

## **SOCIAL: Providing Time for Fun Interaction (15 minutes)**

**Today's Bible Story:** Over and Over (Training to Win the Prize) • 1 Corinthians 9:24-25  
(supporting: Matthew 22:36-40)

**Today's Bottom Line:** Keep practicing what matters most.

**Monthly Memory Verse:** *Training the body has some value. But being godly has value in every way. It promises help for the life you are now living and the life to come.* 1 Timothy 4:8, NIV

**Monthly Life App:** Commitment—Making a plan and putting it into practice

**Basic Truth:** I can trust God no matter what.

*Before kids arrive, take a few moments to pray for them. Thank God for His commitment to us, to being so committed to us that He made a way for us to have a relationship with Him forever. Ask God to give kids encouragement today, that they would be spurred on to practice and do the things that matter most. Ask Him to help kids process what they'll learn today and to be listening for how His Spirit might be moving in their hearts.*

### **1. Early Arriver**

*Made to Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and/or working as a group*

**What You Need:** Paper, and pencils

#### **What You Do:**

- Greet kids by name as they arrive.
- Give each kid a piece of paper and instruct them to tear it into strips.
- On each strip of paper, ask the kids to write down something that you can get better at if you practice it.
- To get them started, share a few ideas from the list below.
  - Tying your shoes
  - Writing your name neatly or in cursive
  - Memorizing your multiplication tables
  - Playing an instrument or sport
- After they finish, instruct the kids to fold their strips in half and place them in the center of your small group area.
- Use the paper strips to play a game of charades.
- Select the kid with the closest birthday to go first.
- Direct the first kid to select a strip, read it silently, and act it out (without talking) for the rest of the group.
- The first kid to guess correctly will choose a new strip to act out for the group.
- Continue as time allows.
- If you need to move on before you finish, gather all the remaining strips and read them aloud to the group.

## 2. Opening Activity

*Made to Move: an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body*

**What You Need:** Two markers

**What You Do:**

- Divide your group into two teams.
- Instruct both teams to line up on one side of your small group area.
- Place the two markers several feet away from the teams.
- When you say, “Go,” the first kid from each team will run to the other side of the markers, lay down on their backs, fold their hands across their chests, and get up without moving their arms.
- Once the first kid stands up, instruct them to run back and tag the next kid in line.
- Make sure the kids know that this will take practice!

**What You Say:**

“Wasn’t that tough? It took some practice to stand up without using your hands! **[Transition]** Today in Large Group, we’ll hear about something else that requires practice! Let’s go!”

# PLAY BIBLE VIDEO

## GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (25 minutes)

### 1. Run for the Prize

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

*Made to Create: an activity that explores ideas through the process of drawing, building, designing, and problem-solving*

**What You Need:** Bibles, construction paper, stapler, scissors, and markers

**What You Do:**

- Hand out the Bibles, one for every two or three kids.
- Encourage kids to look up 1 Corinthians 9:24-25.
  - Direct them to look up 1 Corinthians in the Table of Contents and find chapter 9.
  - Remind them that 1 Corinthians is in the New Testament, the second part of the Bible.
- Invite a kid to read 1 Corinthians 9:24-25 out loud as the group follows along.
- Pass out a piece of construction paper to each kid.
- Instruct the kids to fold the paper in half, lengthwise (a hotdog fold), and cut or tear along the fold to make two strips.
- Encourage the kids to staple the two strips together to make it long enough to fit around their heads as a paper crown.
- Direct the kids to lay the paper out flat and decorate their crowns with markers however they want.

- As they work, lead the following discussion:
  - What does a gold medal runner have to do to prepare for a big race?
  - Have you ever trained for a sport or prepared for a recital? What did you do to prepare?
  - When we see someone receive a prize in a big race or competition, it can be easy to forget that they trained REALLY hard to win! What are some ways we train or practice our faith? (*love God, love others; hear from God; pray to God; talk about God; live for God*)
  - Practicing these four things—Hear, Pray, Talk, Live—will help us love God and love others. That’s running in a way that will earn a prize. What kind of prize do we earn according to 1 Corinthians 9:25? Is it a crown like the one you made? (*No, the prize lasts forever. When we put our faith in Jesus and practice loving God and others, we will win the prize of life forever with Jesus!*)
- Lay the crowns out flat in a stack. Do not staple them into circles yet.
- Set them aside for prayer at the end of your small group time.

### What You Say:

“Today, we talked about four ways we can grow or practice our faith. We’ll talk about these things all month long! Commitment is about making a plan and putting it into practice. Even though the word ‘faith’ can seem like a big church word that’s not-so-easy to understand, there are some simple ways we can follow Jesus each day! Paul reminded us in his letter to the Corinthians to ‘run in a way that will get you the prize.’ And the prize can’t be taken away or lost like a trophy, medal, or crown! The prize is life forever with Jesus in a perfect place! That’s why it’s so important to **[Bottom Line] keep practicing what matters most.**”

**[Make it Personal] (Tell your kids about one spiritual discipline—reading God’s Word, prayer, etc.—that you incorporate into your life on a regular basis. Give some practical ways you make this a part of your routine then share with the kids how this commitment has helped you to [Bottom Line] keep practicing what matters most.)**

## \*2. Four Corners Faith

### [Live for God | Application Activity]

*Made to Imagine: an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates concrete application through role-play and reenactment*

**What You Need:** Prepared paper, marker

### What You Do:

- Set the four pages in the four corners of your Small Group area, number side up.
- Play four corners.
  - Select a kid to stand in the middle of the group, close their eyes, and count to ten as the rest of the group runs to a corner.
  - Direct the kid in the center to call out a number between one and four then open their eyes.
  - All kids in that corner are out.
- Before the kids in the called corner sit down, instruct the kid in the center to call on someone from that group to flip over the number in the corner and read the word on the back.
- Use the questions below to talk about that faith skill with all of the kids.

- Instruct the kid in the center to close their eyes and count again as the remaining kids run to one of the three remaining corners.
- Remind kids frequently not to bunch up too closely in one spot.
- Repeat the game for the three remaining numbers.
- Questions:
  - HEAR
    - What is the number one way we hear from God? (*through His Word, the Bible*)
    - What are other ways you can hear from God? (*through others you trust who follow God*)
  - PRAY
    - What is prayer? (*talking to God*)
    - When can you talk to God? What can you talk to God about? (*You can talk to God at any time about anything.*)
  - TALK
    - Who do you talk to about God? (*family, friends, your small group*)
    - Why do you think it's important to talk to others about who God is and what He's done? (*When you talk to others about your faith, it can help their faith grow, too!*)
  - LIVE
    - What do you think "living for God" means? (*making choices that honor Him; trusting Him to guide you; loving God and loving others*)
    - How can you live for God at school? At home? On your ball team or in your neighborhood?

### What You Say:

"Just as a runner follows a PLAN—they make sure to MOVE each day, FUEL their body with healthy food and lots of water, and make time to REST—we have a plan to follow, too. Even though we're running a different kind of race: a race to follow God. When we follow this simple plan (*hold up the signs as you review*) to hear from God, pray, talk about Him with others, and live in a way that honors Him, our faith will grow and get stronger! That's why we need to make a commitment to **[Bottom Line]** keep practicing what matters most."

## 3. Memory Verse Relay

### [Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

*Made to Move: an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body*

**What You Need:** "Memory Verse Phrases" Activity Page, Bibles

### What You Do:

- Pass out Bibles and encourage the kids to open to 1 Timothy 4:8 using the navigation tips below.

**Finding verses with 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders:** Guide them to open their Bibles to the front and find the table of contents. Hold up a Bible opened to the table of contents to show the kids what the page looks like. When the kids find the table of contents, lead them to find 1 Timothy in the list under "New Testament." When the kids find 1 Timothy, lead them to look at the page number beside the word. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find 1

Timothy. Help the kids find the page. When they find 1 Timothy, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find chapter 4. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find verse 8 in chapter 4.

- Read the verse together several times.
- Talk about how following God is like training for a marathon, but it's FAR MORE important to grow in our faith, because it matters today and forever!
- Divide the group into two teams and line them up.
- Place a set of memory verse phrases for each team several feet away.
- Tell kids to crab walk, one at a time, to their pile, grab a memory verse phrase, and crab walk back to the next kid in line. (Each kid may stand up to grab a memory verse phrase, but must get back down to crab walk back.)
- Once all phrases have been collected, instruct teams to work together to put them in order then sit down to signal they completed the task.
- The first team to successfully put the verse in order, wins!

#### **What You Say:**

“Great job! There are lots of ways you can ‘train the body’ for a race or a big game. If you’ve played any sports, you’ve probably had to run drills, relays, or maybe even crab walk! Growing in our faith is like training for a big physical challenge. But it’s way more important than crossing a finish line first or winning a medal. Making a commitment to follow God doesn’t just affect how you live today, but forever! That’s why it’s important to **[Bottom Line] keep practicing what matters most.**”

#### **4. Pray and Dismiss**

##### **[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]**

*Made to Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal processing and application*

**What You Need:** Crowns from “Run for the Prize” activity and stapler

#### **What You Do:**

- Help the kids place the crown around their heads for sizing, bringing the ends together.
- Let the kids hand you their crowns to staple.
- Encourage kids to wear their crowns as you lead the group in prayer.

#### **What You Say:**

“Heavenly Father, You are awesome! Thanks for reminding us how important it is to **[Bottom Line] keep practicing what matters most.** Help us make a commitment to follow You so we can love You and love others. Thank You for Jesus. In His name we pray, amen.”

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage the kids to show off their crowns and talk about how they will make a commitment this week to **[Bottom Line] keep practicing what matters most** so they can grow in faith!