



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Series: The Early Church  
Spring Year 1, Lesson 56

# Keep Your Eyes on Jesus and Run the Race

**Primary Scripture:** Hebrews 12:1-3

**Key Verse:** Hebrews 12:3, "Think about Jesus, who endured opposition from sinners, so that you don't become tired and give up."

## **How does this address a need in our kids' lives?**

Kids live in a world where Christianity is no longer in a favored position. It is also a world where values are relative, each one determining for one's self what will be right or wrong. So that kids might be equipped for such a world, they need to be able to think about Jesus. As they keep their minds on him and consider what he has done for them, they can remember Jesus is with them and will help them do the right thing.

## **How does Jesus fill this need?**

**Jesus for us:** Jesus endured opposition from sinful people giving his life for us on the cross so we would be forgiven and free to follow him.

**Jesus in us:** As we think about Jesus, we open ourselves to God's word and the very presence of Jesus, who is the living Word of God. This gives us encouragement so we would not grow tired and give up.

**Jesus through us:** We can make a difference in our world even when it opposes us. We can run the race.

## Stamp of Excellence:

*Remind the kids what excellent worship looks like. We are in God's presence to honor him. Put on your best manners. This might include wearing your name tag, participating eagerly at all times, listening when the leader is talking, raising your hand to speak, not distracting others, playing the learning game with cooperation, singing enthusiastically, and praying reverently. Offer rewards or positive reinforcement to those who worship with excellence.*



## Worship

### Invocation:

*Let kids bring forward the worship symbols such as cross, candles, Bible, and offering plate. Invite God's presence and call by name Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

### Attention Grabber:

*Capture the children's attention and help them focus on the worship theme for the day.*

*For a visual, use a large picture or a life-size cut out of Jesus.*

Read Hebrews 12:2 and the following:

***"We must focus on Jesus, the source and goal of our faith." What does that mean? It means that we need to think about him. We need to keep our eyes on him so we can run the race in front of us and never give up. That is also in the Bible. "We must run the race that lies ahead of us and never give up."***

**When we praise God today we are thinking about Jesus and it helps us keep on track. We remember that he endured much pain when he took the sin of the world on himself. He didn't give up and because he did that for us, we can follow him in all that we do.**

**When we worship today, boys and girls, we are really keeping our eyes focused on Jesus. You might want to even close your eyes and think about him. He is alive. He is here right now. He loves you more than anyone else. When you think about Jesus, you can praise him for what he has done for you and praise God for sending him.**

## **Songs of Worship:**

*Choose two or three songs. Briefly introduce songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God!*

Your choice of music.

## **The Power of the Cross:**

*Jesus has given his life for us that we might have forgiveness and power to live for him.*

It gave him joy to suffer: Help the kids grasp this major thought.

**Jesus grew tired and he endured a lot of suffering when he went to the cross for us. But there is one thing Jesus kept thinking about that kept him going. There is one thing that gave him joy, even when he had pain.**

**Do you know what Jesus was thinking about when he was going to the cross? He was thinking about you and me and that we would be with him forever because he was going to pay for all the punishment of our sin.**

**The Bible says that Jesus saw the joy ahead so he endured death on the cross, and he ignored all of the disgrace that it brought him. If Jesus was thinking about you way back then, let's think about him now.**

**Think about anything you have done this week that Jesus wouldn't like. Think of any wrong things you did by not showing love to other people or by not showing love to Jesus. Confess those sins right now.**

**Dear God, I am thinking in my mind of some of the things I have done that don't show your love. I am sorry for doing them. For Jesus' sake, please forgive me. Just like Jesus had joy knowing that he would go through hard times so I could be forgiven, give me joy knowing he is my friend and will be my friend forever. Help me to keep my eyes fixed on Jesus so I can run the race that lies ahead of me and never give up. Amen.**

## **Song of Response:**

*Choose a song to help the children turn to Jesus. Or, you may want help them celebrate what God has done by singing a song of praise.*

## **Offering:**

*Teach the importance of giving and talk about the mission activities they are supporting.*



# The Word

## Learning Game:

*Some churches dismiss children from the adult service at this time to join Kids Church. The learning game provides a fun kinesthetic activity to help kids connect with each other. The learning point will help reinforce the theme of the day.*

*Props needed: a large picture or a life-size cut-out of Jesus, a plastic baseball bat*

Ask for eleven volunteers to come forward. One person will make a journey through life keeping his eyes on Jesus. The other ten people will partner off facing one another and make a corridor or path through which the first person will walk. The image of Jesus should be at the end of this path.

Have the first person well outside the corridor rest the end of the bat on a fixed spot on the floor. Then have him put his forehead on the other end of the baseball bat and quickly spin around it four times. Have that person now try to walk through the corridor to Jesus.

Being dizzy makes it difficult and yet, as that person walks through the corridor, the people can gently help him as he goes to Jesus. This experience can be repeated with others as the large group leader chooses.

Then read Hebrews 12:1.

***“Since we are surrounded by so many examples of faith, we must get rid of everything that slows us down, especially sin that distracts us. We must run the race that lies ahead of us and never give up.”***

**This verse says that there are many examples of faith throughout the Bible—people who kept their eyes on Jesus and did not give up. Even though sometimes the world made them dizzy, they kept on the race toward him. These examples help us along the way just like the volunteers helped keep the one person on the path.**

Then read Hebrews 12:2,3:

***“We must focus on Jesus, the source and goal of our faith. He saw the joy ahead of him, so he endured death on the cross and ignored the disgrace it brought him. Then he received the highest position in heaven, the one next to the throne of God. Think about Jesus, who endured opposition from sinners, so that you don’t become tired and give up.”***

**Every day we must think about Jesus. We remember that he thought about us when he ran his race to the cross. It gave him joy knowing we would be his friends. Knowing Jesus loves us so much gives us power to keep on going.**

## **Bible Presentation:**

*Help children pay attention by giving them a word or concept to listen for as you read. Consider letting a child read who could do so with excellence.*

Have two children come forward and read 1 Peter 3:15 and Acts 5:40b-42. Tie this into today’s lesson as you talk about how difficult it was for the disciples and yet they kept on with their witness.

## **Application:**

Show *The Last Chance Detectives: The Legend of the Desert Big Foot*. It shows the importance of doing right even when it is tough. Order from [http://ng.shop.com/op/~CLEARANCE Last Chance Detectives: Legend of the Desert Bigfoot-prod-6036743](http://ng.shop.com/op/~CLEARANCE+Last+Chance+Detectives:+Legend+of+the+Desert+Bigfoot-prod-6036743). This is a **fifty-three minute** video from Focus on the Family.

Some concluding comments from this video can be incorporated at the discretion of the large group leader but should be brief and to the point focusing on the theme of keeping our eyes on Jesus so we can run the race. This helps us think about him and do the right thing.



# Witness

## Witness and Tell:

*Give children opportunities to share how God is working in their lives. It is best to use a microphone to ask children interview questions around the theme for the day.*

Invite kids to tell about some right choices they made when it was hard to do so.

## Prayer:

*Let the kids pray out loud. If you are using a microphone, invite children to form a prayer line and speak their thanksgivings or requests. If you have portable microphones, you can roam the audience. Kids can also go to prayer stations set up for specific types of prayer.*

## Blessing:

*Speak a blessing prayer over the children. Personalize this to your setting. Use special scripture verse or blessing around the theme of the day.*

## Song of Sending:

*Choose one song. Briefly introduce songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God.*

# Supplies:

## *Attention Grabber:*

- large picture or life-size cut-out of Jesus

## *Learning Game:*

- plastic baseball bat
- large picture or life-size cut-out of Jesus

## *Bible Presentation:*

- video: *The Last Chance Detectives-The Legend of the Desert Big Foot*, a Focus on the Family Film (1995)—order from [http://ng.shop.com/op/~CLEARANCE Last Chance Detectives: Legend of the Desert Bigfoot-prod-6036743](http://ng.shop.com/op/~CLEARANCE_Last_Chance_Detectives:_Legend_of_the_Desert_Bigfoot-prod-6036743)

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