

# Faith Adventures Youth Resource



Free to use – please acknowledge when using beyond local church children's and youth work so others can find and use the resource themselves.

*Embedded in Faith Adventures: Children Together, this youth resource is intergenerational in nature and designed to foster God-connection in church, home and beyond.*

For guidance on the purpose of the resource and how to use it as a launch pad for your engagement with children and families, please use this link: [www.bit.ly/How-To-FAYR](http://www.bit.ly/How-To-FAYR)

## Title: 1 Corinthians 9: 24–27

**Theme:** My personal best

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### Introduction: What would be helpful to know in my planning?

In the First Epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul compares the Christian life to running a race. Athletes train with focus, discipline and self-control so they can perform at their very best. Paul reminds believers that faith also requires intentional living – not drifting aimlessly but choosing habits and attitudes that help us grow closer to God.

Self-control is about far more than simply “behaving well”. It is about self-disciplining our own faith journey, each of us reaching our personal best, in our race. This resource will help explore what healthy, biblical self-control looks like. Like the lesson from the classic tale of the hare and the tortoise, faithful growth is not always fast or flashy; it is steady, intentional, and consistent. We must also remember that this is part of a wider theme of Fruits of the spirit.

Paul's image of athletic discipline reminds us that spiritual growth takes practice. Just as athletes train their bodies, Christians are called to train their hearts, minds, and habits. Whether through prayer, worship, rest, encouragement, or wise choices, every small step matters. Sometimes self-control is seen in what we say; at other times, in what we choose not to say.

We each need to run our own personal best race, the goal is not perfection, but progress – becoming a little better, a little wiser, and a little more like Christ each day. Even small changes matter. A commitment to become “one per cent better” in our attitudes, reactions and faithfulness can have a lasting impact on our journey.

This resource is designed to encourage and equip all to grow in self-control through biblical reflection, practical application and honest personal discipleship, so that together we may “run in such a way as to get the prize”.

## Together – prayer and games

Let's start our time with God and each other well

Use this opening prayer or encourage young people to open the session with a prayer of their own.

*All mighty God,*

*Be with us as we learn more about you through stories and people in the Bible.*

*Help us to walk in your way and follow your path.*

*Be with us as we make decisions that affect our lives and the lives of those around us.*

*Amen.*

Alternatively, you may join with the widgit prayer found in Faith Adventures: Children Together, or else the Lord's Prayer found at the end of this session.

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### Active game: Personal best

Circuit race: do it, then see if you can improve on your personal best; or spend time at each obstacle to create strategies.

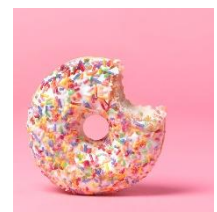
Create a small circuit of fitness activities e.g. do five-star jumps, run the length of the room and back, followed by five lunges and five push-ups. Time how long it takes for each person to do the circuit – then ask them to go again to beat their PB. It's about each child improving on their own time, and isn't a competition with others.

Or you could ask the children to balance a bean bag or book on their heads and walk around. Time how long they can keep the item on their heads. Then take time to work out strategies to improve their time and ask them to do the activity again to see if they have improved their best.

### Quieter game: Self-control

Self-control is tricky; these suggestions will help everyone to try out how much self-control they have.

Eat a doughnut:



Give everyone a sugar-coated doughnut. Ask them to sit in a circle so they can see each other. They then have to try and eat the doughnut without licking their lips. Please be aware of allergies.

Other ideas might include eating a Starburst or chocolate éclair without chewing.

Stand on one leg:

On the count of three, ask everyone to stand on one leg. How long can they control their body to enable them to keep that going?

**For an extra challenge:** combine both of the activities – so, stand on one leg while eating a doughnut without licking your lips.

## Experience – Bible story and songs

Hear, watch and sing the Bible story

This link takes you to 1 Corinthians 9: 24–27 in *The Message*:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%209%3A24-27&version=MSG>

You may wish to research different versions of this reading on [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)  
Recommended versions to try are NRSV, Easy-to-read, *The Message*, NIRV

<sup>24-25</sup> You've all been to the stadium and seen the athletes race. Everyone runs; one wins. Run to win. All good athletes train hard. They do it for a gold medal that tarnishes and fades. You're after one that's gold eternally.

<sup>26-27</sup> I don't know about you, but I'm running hard for the finish line. I'm giving it everything I've got. No lazy living for me! I'm staying alert and in top condition. I'm not going to get caught napping, telling everyone else all about it and then missing out myself.

*The Message (MSG) Copyright © 1993, 2002, 2018 by Eugene H. Peterson*

**Watch:** One-minute sermon: The World Cup, by J. John  
<https://youtu.be/sBP2Tf0cZek?si=um1X7qL9IDEPencW>



### An opportunity for reflection

- I wonder if you agree or disagree with anything said in this video
- JJ John references a question Jesus asks – “What do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your soul?” I wonder how you would answer that if Jesus were asking you directly

## Explore – ways into the theme

Ideas and activities to explore this week's Bible passage together

### A new way to explore the theme

This is a new way to explore the Bible passage and the theme for this week.

Alternatively, you may wish to use the Explore section from this week's Faith Adventures: Children Together to guide your exploration of the theme this week.

Invite everyone to join in with a simple challenge such as balancing, hopping or completing a quick circuit. Let everyone try it once and then encourage them to improve their personal best. Ask them, "Have you ever trained or practised for something? What helped you improve?" Provide two sheets of paper: one titled "Athlete" and the other "Christian". Consider these different aspects of being an athlete and a Christian.

Think about an athlete – they run... stop... breathe... then run again. No crowd. No medal. No one watching. They turn up again and again; they choose healthy food; they listen to the coach; they do not give up when it hurts.

An athlete chooses what helps them grow strong – food, water, rest, practice.

A Christian chooses what helps their faith grow – God's word, prayer, encouragement, time with God.

An athlete prepares carefully – they practise, they stay focused, they keep going when it's hard.

A Christian prepares too – learning from Jesus, practising self-control, trying again when they get things wrong.

Gather the group around a large piece of paper and ask what an athlete does to be able to give their best or even win a race.

Encourage the group to capture their ideas on the sheet of paper. For example: good nutrition exercise, sleep and rest, learning about the body and how it works, practising running, having a coach to guide you, never giving up, and so on.

Explain that, in this passage, we see the Christian life described as a race; each of us is encouraged to run our best race. What can we do to be able to give our best in our faith journey? For example, reading the Bible, prayer, meeting with other Christians, living a good life.

Create these ideas on a separate list, comparing the athlete and a Christian. What small steps do they both take to do their best?

- What is one small step you could take to be your **personal best** in your journey with God?

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## Modern parables

This section includes references to TV programmes, films, books, TED talks, TikTok etc aimed at this age group that will have been widely seen, or where a clip is available to use as a stimulus for discussion. You may also enjoy the picture book recommended for Faith Adventures: Children Together and explore the relevance of the story to the theme of the session in more depth – young people and adults are often well tuned in to the deeper meanings in materials aimed at younger people and the authors are often very aware of the adults reading the books to or with younger ones.



### *Eddie the Eagle* (March 28, 2016, Lionsgate)

In the film *Eddie the Eagle*, we see the true story of a young man who always dreamed of taking part in the Olympics. After much hard work, and never giving up, he makes it. He doesn't win by any means, but he does achieve his personal best. The film reminds us that taking part and giving your personal best is more important than

winning.

Watch this clip of Eddie achieving his personal best in the highest ski jump at the Olympics.

[https://youtu.be/cdc3bebh-aw?si=j1mK8khW\\_s1Eh9Ve](https://youtu.be/cdc3bebh-aw?si=j1mK8khW_s1Eh9Ve)

- Consider how your faith journey is going and whether you are giving it your best

### Group discussion

- I wonder what the opposite of self-control is and what is its impact on your faith and/or life.
- I wonder what you think a lack of self-control leads to in life, and for eternity, based on what the Bible says here.

### Personal reflection

- Does slow and steady always win the race?
- Do you have to have a final goal in mind?

## Express – prayer and creative activities

Praying together: enabling your group to respond spiritually

### Praying together

**Prayers** Respond to the theme by writing or saying a short prayer. Alternatively, use the creative prayer from Faith Adventures: Children Together for this session, or use the prayer activity below. Alternatively, light a candle and play some music while you listen and talk to God together.

### Prayerful activity- Beep beep

*You will need:*

- timer
- partypoppers

*What you do:*

A well-known activity in schools is the beep test: can you run from place to place at the beeps? This prayer activity works on the same premise. The prayers will be timed and a beep will sound each time a new period of time has started. Between each beep is a time to pray. Think carefully about your group and set the timer accordingly – 20 seconds can seem longer than you think to a young person! You may wish to suggest themes for each

prayer section: people, world, war, ourselves, etc.

So, start with a theme, set the timer, and when the beep goes off, change to a different theme. When all themes are completed then everyone gets to pull their party popper, to signify the prayers have ended and as an Amen.

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## Spoken Prayers

Eric Liddell was a famous Olympian – famous for his sport but also for his faith in God. You can find out more about him in the responding together section. He wrote a book which included the following prayer. Use this as your spoken word prayer. Either reword it for your group or say it as it is.

*“Father, I pray that no circumstances, however bitter or however long drawn out, may cause me to break thy law, the law of love to thee and to my neighbour. That I may not become resentful, have hurt feelings, hate, or become embittered by life’s experiences, but that in and through all, I may see thy guiding hand and have a heart full of gratitude for thy daily mercy, daily love, daily power and daily presence.*

*“Help me in the day when I need it most to remember that:*

*All things work to the good for those in Christ, that love God. (Romans 8:28)*

*I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:13)*

*[God said] My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in thy weakness. (2 Corinthians 12:9).”*

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## Responding together

This is an opportunity for a social justice challenge, some research, craftivism, or a craft or STEM activity. You may have a specific activity chosen but free choice is also an option. Here are some suggestions for this week’s theme. Choose whatever will work best for your group.

### Medal Biscuits

*You will need:*

- Digestive or Rich Tea biscuits
- icings
- edible decorations
- strawberry laces
- writing icing to decorate



*What you do:*

Decorate a biscuit to look like a medal using the icing and other decorations. Add a strawberry lace as a ribbon for the medal.

## Eric Liddell

Watch the following clip, which describes Eric, his love of sport and love of God, and how he responded when the two things clashed:

Eric Liddell 100, by Scottishathletics <https://youtu.be/FLaKb1txtQ8?si=AusE-npNWuA5cLMM>

- What impact did Eric's protest make?
- What may cause you to protest like Eric, particularly something which may clash with allowing you to run the best race for Christ?

## Challenge

Discipleship doesn't stop when you walk out of the church door – it is a part of everyday life. Take a challenge with you and try to make it part of your week.

You may think of your own suggestion of what you as an individual or a group might do in the coming week in response to what you have explored today. If not here are some suggestions:

- Use one of the “conversation starter” questions or the question below to talk with someone of a different generation or from a different setting and share your questions, thoughts and insights together. **I wonder what part of God's “race” in life we find the hardest.**
- Research something suggested by JPIT Resources ([jpit.uk](http://jpit.uk)) or *Commitment for Life* ([cforl.co.uk](http://cforl.co.uk)).
- Are you inspired by Eric Liddell? Is there something you could do that involves standing up for what you believe in because it is what God calls us to do? Perhaps you could highlight Eric's story either in some homework, at church or with your friends and family.

Thank you for exploring the **1 Corinthians** passage with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing [sharon.lloyd@urc.org.uk](mailto:sharon.lloyd@urc.org.uk) or by sharing it on [www.bit.ly/FACT\\_FB](http://www.bit.ly/FACT_FB)

  
The Lord's Prayer

 Our  Father,  who art  in  heaven,  hallowed be  thy  name.

 Thy  kingdom  come,  thy  will  be done






 on  earth  as it is  in  heaven.

 Give  us  this day  our  daily  bread

 and  forgive  us  our  sins  As  we  forgive  those  who  sin  against  us

 Lead  us  not  into  temptation  but  deliver  us  from  evil

 For  thine  is the  kingdom,  the  power  and  the  glory

 For  ever  and  ever  . Amen

