



Date: _____
Series: A-MAZE-IN Life
Summer Year 2, Lesson 1

Grace for the Race

Take Home Point: *God won heaven for you—be a winner for him. *Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson.

Bible Event: Philippians 3:12-14

Key Verses: Philippians 3:12b, "...I run to win that which Jesus Christ has already won for me."

We will help kids know:

- Jesus won heaven for us through his death and resurrection. If kids put their faith and trust in Jesus, they are a winner.
- We now run the race of living for him. The race lasts throughout our lives, but someday we will arrive at the finish line of heaven.
- They should set goals for the summer as to how they will run their race.




We will help kids feel:

- Victorious for what God has done for them.
- Motivated to set a spiritual goal to help run their race with success.

We will help kids do:

- Decorate their hands into characters that will compete in the Olympics.
- Practice kindness and godliness in the midst of the hand Olympics.
- *Option:* Watch the "McGee and Me" video called *Skate Expectations* as an example of pursuing kindness and love more than earthly contests.

THIS LESSON'S ROADMAP

DESTINATION	PAGE #	DISCOVERIES ON YOUR JOURNEY	SUPPLIES NEEDED
Small Group Warm-Up 	3	Kids play Olympic games with their “hand” characters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> masking tape water-based markers ping-pong balls paper optional prizes
Large Group 	4 7 9	Overview Kids use their “hand” athletes and actively participate in the Bible reading of Philippians 3:12-14. They are reminded that Christ has already won the victory for us, and they are encouraged to keep running the race of life. Video: <i>(Optional)---McGee and Me, Skate Expectations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> costuming for a coach presenter has contestant marked on hand like kids from small group warm-up blue marker Optional video—<i>Skate Expectations “McGee and Me”</i> series #4 (This 30-minute video is available at www.christianbook.com.)
Small Group Application 	5	Kids set goals to help them run the race this summer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> blue water-based marker wet wipes

Small Group Warm-Up: 15 minutes



Purpose: *Get pointed in the right direction!* Build relationships and help guests feel at ease. Do the learning readiness activity that will point your group in the right direction for the lesson.

As kids gather: Listen to memory verses from last week and give coupons for memory verses, remembering to bring your Bible, and bringing a guest.

Supplies: masking tape, paper to tear into small pieces, ping-pong balls, water-based markers, (option: goofy prizes or snacks for the winners)

Make a three-foot by four-foot playing field on the floor with masking tape. This will be used for races and for soccer. On the three-foot end, place tape to mark goals approximately eight inches wide.

Using washable markers that can be washed off after the games, have kids decorate their hands to look like an Olympic character. Encourage kids to lose some of their inhibitions and simply have fun together.

Today we are going to have our first annual summer kick-off “hand” Olympics. Each one of you will enter one contestant. Your contestant is created from your hand.

Your pointer finger and middle fingers will become the legs of your contestant. With a washable marker, draw a head and shoulders on the back of your hand. Your contestant’s arms are your thumb and pinky finger. Make your contestant as creative as you would like. He/she may need tennis shoes, hair and also a name.

Now, let’s get ready to compete.

The games can be played with much flexibility according to how many kids you would like to see compete at every event. This activity is meant for fun around the metaphor of running the race or competing in a game.

Our first contest is going to be the sprint. Three contestants will “run” from one side of our taped off field to the other end. There can be no “flying” with your contestant. They must keep their feet on the floor at all times.

Divide your group into heats and give out prizes or snacks for each winner.

The next contest will be soccer.

Divide your teams according to how many kids you have.

We will use this ping-pong ball as our soccer ball. Try to keep it on the field, passing to one another to make a goal.

Give prizes or snacks to the winners.

Our final contest will be a “kick” contest.

Tear off a piece of paper and wad it up for the kick-ball.

We will take turns kicking this kick-ball to see who can kick it the farthest. We will have two kicks at a time and measure the results to find our winner.

Have someone be the official marker for each kick, using a piece of tape to mark.

After games are finished, discuss the following:

How important is it to you to win? Is it not very important, kind of important, or very important?

What games have you played and won?

What games have you lost?

Today we will talk about being winners in a race that has already been won for you, but the race continues on. We will learn that **God won heaven for you—be a winner for him.*

Large Group: 20-30 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids observe what the Bible says. Present the Bible event in creative fashion. Help kids begin to interpret what it means.*

Overview

Kids use their “hand” athletes and actively participate in the Bible reading of Philippians 3:12-14. They are reminded that Christ has already won the victory for us, and they are encouraged to keep running the race of life.

Video: *(Optional)---McGee and Me, Skate Expectations*

Small Group Application: 20-25 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids map out the meaning of the Bible event in their lives. Use the questions to stimulate discussion, but don't feel tied to them. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. Include personal examples from your own faith journey. The example of Christ at work in your life will leave lasting impressions of how Christ can work in the children's lives.*

Use your Bibles! Children need to learn how to look up references and follow along when scripture is read aloud. Allow for quality time of prayer at the close of the lesson.

Observation Questions: What happened? / Interpretation Questions: What does this mean?

Have kids refer to Philippians 3:12-14 in their Bibles.

When Paul wrote this letter to the Philippians, what goal had he (and us) not yet reached? *(Heaven.)*

What does he mean by “completing the course?” *(Life and the purposes God has for us in this life.)*

The key verse from Philippians 3:12b says, “...I run to win that which Jesus Christ has already won for me.” What has Jesus already won for us? *(Eternal life.)*

Application Questions: What does this mean to me?

Application Activity:

Supplies needed: blue water-based marker, wet-wipes (or the kids can wash their hands with soap and water)

Have kids draw a blue first place ribbon on their hand like the large group presenter.
Say:

This ribbon symbolizes that *God won heaven for you—be a winner for him.

What are ways you can “run straight toward the goal and win the prize” that God offers in Jesus? *(Keep faith in Jesus and do our best to serve God. Pray when we feel like giving up.)*

What are some things that you look forward to playing this summer?

How can you do these activities and not just be interested in winning a trophy, medal or a prize, but rather, doing them in a way that shows you have already won the race?

How can you show that you have grace for the race?

****God has won heaven for you. How can you be a winner for him this summer?***

If time allows, let kids play a few more “hand” Olympic Games with their athletic contestants. For example: a relay race, kicking a ping-pong ball through goal posts made by someone’s hands, or a race hopping on one “foot.” Allow the kids to be creative and suggest other activities that can be done with their hand contestants.

Closing Prayer:

Thank God for sending Jesus to win the victory for us. Pray to have “grace for the race” while living this life, and when we feel like giving up or giving in, to remember the goal and run straight toward it.

Let kids clean their hands before leaving.

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Large Group Presentation: 20-30 minutes

Grace for the Race

The large group presenter is costumed as a coach with a whistle, shorts or sweat pants and carrying a clipboard. This can be as elaborate as you would like.

NOTE: This weekend for many is a holiday and programs typically have fewer shepherds. Extended large group time with a video is incorporated to help with this.

Supplies: water-based markers (optional: the video Skate Expectations “McGee and Me” series #4.)

Introduction and Warm-Up

Good morning, athletes. Welcome to the first annual summer “hand” Olympics. It is very important that each of the athletes in the Olympic Games is fit and ready to compete. As each of you know, before the race officially begins, there has to be a time of warming up those muscles. Let’s begin with some calisthenics.

As kids are seated have them warm up their “hand” athletes on the floor in front of them or on their other hand.

First we need some leg lifts. Ready, here we go—left leg up, left leg down, right leg up, right leg down. Let’s count one, two, one, two.

Continue this allowing the kids to follow your lead with your hand contestant. Be creative with other calisthenics such as leg squats, scissors, and jumps.

I see that you are all ready for the race. Today we will talk about a race that is an absolutely “must win” deal.

A Race That Has Been Won-Rule #1

When I read this scripture, every time you hear the word “win,” “won,” or “winner,” lift your athlete in the air and run in place as fast as you can for one second.

Are you ready? Our verses today are from Philippians 3:12-14. Let’s get started. “It’s not that I’ve already reached the goal or have already completed the course. But I run to WIN...(Pause for the kids to raise their contestants and make them run in place.) *that which Jesus Christ has already WON...* (Pause. Continue in the same manner.) *for me.*”

I need to stop here. We are running to WIN a race that Jesus Christ has already WON for us. What race is this? Do I have any contestants that would like to answer that question?

Choose a kid to answer. *(This is a lifelong race that ends when we reach heaven.)*

Has this race already been won for you? Yes or no. (Yes.) What did Jesus Christ do to win this race? (He gave his life for us.)

Jesus gave his all when God sent him from heaven to earth with the mission to live a perfect life, die on the cross, and rise again. Now he is alive forever in heaven and alive in the hearts of believers. This is the complete victory Jesus won for anyone who puts his or her faith and trust in him. If you trust Jesus, you have already won the race.

Keep on Running

As we read on in Philippians 3:13, it says, “*Brothers and sisters, I can’t consider myself a WINNER yet.*” But, didn’t we already say we won? The truth is we have won. Heaven has been given to us. But, that does not mean we stop running the race. That doesn’t mean we stop living for him.

Continuing on in verse 13 and 14, “*This is what I do: I don’t look back, I lengthen my stride, and I run straight toward the goal to WIN the prize that God’s heavenly call offers in Christ Jesus.*”

Do you think you will ever get tired or discouraged in your run? Of course you will. Should you give up? (No.) Why? The race has already been won for you, so you keep running the race. You cannot be defeated! God gives us the grace for the race.

Drawing the First Place Ribbon on Each Contestant

Draw a ribbon around the neck of your own hand athlete with a washable marker.

As you can see, I am drawing a first place ribbon on my athlete. This reminds me that because of Jesus, I have already won heaven. I am a winner, but I continue to run this race until I arrive in heaven someday.

This race is more important than winning any track race, baseball game, softball game, soccer game, dance contest, music contest, or spelling bee. This is living life so that everything you do gives glory to God who has given you grace for the race.

Option #1: Video

Show the 30 minute video *Skate Expectations*, “McGee and Me” series #4.

Summary: In this video, Nick witnesses to his faith by defending the school nerd, while Derrick wants to bully him. Nick and Derrick settle their issues by competing in a skateboard race. Nick competes honestly; Derrick does not. Nick is in fact competing in a different type of race. This is like the race we are discussing today. It is a contest like our lives by his standards of showing kindness and love to others.

Discussion questions for the video:

Think of Derrick at school, with his friends and during the race. What things do you think were most important to him?

Think of Nick in the situations he faced. Think about how he made his decisions. What were some of the things most important to him?

Let’s not think about skateboard races. Think about the race in which you run toward the things that are important to you. What are the different races Derrick and Nick were competing in?

What kind of life races are you running in?

Prayer before kids are dismissed at end of hour or before returning to small group:

Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus who has already won the victory for us. He has defeated Satan and has won the prize of heaven. Help us to persevere and run toward the goal of heaven. Give us strength and courage when we are weak. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Option #2: Have kids return to Small Group Application if video not used.