his voice and pay attention to him.

Move on to the student lesson.

Bible memory verse: Romans 5:19b

LESSON 1 LEVEL 2

WHAT DO I NEED?



- The lesson poster (The baptism of Jesus).
- Images from the story of Jesus' baptism, from the section of cut-outs (See Recortables in Spanish files).
- Letters of the alphabet from the cut-outs (pp. 92-98, Spanish side) for the Bible passage from Romans 5:19b.
- Construction paper (light colors).
- Glue.
- Crayons or markers in various colors.
- Masking tape or pushpin to hang the poster on the wall, if possible.

ACTIVITY



Glue the cut-out letters to the construction paper to form the Bible passage from Romans 5:19b: **BY THE ONE MAN'S OBEDIENCE THE MANY WILL BE MADE RIGHTEOUS** (which is the memory verse).

The first game in this lesson plan can be used for Levels 1 and 2.

Organize the children in a circle. The teacher will be in the center, and will go around the circle giving orders. The goal is simple.

Pay attention to my voice and do whatever I ask you to do.

The teacher will begin with a normal tone of voice, and will ask the children, for example to march in place. The instructions should be related to some physical exercise. Continue with the same tone of voice asking the students to do exercises that are easy to perform: jumping, hopping, and rolling, among others. Each time the children complete a command, the teacher encourages them saying, for example, "Great job. Way to go! That's it! Good listening!"

After giving four or five commands, lower your voice using the softest whisper possible that is still audible. Alternate using a loud, then a soft voice several times. The children may find the surprises funny as you change from loud to soft. The game should last approximately ten minutes.

BIBLE STORY



Seat the children in a circle, and share with them the Bible story from Matthew 3:13-17. Remember to always have the Bible open and close at hand, so that the children understand that the story comes from there.

Use the images from the section of cut-outs.

Tell the story of Jesus' baptism in simple words.

John had heard about Jesus the Savior of the world. He began to tell everyone this good news of salvation. John baptized everyone who believed in Jesus, in Jesus' name. One day, while John was baptizing, Jesus arrived. John was surprised. He did not expect to see Jesus there. It was not necessary for John to baptize Jesus, but he did so anyway. When Jesus obeyed the will of his Father, God himself spoke saying that he was very proud of his Son's obedience.

Sin, lying, cheating, using dishonest words, fighting, bullying, and other things take us far away from God, because God does not live where there is sin. Jesus obeyed the command that was given by God. In this way, he brought us close to God.

Now we can be confident that if we believe in Jesus as our Savior and obey God's word that guides us, he will accept us as his children.

God speaks to us and says what is expected of us. Let us listen his voice and pay attention to him.

Through Jesus, God finds us righteous. Believing in Jesus brings us close to God again.

Knowing that Jesus listened to and obeyed the voice of God the Father fills us with joy.

Gather the children to paint a poster of the Bible memory verse: Romans 5:19b

Help the children repeat the Bible verse, so that they commit it to memory.

Move on to the student lesson.

LESSON 1 LEVEL 3

WHAT DO I NEED?



- The lesson poster (The baptism of Jesus).
- The Scripture passage photocopied for this class (from the cut-outs). Copy one per child.
- A hole punch, poster board, light blue tissue paper, white cardboard.

ACTIVITY



Display the poster that corresponds to this lesson. Ask the children if they know the story that the image represents.

Ask the children if any of them has been baptized. Leave time for them to share their personal experiences.

Ask the children who ought to be baptized, and why.

Possible responses: children should be baptized, or the young, or sinners, or people who don't go to church, people who are not Christian.

Allow a few minutes for the discussion.

BIBLE LESSON



Invite the participants to open their Bibles to Matthew 3:13-17. Read it more than once, alternating readers among the group.

Relate the story in simple words:

John believed in the promise of a Messiah, a Savior. He preached this hope to everyone. John baptized those who believed in the name of the one who was going to come. When he saw and recognized Jesus, John did not feel worthy to baptize him.

When you reach this point, stop and ask, "Why did Jesus want to be baptized? Was it his own decision? Was it because of the sins he had committed? Was it to keep a custom of the times?"

Jesus did not need to be baptized. Jesus was baptized to fulfill the Father's will.

Jesus' baptism meant he submitted completely to the will of the heavenly Father. Jesus is obedient, accepting through baptism his surrender, even unto death itself. Jesus' obedience allows us to rest in faith, knowing that Jesus fulfilled the entire law for us, bringing us the good news of salvation and freedom.

Give each student a styrofoam tray, a paper punch, a copy of the Bible passage for this lesson, a piece of cellophane, and a rectangle of white cardboard a little larger than the Bible passage. The students should cut out each of the letters, placing the handout over the styrofoam tray. Once they are in place, put the cellophane behind them and glue the passage onto the white cardboard.

Move on to the student lesson.

Bible memory verse: Romans 5:19b

LESSON 1 LEVEL 4

WHAT DO I NEED?



- The lesson poster (The baptism of Jesus).

ACTIVITY



Display the poster that corresponds to the lesson.

Ask the participants what was the last baptism they attended. Allow a moment for them to share personal stories.

Ask the participants: **Why are people baptized? Who needs to be baptized? When should someone be baptized?**

BIBLE STORY



Read the Bible story in Matthew 3:13-17 at least two times. Have the group identify who the main characters of the story are. The protagonists are Jesus and John.

John preached about the expectant hope of salvation that Jesus brought for all those who believed in him. Jesus comes to bring salvation to humanity that is lost in sin.

John is a sinner, but Jesus is forgiveness. Who should be baptized? Who should baptize? The answer seems to be logical and simple, but none of God's answers makes sense with human logic.

Jesus is baptized by John because Jesus is obedient in fulfilling the will of his Father.

Thanks to the obedience of Jesus we can enjoy the love of the Father.

God is pleased by the obedience of his beloved Son.

Move on to the student lesson.

Bible memory verse: Romans 5:19b

