



GO THE DISTANCE

Dear Coaches,

In this booklet you will find a 20 minute per day format for your spiritual preparation to be a volunteer at your church's sports camp. You can do this devotional in your own quiet time before your summer camp begins, or in your quiet time each day before you arrive at camp. It is vital that you come prepared each day. The 10 minutes that you spend with your team during the "Coach's Huddle" may be the most important time you have each day with your kids.

When you prepare early it will allow the Holy Spirit to direct you into a fuller understanding of the theme so that you can be a more effective leader. The important thing is that you prepare before you come to camp each day.

Here is a guide to your 20 minute preparation time:

- 3 minutes Work on the memory verse for the week.
- 3 minutes Reflect on the theme, Bible story, key points, and introduction for the day.
- 5 minutes Read the Scripture passages from the Bible story.
- 3 minutes Read and reflect on the devotional thought and discussion questions.
- 3 minutes Pray for your kids, as well as yourself, for what to say today.
- 3 minutes Review your personal life story for the day's coach's share time.

2 Timothy 4:6-8: *"For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day - and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing."*



GO THE DISTANCE

Introduction:

Everyone starts somewhere, but most will be remembered for where and how they finished.

In every facet of life there are those who "Go the Distance." They not only go the distance but do it with a flair that causes those that know them to admire and emulate them. People who live to be 100 years of age, workers who finish 20, 30, or more years at the same job, marriages that last 50 years or more, and people who never waiver in their beliefs throughout their life, these people are admired for their ability to "Go the Distance".

However, every person on the planet, even the successful ones, face struggles that cause them to want to quit, to take the easy path, to give up, or to compromise. People that persevere and "Go the Distance" without doing these things are admired and seen as successful. Everyone admires those who continue in the journey and finish the race strong, whether it is the athlete who has had a long and storied career, or the person who has completed a daunting task.

Athletics create situations that are great metaphors for life. A sporting contest, an athletic career, and a sports season all have beginnings and endings. Whether the athlete, coach or team goes the distance, it is easily measured. These athletic metaphors, along with principles from God's Word, form a powerful communication technique that helps us understand how to live our everyday lives so that we can "Go the Distance".

The "Go the Distance" curriculum will take the approach of correlating five key qualities that give athletes the ability to "Go the Distance" to similar Biblical principles that can give us practical tips that will help us "Go the Distance" in our lives.



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Introduction:

These qualities include:

1. **Being willing to change.**
2. **Enduring hardships.**
3. **Knowing how to renew your strength.**
4. **Realizing you cannot do it alone.**
5. **Knowing where the finish line is.**

To develop the theme we will look at great sports endurance stories as well as accounts from the missionary journeys of Paul the Apostle for our inspiration. Our theme verses will be found in II Timothy 4:6-8, in which Paul states, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith".

Lesson 1 The children will learn about change and how a willingness to change plays a major role in going the distance in life. They will see how change can happen very quickly as it did in Paul's life. They will see the importance of letting God help in making needed change happen.

Lesson 2 This lesson will teach the children about hardships they face in life, especially the ones that seem undeserved. Everyone will have to endure hardships in life in order to go the distance. They will learn that God can use our hardships to make us stronger and bring glory to Him.

Lesson 3 The children will learn that many times it is important to rest; to take some time off from the normal routines of life. These are times when God can renew their strength. These times of rest are essential in going the distance in life.



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Lesson 4 The children will learn that going the distance is something they can't do alone. Everyone needs help with things in their life and it is important to have others around them who can point them to the finish line. They will also learn that they are never alone if God is with them.

Lesson 5 This lesson will teach the children what it means to finish strong and how to recognize where the finish is. The importance of finishing what they start is another key in going the distance. There are rewards both in life and eternity for finishing the race.

The children who will hear these lessons will face crucial moments in their lives, where their decision could affect their ability to "Go the Distance". Through music, role modeling, teaching, actions, and the written word, the Christian child will be given guidance in how to recognize principles that persevere from God's Word. The non-Christian child will be challenged and shown how to trust God for a life that will be abundant, fruitful, and fulfilling.

God's Word is the only true guide for living a life that will stand up under the pressure of life and allow you to finish strong. I pray that as you read and live the lessons in your preparation for teaching, that God will give you insights as to how to share your own applications of these concepts and that you will be inspired to "Go the Distance".

To Go the Distance you must...

MONDAY

Be Willing to Change

Sports Story: Rick Ankiel

Bible Story: Conversion of Saul of Tarsus

Key Point I: Change can happen in an instant

Key Point II: Change can be permanent if God does it

Introduction: Everyone will finish their own personal journey at some time in some way. Many times choices made along the journey will determine how and in what manner the person finishes. In every person's life there are crucial moments of choice that determine whether you will be able to "Go the Distance". Finishing the race in the right way, having self-respect and integrity, or receiving the prize for work well done are things which happen at times because the person made a choice to change the direction they were going at a crucial moment. In athletics it could be a choice of work ethic, coach, team, or sport. In spiritual terms it boils down to a choice to do it with or without God's help.

Scripture: Acts 9

Devotional Thought: Saul of Tarsus had been bent on destroying the Church; a direction and a lifestyle that was contrary to God's design for his life. In a spectacular moment on a dusty road north of Jerusalem, Saul was changed. The direction and lifestyle of this zealot was now heading the opposite way; the way God wanted. Saul's conversion may be at the extreme end of directional change but each person who comes to Christ makes a decision that literally changes that person's focus and decision process. From that moment on there are significant points in a person's life where the prompting of the Holy Spirit causes him to make adjustments (being willing to change) that will result in his ability to "Go the Distance" God's way.

To Go the Distance you must...

MONDAY

Be Willing to Change

Self-examination:

Many times in life's journey you are faced with situations that cause you to consider a change in direction. It could be negative like a loss of a job, an illness you or a family member has, or maybe a relationship gone bad. It could also be a positive opportunity that looks inviting but the question remains, should you take it? These situations create a moment of choice for a change. To go the distance for God, those situations need to be bathed in prayer. Your spirit needs to be humbled from pride and you need to attack it with courage. Are you facing a change today?

Coach's Huddle:

Tell a life story about a time when you had to change your attitude or actions in order to continue on in a successful manner. If possible share about a time when this change was initiated by God or influenced by a decision to please God.

Discussion Questions:

1. **What are some good reasons to change?**
2. **Is change always good?**
3. **If a person is always changing their mind is that good?**
4. **Why can you trust God if He asks you to change?**

Situation:

Katana is a good shooter in basketball, but she also is a good dribbler. She likes to dribble to the basket and try and make the lay-up hoping to get fouled so she can make a 3-point play. She is very successful at this part of her game. Her team is playing a good defensive team that has a lot of tall players. Coach has encouraged Katana to take more outside shots and not to drive as much. What should Katana do? Shouldn't she keep doing what has worked in the past?

