

# Explore It

## FOR LEADERS



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### TRUSTING OUR COACH

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#### Hebrews 12:1-2a Follow Jesus' example

Just as good sportspeople have great relationships with their coaches, who help and support them to do well in their sport, God has put people around us to help and support us in our faith. Of course, our greatest coach is Jesus himself!

The writer of Hebrews compares our Christian life to a race, a race in which we give everything to be like and with Jesus. That's why we want to stay as fit as we can, so we can keep running towards him. As we run, we mustn't compare ourselves to others around us, but keep our eyes on Jesus and follow where he is leading. Jesus always loves us whether we keep working on our spiritual fitness or whether we give up, fall down or mess up. Jesus gives us his Holy Spirit to guide us and help us to stay strong.

Each child will need:

- Pens/pencils and paper

### Start It

Play a game of *Follow the Coach*. Choose a child to be the coach. They demonstrate a move for the rest of the group to follow. As the group repeats the move, the coach gives tips and encouragement to children to improve their performance. Eg point your toes; keep wiggling! You can do it! If there's time, swap coaches.

**Say:** Over the last few weeks we have been looking at the different ways we can grow stronger in our faith and grow as Christians. We have thought about the way athletes train to improve at their sport and compared this to us training to be better Christians.

#### **Ask:**

- Most athletes have someone who gives them guidance and helps them to improve. What is that person usually called?
- What kind of things does a coach do to help the athletes?

### Sing It

Today's song is all about running the spiritual race every day of lives and inspires us to keep running no matter what.

'Finish the race' - lyric video and hand motions by Doorstop Songs (4 mins 12 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Np98t-h7070>

### Tell It

#### **Video**

Stop the clip at 3 mins 28 secs.

**Screenshare:** *Run the good race* by The Superbook Show (4 mins 9 sec)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O9NWN2sIMj8>

🗨️ **Say:** In 1 Corinthians 9:24, Paul writes: 'You know that in a race all the runners run. But only one gets the prize. So run like that. Run to win!'

1 Corinthians 9:24 (ICB)

**Ask:**

- ➔ What kind of race do you think Paul is talking about?
- ➔ In the clip the first piece of training advice was to be consistent – what does that look like in our spiritual race? We can't just follow Jesus when we feel like it; we need to be consistent.
- ➔ How can we train up our faith? For example: read the Bible; pray; go to church and put our faith into practice.

🗨️ **Say:** In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul continues with these words:

**Screenshare:**

**'All those who compete in the games use strict training. They do this so that they can win a crown. That crown is an earthly thing that lasts only a short time. But our crown will continue forever.'**

— 1 Corinthians 9:25 (ICB)

🗨️ **Say:** The second piece of advice in the clip is to believe in your training. Rather than relying on our own strength, we believe in God and the training he gives us. It's OK to doubt sometimes, but remember who your coach is and believe in what he is asking you to do.

**Ask:**

- ➔ What kind of coaching does God give us?
- ➔ How does God's coaching help us run our spiritual race?

🗨️ **Say:** God's coaching keeps us strong while we're running the race. Isaiah 40:31 says:

**'But the people who trust the Lord will become strong again. They will be able to rise up as an eagle in the sky. They will run without needing rest. They will walk without becoming tired.'**

— Isaiah 40:31 (ICB)

**Ask:**

- ➔ What do you think it would feel like to be able to run without needing a rest or walk without ever becoming tired?
- ➔ What do you think that looks like for our spiritual lives?

🗨️ **Say:** Jesus came to show us what it looks like to run the spiritual race here on earth. As well as being leader of an amazing coaching team, he showed us how to live our lives for God and to follow his training advice carefully.

## Action It

Ask your group to quickly act out / freeze frame each scenario.

🗨️ **Say:**

- ➔ When we are running a race, we might sometimes find it difficult to keep going.
- ➔ We might start to doubt that we can make it.
- ➔ We might see someone ahead of us in the race and feel like we're not doing very well.
- ➔ We might realise that we've not been training properly and regret not putting in the work.

🗨️ **Say:** All of these things can also happen in our spiritual race.

Ask your group to act out / freeze frame one final time.

🗨️ **Say:** But don't worry – our amazing coach has some training advice for us.

### Screenshare:

**'So we have many people of faith around us. Their lives tell us what faith means. So let us run the race that is before us and never give up. We should remove from our lives anything that would get in the way. And we should remove the sin that so easily catches us. Let us look only to Jesus. He is the one who began our faith, and he makes our faith perfect.'**

— Hebrews 12:1-2a (ICB)

**Ask:** What kind of distractions get in the way of us running our spiritual race?

### Draw

Ask the children to draw a running track to represent the spiritual race. Here are some ideas of what they could include on the track:

- themselves as a runner
- a reminder of the key Bible verse – Hebrews 12:1-2a
- coaching tips from Jesus
- warning signs that show possible distractions
- training tips from the *Superbook Show* clip: be consistent, believe in your training

Ask the group to share and explain their running tracks at the end of the activity and revisit Hebrews 12:1-2a to bring this part of the session to a close.

### Pray It

- **Say:** Sometimes it might feel like we are running the spiritual race alone, or that there are too many distractions. We are not alone. God is there with us, guiding us and leading us forward. When he came to earth, Jesus showed us how to keep running even when we are distracted. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we can stay strong even when we're tempted to drop out of the race.

**Ask:** What part of running the spiritual race do you find challenging?

Once the group has shared, then spend time praying for each child. Remind them that you are running the race with them as well and are always praying for them.

### Explore It

Remember to send home the Explore It (For Me) and Explore It (Together) ideas for children and families.