

RUN THE RACE

Eight sessions on the Christian Race



**Secondary
School**



Lunchtime Group Resource

RUN THE RACE

Eight sessions on the Christian Race



The Crusader Union is a Bible-based, interdenominational Christian youth organisation, whose vision is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to students in the Independent Schools of Australia, to nurture Christians and to encourage church membership.

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WELCOME

This resource has been specifically written with school groups in mind but can be adapted depending on your needs. It is based on the group running for approximately 30 minutes each meeting.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

- 7 sets of leader's notes for regular meetings. The leader's notes provide the aim of the study, a fun activity, discussion questions (with notes to help answer some questions) and prayer ideas.
- 1 set of leader's notes for an outreach meeting.
- 7 student pages for regular meetings. The student pages can be photocopied and handed out if so desired. Each sheet contains the Bible passage (NIV), activities, questions and prayer ideas.
- 2 colour advertising posters designed to grab the attention of students and help increase awareness of your group. There is space for you to fill in your group name and where you meet. We encourage schools to use the 'CRU School Groups' logo when promoting their group so as to link students with the work that God is doing in other schools.

BEFORE YOU START

- Paul says to Timothy near the end of his life "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." (2 Timothy 4:7) The Christian life of faith is like a marathon. It will involve struggle, toil, perseverance but has great reward at the finish line. This series aims to equip students with an understanding of what it takes to **Run the Race**. A variety of media - internet websites, video and music - is used in this series and most of these can be accessed from the Web Extras section of the Crusaders' website:

<http://www.crusaders.edu.au/ministry/resourcewebextras>

- Although these studies are geared more towards the already-believing student, each study seeks to use God's word to challenge both Christians and non-Christians about the realities and rewards of the life that's been given to us by Jesus Christ. We encourage you to guide students to marvel at what God has achieved through His Son, not simply in what we have to do as we run the Christian marathon.
- Please note that all pages in this resource can be photocopied but Crusaders requests each school purchase at least one original.

We pray that this resource will be a great help as you join in God's work of bringing students to Himself and growing them to be like His Son.

"We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom,
so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.

To this end I labour, struggling with all His energy which so powerfully works in me."

Colossians 1:28-29

RUN THE RACE

| Week | Title | Passage | Key Focus |
|------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| 1 | OUTREACH: Start the Race | Mark 1:14-18 | Repent. Believe. Follow. This is how we start and continue in the Christian race. Have you repented, trusted in Jesus and decided to live God's way? Will you? |
| 2 | Disciplined Training | 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 | Our goal to win the prize means that we must engage in spiritual self-discipline. In what ways are you disciplining yourself in your Christian life? |
| 3 | Practice! | 1 Timothy 4:7-12 | Practicing godliness impacts us both now and in the future. What specific ways can you train yourself in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity? |
| 4 | Don't Trip! | Hebrews 12:1 | We need to get rid of sin and anything else which can trip us up and hinder us in the Christian race. What are some things that you need to get rid of? |
| 5 | Keep Running to the Finish | Hebrews 12:2-3 | Perseverance means focusing on Jesus alone, letting nothing hinder us from running the Christian race. How can you keep focusing on Jesus in the long term? |
| 6 | Don't Get Distracted! | Matthew 6:25-34 | Don't be like others who are distracted by things in this world. How can you continue to focus on the main thing without distractions? |
| 7 | You Don't Run Alone | Jude 24-25 | Don't run solo or trust in yourself – trust God. He is with us in the race, making us more like Jesus every day. Have you been trusting in yourself or in Jesus? |
| 8 | The Ultimate Prize | Philippians 3:10-14 | We need to press on towards the goal of the Christian faith because nothing is greater than life with Christ in heaven. How can you be more single-minded about heaven? |

Disciplined Training

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

AIM

To motivate students to practice spiritual self-discipline as an important part of running the Christian race.

PREPARATION

- ❑ Read through 1 Corinthians 9, familiarising yourself with the context and content of the focus passage. Pray that students will seek to be self-disciplined in their Christian lives.
- ❑ Photocopy the Week 2 student page from page 20 for students.
- ❑ Choose from a variety of activities for the circuit fun activity and bring along the necessary equipment.
- ❑ Optional: provide Bible reading material for students in your group. A short list of suggested material is available on the Web Extras page.

FUN ACTIVITY

The Trivia Circuit – run a circuit session with different stations around the room. Have at least four stations, one for each part of the room. Split your group into teams which must answer a trivia question correctly in order to have a chance to complete one circuit station exercise. The winning team is the first to complete all the circuit activities.

Circuit activities: 10 x bicep curls (weights needed), 40 skips (skipping rope needed), 40 x punches (boxing gloves and pads needed), 20 x stomach crunches, 10 x push ups, 20 x star jumps.

Trivia Questions: available from links on the Crusaders Resource Web Extras.

This activity will help students to reflect on what sports people do when engaged in disciplined training.

NOTICE NEWCOMERS

New students who attended in Week 1 may choose to return to the group this week or in following weeks. Some may have decided to follow Jesus, while some may just be interested to discover more. Explain the format that your meeting will take and that you will be exploring what the Bible says about various aspects of 'running' the Christian race - what does living as a Christian look like? Why live like this? Is it all worth it? Allow students the opportunity to ask any questions they may have at an appropriate time and be aware of using 'Christian jargon' as you move through the series.

DISCUSS

1. How do you know someone is serious about their sport? Do you know anyone like this?

Those who are serious about their sport may talk about it a lot or watch a lot of it frequently. However, one sure way to tell a dedicated athlete is the amount of time they devote to training for their sport. Elite sportspeople will spend time every single day training (normally more than 20 hours a week) to improve their muscles, fitness, skills and grasp of the game to ensure peak performance, so that they can excel in their chosen activity.

Name some people that you may know personally who are like this (it may even be yourself!) and also some famous sports people/teams.

Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.

2. What kind of race/game do you think Paul is talking about? What kind of training do you think Paul is referring to in this passage?

Paul isn't talking about an ordinary sport. He is referring to the Christian journey and comparing it to a race. A serious competitor aiming for the prize would prepare by undergoing strict training and dedicated preparation, even when the training seems painful or tough (like the ones in the circuit activity). The same goes for the Christian race.



Training and preparation will help, particularly in the area of endurance. Remind students that the Christian race isn't a sprint or an 80 minute game with half-time in-between. It is more like a marathon, a long-distance race that requires stamina and preparation. We may be able to play a game of footy or sprint for a short while without a great deal of preparation if we are fit, but to undertake a marathon requires disciplined training.

Allow students to think about what kind of training we could do for the Christian race. Try to prioritise your training list to two or three main activities to focus your attention on today. Some of the things you may want to prioritise: regular Bible reading, regular prayer to God or meeting regularly with other Christians.

3. What is Paul's motivation as he trains personally for the Christian race?

The Christian race doesn't end with a prize or crown that is temporary (v.25). Instead it is a crown that will last forever. Participating in the Christian race has eternal implications as it is about life with Christ in heaven. Point out that the apostle Paul did not exclude himself from training for the race. He disciplined himself and showed his dedication to the Christian race because he believed in the everlasting crown he would receive and didn't want to be disqualified for this prize.

Emphasize that **our relationship with God in heaven is not determined by our "training performance"** but instead upon repenting, believing and following Jesus. **Disciplined training keeps us on track as we follow Jesus throughout our life.**

APPLY

What is our dedication to the Christian race like? How are we undergoing strict training for it?

Encourage students to think about how they are faring in the areas mentioned in Q2. Are they

intentional, disciplined and planned out in their approach to their Bible reading or prayer life? Or are they more like people who do not train for a sport? What is ONE thing that they can set as a training goal? In particular, encourage students to develop a regular Bible reading time where they read through a section of the Bible (e.g. The New/Old Testament, one of the Gospels, the book of Romans, or Luke & Acts together). Encourage them to share what they are doing with one other person in the group and to remind each other about this over the next few weeks and months. You may wish to decide on something to read as a group so that you can be accountable to each other to maintain discipline.

PRAYER

In pairs or fours, pray with each other about the things you have decided to be disciplined in. Thank God that our salvation isn't based on our training performance but pray for willingness to grow in these disciplines so that we can keep on track with following Jesus.

FINISH

Dedicated training is important for the sportsperson. Remind students as with any exercise not to aim too high (e.g. from not reading the Bible at all to one hour bible reading sessions each day!) but to start small and aim for regular, disciplined commitment for the long term. The Christian race is far more important than any other activity we will participate in, and we will need to commit time and effort to it along the way.

Week 2

Disciplined Training

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

²⁴Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.

²⁵Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. ²⁶Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. ²⁷No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.



When a Christian shuns fellowship with other Christians, the devil smiles. When he stops studying the Bible, the devil laughs. When he stops praying, the devil shouts for joy.

Corrie ten Boom

1

How do you know someone is serious about their sport? Do you know anyone like this?

Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

2

What kind of race/game do you think Paul is talking about? What kind of training do you think Paul is referring to in this passage?

3

What is Paul's motivation as he trains personally for the Christian race?

Apply: What is our dedication to the Christian race like? How are we undergoing strict training for it?