

## **Finish the Race Bible Study for Youth**

Bible Text: Hebrews 12:1-3

**Central Bible Truth:** Youth can count on God to help them Finish the Race

### **Bible Truths:**

1. Believers are encouraged to Finish the Race.
2. Witnesses identified in Chapter 11, prove that it is possible to Finish the Race.
3. Believers face obstacles when running the race.
4. Believers can count on God to help them overcome their obstacles to finish the race.
5. Those who run the race must fix their eyes on Jesus for help and encouragement.

### **Teaching Plan**

**Step 1** Create interest by encouraging students to review scripture and play “Draw it/Guess it” (10-15 minutes)

As students arrive, invite them to read Hebrews 12:1-3 and to scan quickly Hebrews Chapter 11.

Begin the class by asking a student to lead in prayer. Welcome the class and share that today they will be playing a game called “Draw it/Guess it.” Divide the class into two teams. Enlist a team captain for each team. Share that the first team captain sends one of his/her team members to the whiteboard to draw a picture of the word they select from the 3x5 cards. Read the following instructions to the class:

“You have 60 seconds to do draw a picture that best describes the word you selected. You may not use letters, numbers, speak, or point while drawing. After drawing you must remain silent until the teacher releases you to return to your seat. While you are drawing, your team has the same 60 seconds to guess your word. Your team may use their bibles to review Hebrews 12: 1-3 while you draw. Your team gains one point if they guess the word in within the 60 seconds. If they do not guess the correct word, then, the second team gets 30 seconds to guess the same word.

The second team gets a point if they guess your word within the 30 second time frame. If not, the second team gets to choose a word and go through the same procedure.”

The score keeper keeps time and the score. Remind the class that the key words come from the scripture and/or from concepts related to the scripture verses for the day. The game is completed when the time is up or all the 3x5 cards have been used. The winning team has the most points.

**Step 2** Strengthen interest using the following true/false quiz. (10 minutes)

Point out that the class will take a true/false quiz. Read each true/false statement and ask students to raise their hands after you read each statement if they believe the statement to be true.

True/False Statements:

1. One out of four kindergarten students in America is Hispanic.
2. Best estimates indicate that 40-50% of Hispanic students drop out before completing high school.
3. A high school graduate will make \$1 million dollars in his/her life time more than a person who drops out of high school.
4. Experts predict that Hispanic 9<sup>th</sup> graders who miss 5 or more days in their first 100 days in 9<sup>th</sup> grade AND fail a class in that same time frame will drop out of high school.
5. Starting salaries for college graduates usually start at \$40,000-\$45,000.00/year.
6. Leaders suggest that Hispanic students can find great jobs in the future if they will read, write, and speak fluent Spanish, English, and complete high school.
7. The cost of one college class in most community colleges is approximately \$160.00.

After giving the quiz, point out that all of the statements are true! Share that today's scripture encourages us to run the race God has placed before us. Say, "You need to run the race that God has set before you. Perhaps for this moment in your lives, the race set before you is for you to finish high school. "

**Step 3** Examine Scripture through question/answer session (20 minutes)

Invite a student to read the verses aloud. Use questions below to lead the class through a discussion of the key points identified above.

Question 1 Say, "Paul states that we are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses. Who do you think are the witnesses he is describing?" After the class has given their responses, ask them to quickly scan Hebrews chapter 11 for names of spiritual heroes. Write several of the names on the whiteboard. This list should include names such as David, Moses, Noah, Enoch, Abraham, Ruth, etc...

Question 2 After listing the names found in Hebrews 11 on the whiteboard say, "What do these names have in common?" After hearing class responses point out the following:

- A. Each one of these spiritual heroes finished the race set before them.
- B. Each hero stands as living proof that it is possible to finish the race.
- C. Each of their life races was unique and based upon God's plan for their lives.
- D. Each one of these spiritual heroes faced huge obstacles and challenges when running their race.
- E. Each one of these heroes learned to depend on God for help to overcome obstacles.
- F. God was faithful to provide just-in-time solutions to those running the race.
- G. God continues to be faithful to obedient believers choosing to finish the race set before them.

Question 3 Say, "What are the actions taken by athletes when preparing for their sport?" Give students moments to respond. Encourage your class to give specifics, like get in shape, lose weight, exercise muscles, study the sport, practice, practice, practice, choose healthy foods, get plenty of sleep, focus on

the sport and remove obstacles, think positive thoughts, watch others who are successful in their sport, etc.. Share some of the previous ideas to complete the list they provide.

Say, "Why does Paul suggest that believers should follow the example of an athlete preparing for his sport?" After students respond, point out that Paul encourages those who want to run the race set before them to prepare in the same way athletes prepare.

Question 4 Say, "What does Paul say about sin in these verses?" Students should respond that Paul encourages believers to set aside sin which so easily snares or entangles them and keeps them from running the race. Point out that Paul calls for believers to run, not crawl or walk the race. Ask, "Why is it that believers find themselves crawling or walking the race? Say, "With the power of God, you can decide to confess sin, get forgiveness for sin, and run the race."

Question 5 Say, "What kinds of obstacles get in the way of a student who wants to run the race and be faithful to God in school?" After students share their responses, say, "in what ways, have you seen God provide help to deal with some of these obstacles you've shared?" When students have responded, invite a student leader to lead a prayer giving thanks to God for His faithfulness to help with challenges they face.

Question 6 Say, "What actions does the letter to the Hebrews suggest for us as identified in verse 2 and 3? Point out the following:

- A. Those running the race need to fix their eyes on Jesus!
- B. Those running the race should remember that Jesus finished the race.
- C. Those running the race need to remember the obedience of Jesus as He lived, sacrificed, endured, and finished the race.
- D. The life and race of Jesus serves as help and encouragement for each of us who run the race.
- E. When facing obstacles and before getting discouraged, remember Jesus.

**Step 4** Lead students to apply this study to their lives by completing phrases on a 3x5 card. (10 minutes)

Say, "This is the most important time of our session today. Please bow your heads. Lead the class in a prayer asking for God's guidance and their obedience to His will."

After the prayer, distribute a 3x5 card and pencil to each student. Point out that you will read questions to them. Let them know that their answers will NOT be shared with anyone. Read the following questions to them. Ask them to write their personal responses for each question.

Question 1 The race that God has called me to run at this time of my life is....

Question 2 The greatest obstacle I face when running the race is.....

Question 3 My prayer request to help me finish the race is.....

Say, do not place your name on the 3x5 card. You can choose to place your card in today's offering plate.

When all students have completed their cards, invite a student to close the study with a word of prayer. Thank students for their cooperation and say, "go now and finish the race" as they leave the classroom.

**Getting ready for this class:**

Step 1

Secure a white board or tear sheets with markers. Arrange student chairs so that youth can be seated in two groups. Write each of the following words on a 3x5 card. (witness, race, run, weight, cloud, focus, discouraged, sacrifice, obedience, finish, surrounded, help) Enlist another adult or a student to help as a scorekeeper and time keeper.

Step 4.

Secure a 3x5 card and pencil for each student. Let your pastor know that students may be placing their cards in the offering plate for this Sunday. Be prepared to review the cards with the pastor.