

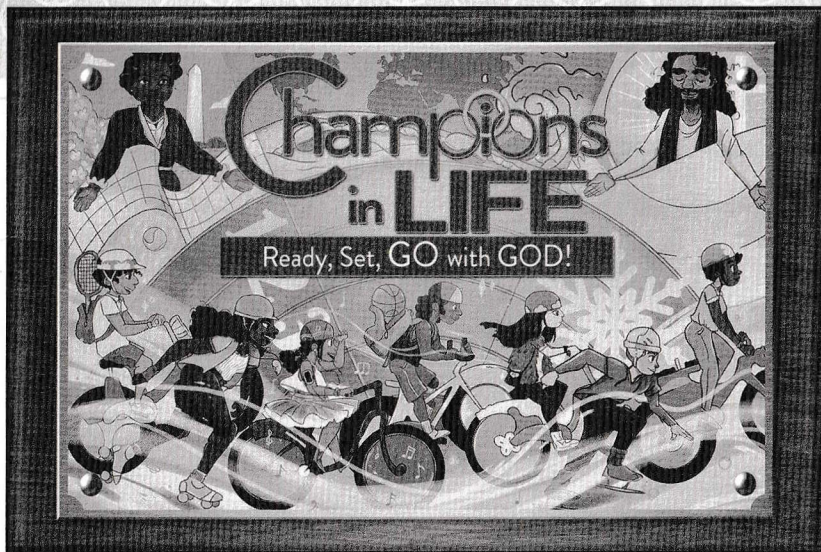
ABINGDON PRESS



Champions
in **LIFE**

Ready, Set, GO with GOD!

TEEN
Student Handbook



Champions in Life: Ready, Set, GO with GOD!

Teen Student Handbook

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Session 1
Get in the Race!.....2

Session 2
Be Skillful, Be Caring!.....9

Session 3
Keep Your Eyes on Jesus!.....16

Session 4
A Long Wait!25

Session 5
Reach for the Goal!33

A CHAMPION'S PRAYER/AFFIRMATION

I'm a champion. I'm winning at life.
I'll do my best; ready to go in Christ!

I'm running ahead to bring good news,
The news that God loves me and you.
It's an honor to run, I'm gonna run to win.
Lord, guide my feet till I get to the end.

I've got my eyes on the prize and the prize is high;
Beyond what I know, beyond the sky.
Reaching for the goal, lifting as I climb;
Don't want nobody to get left behind.

Help me, Jesus, so I will not fall
I'll give the effort. You gave your all!
You reached out to put me on higher ground.
I once was lost but now I'm found!

I'm a champion. I'm winning at life.
I'll do my best; ready to go in Christ!

Help me, Lord! Amen.

*But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength;
they will fly up on wings like eagles; they will run and not be tired;
they will walk and not be weary. (Isaiah 40:31)*



LESSON 1

GET IN THE RACE!

Part 1: Listen to—

Guide My Feet

Verse 1: Guide my feet, while I run this race. (3X)
'Cause I don't want to run this race in vain.

Verse 2: Hold my hand . . .

Verse 3: Stand by me . . .

Verse 4: Guide my feet . . .

Think About It

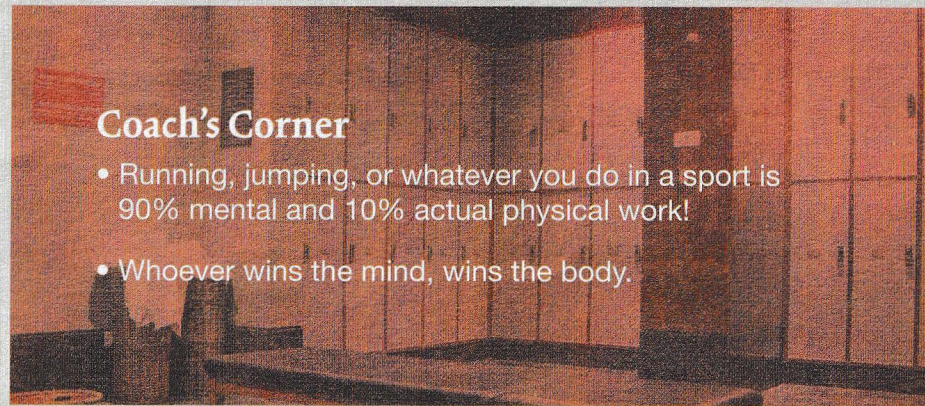
- Why is it important to ask God to guide our feet and our hands?
- Can you think of a particular situation in which you would like to know that God is standing with you?

Bible Coach

- *My feet now stand on level ground. I will bless the LORD in the great congregation. (Psalm 26:12)*
- *LORD, teach me your way; because of my opponents, lead me on a good path. (Psalm 27:11)*
- *And if your right hand causes you to fall into sin, chop it off and throw it away. (Matthew 5:30a)*

Coach's Corner

- Running, jumping, or whatever you do in a sport is 90% mental and 10% actual physical work!
- Whoever wins the mind, wins the body.



Part 2: Reading Aloud

2 Samuel 18:19-32 CEB

Then Zadok's son Ahimaaz said, "Please let me run and take the news to the king that the LORD has vindicated him against his enemies' power."

Joab said to him, "You aren't the one to bring the news today. You can bring news on another day, but not today, because the king's son is dead." Then Joab said to a Cushite, "Go tell the king what you have seen." The Cushite bowed low before Joab, then ran off.

But Zadok's son Ahimaaz again said to Joab, "I don't care what happens, just let me run after the Cushite too."

"Why do you want to go, son?" Joab asked. "You'll get no reward for going." "I don't care what happens, I want to go," Ahimaaz said. So Joab said to him, "Run off then!" Ahimaaz ran off, going by way of the plain, and passed the Cushite.

Now David was sitting between the two gates. The watchman on duty went up on the roof of the gate by the wall. He looked out and saw a man running alone.

The watchman called out and reported this to the king. The king said, "If he's alone, it's good news." The man got nearer and nearer, and the watchman saw another man running and called down to the gatekeeper, "There's another man running alone." The king said, "That one must be bringing good news too."

The watchman said, "I can see that the first one runs like Zadok's son Ahimaaz." "He's a good man," the king said, "and is coming with good news."

Ahimaaz called out to the king, "Peace!" then bowed low before the king, his nose to the ground. He said, "Bless the LORD your God, who has delivered up the men who raised their hands against my master the king."

The king said, "Is my boy Absalom okay?" Ahimaaz said, "I saw a large crowd right when Joab, the king's servant, sent your servant off, but I don't know what it was about."

"Step aside and stand right here," the king said. So Ahimaaz stepped aside and waited.

Then the Cushite arrived and said, "My master the king: Listen to this good news! The LORD has vindicated you this day against the power of all who rose up against you."

The king said to the Cushite, "Is my boy Absalom okay?" The Cushite answered, "May the enemies of my master the king and all who rise up against you to hurt you end up like that young man."

Memory Verse

So run to win. (1 Corinthians 9:24b)

Bible Coach

Ahimaaz ran off, going by way of the plain, and passed the Cushite. (2 Samuel 18:23b)

Part 3: Life Today—

Siu was pumped. Almost shouting, she said, “We are only two days away from the Champions in Life Festival at Lincoln Park!” Everyone would be welcoming 40-50 youth from Children’s Village for an afternoon of fun, games, activities, and food. Children’s Village is a temporary home for kids ages 7-14 whose parents cannot care for them.

Naayo, Jimmy, Siu, Kendi, Omar and Ayo had worked alongside the Children’s Village staff and other volunteers to make the festival possible. Serving was their way to build community, honor God, gain leadership skills, and love their neighbors. The staff called them “Kids for Christ” and part of their responsibility was to bring the good news to the youth at Children’s Village. “Well, there’s still lots to do,” Naayo exclaimed. “Jimmy, Kendi, and Omar! Get started on putting the school supplies in the backpacks! Ayo and Siu, get organized for the games and relays.”

The day would go like this: 1. Affirmations. Everyone would gather in a circle, each person proclaiming their identity by completing sentences, like: I am *beautiful and smart*. Then, God says I am *wonderfully and marvelously made*. 2. Relay competitions. 3. Food!! Grilled burgers and dogs, fresh fruit and veggies, chips, pretzels, AND Naayo’s fantastic fruit punch and celebration cupcakes.

The whole team was really excited about the finale. Naayo and Ayo had written a chant. They needed to practice it.

“Does it have music?” Kendi asked, “Everyone loves music.”

“We will make our own music,” Ayo smiled.

“Everyone will need to join in!” Omar added.

“That’s why we’ve got to get it right!” Naayo replied.

“Everyone repeat after we say a line. OK?”

“Yaaasssss!” they shouted.

Who got the honor? I got the honor!
The honor of being a kid for Christ!
The honor of being a champion in life!
Jesus came for you and me.
He lived and died, rose on day three!
With all power in his hand!
And I’m a Christ kid throughout the land!
Who got the honor? I got the honor!
The honor of being a kid for Christ!
The honor of being a champion in life!
I do believe! Do you believe?

The team repeated, chanted, clapped, beat-boxed, and stomped. “Great job, Twinsies!” Jimmy exclaimed, high-fiving each one. Packing and organizing, they kept up the chant until they had it down. As they finished up Omar said, “We have to make sure to end the day with prayer! What do you guys think?” With that, Kendi broke out in song, “*Let the church say, Amen.*”

Think About It/Talk About It

- What does it mean to share the good news? Why is sharing the good news important?
- The Church Kids used a chant to encourage others to learn about Christ. What are more ways to motivate others with the good news of Jesus Christ? Work with a partner and create a list.
- Work with someone to write an original chant about bringing the good news.



Part 4: The Bible Lesson

2 Samuel 18:19-32 CEB (King David Speaks)

I regret many things that I have done as King of Israel. I regret them because they did not honor God. I dishonored God by refusing to deal with my children's crimes. I did not punish my son, Amnon, for raping his sister, my daughter, Tamar. It was a terrible thing that happened in my family and I did nothing about it. Two years after the rape, my son, Absalom, took revenge on Amnon and killed him. Then, he revolted against me and my kingdom and gained control over Jerusalem, for a short time. In the process, he dishonored me by raping my wives for all to see. This nearly cost me my throne, and now Absalom is dead too.

I will never forget that day when I found out Absalom was dead. I sent the troops out and asked my general, Joab, to protect Absalom. I did not want any harm to come to him. I waited all day for the news to come that Absalom was safe. I sat at the city gate, hoping a messenger would arrive soon with good news. A messenger was running toward me. Then there was another. I hoped that good news was on the way.

The first messenger to arrive was Ahimaaz. He's a good man. Loyal. He wanted the honor of telling me about the victory. He began to tell me that the Israelite traitors had been dealt with, no longer a problem.

When I asked him about my son, he looked as if he wanted to say more, but suddenly lost his nerve. I asked him to step aside. I needed an accurate and full account of what happened on the battlefield.

When Kukimbia (*koo-keem-bee-yah*), the Cushite, arrived, he told me everything; a victory had been won, the Israelite traitors had been dealt with, no longer a problem. But this included my son, Absalom. That long hair of his got tangled up in a tree, so he was caught; later, Joab stabbed him and the armor bearers finished him off. This news was hard to hear. Kukimbia honored me by telling me the whole truth. His words were good news for the King of Israel. My kingdom had been restored according to God's promises.

However, Kukimbia's words were bad news for a father. I went to the room upstairs wishing that I had died instead of Absalom.

Think About It

- Does this Bible story connect with any contemporary stories in our world today?
- How does this lesson connect with "Guide My Feet" and the Bible Coach verses on page 2?
- Why was telling the whole truth, good news?

HONOR

Part 5: Sports Spotlight

Jesse Owens (1913-1980)

The son of sharecroppers and the grandson of slaves, Jesse Owens was a 1936 Olympic gold medalist. After a sickly childhood, in which his mother performed a homemade surgery on him to remove a lump that was pressing on his lungs, Jesse started running as a teen in Cleveland, Ohio. He set junior high and high school records. Jesse attended Ohio State University, working various jobs to support his family. In 1935, Jesse ran 42 events, winning them all, setting three world records. His nickname was the "Buckeye Bullet." The next year, Jesse became the first African American athlete to win four gold medals in a single Olympics Game, disproving the theory of white supremacy. President Franklin Roosevelt refused to honor his excellence, but in 1976, President Gerald Ford presented Jesse Owens with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. A foundation in his name continues to honor his memory with scholarships to students attending Ohio State University.

Cool Facts

- Mr. Owens' given name was **James Cleveland Owens**, nick-named Jay Cee. After moving to Ohio from Alabama, his teacher misunderstood what he was saying and called him Jesse. With his blessing, the name stuck.
- In 1936, he wore track shoes designed by the then unknown German designer Adolph (Adi) Dassler, the founder of Adidas.



Just Do It!

- Follow the directions your leader will give, and make a sports shoe to contribute to the community art project.

Usain Bolt (b. 1986)

A sprinter, this native of Kingston, Jamaica is nicknamed, "Lightning Bolt." At age 15, Usain Bolt became the youngest junior gold medalist ever at the World Junior Championships. He won three gold medals in three consecutive Olympic Games (2008, 2012, 2016) with a total of nine medals. However, his top speed was for the world record of 9.58 seconds in the 100-meter race at the Berlin World Championships in 2009. Despite a significant spinal curvature (scoliosis), he is an 11-time world champion. And although he often looks like he's playing around, Usain is a "Bible-believing, God-fearing and honoring, Jesus-worshipping Christian."

Every year he requires one of his sponsors, the sportswear company Puma, to send sports equipment to the high school he attended, William Knibb Memorial High School.

Think About It/Write About It

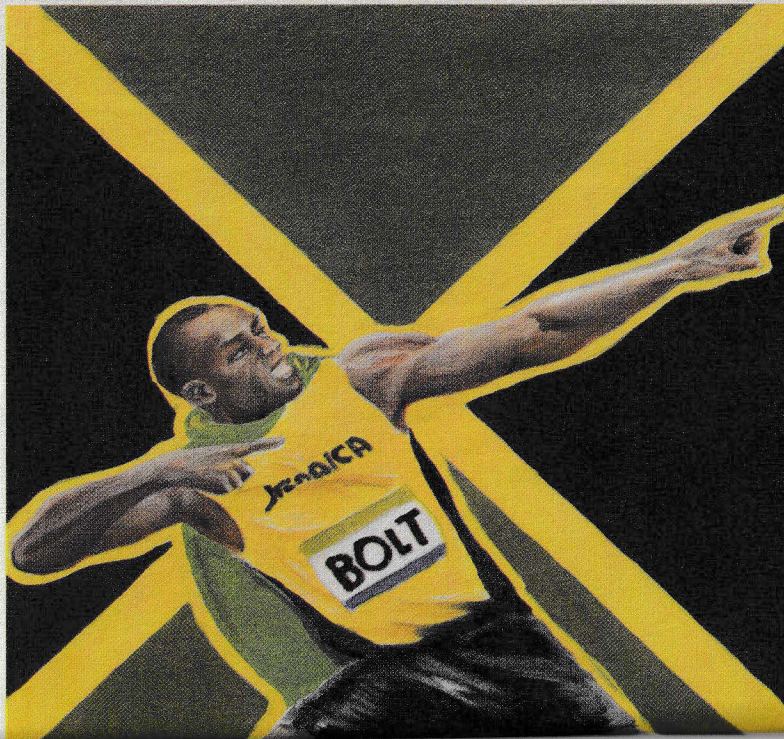
- The racism Jesse Owens experienced continues to happen today. Give an example.

- What words of positive self-talk (affirmation) do you use to help you get through racist name-calling?

Coach's Corner

What is the good news in this lesson?

1. The Bible shows that black people have been in the race for a long time.
2. Today, more people do not remain silent about or accept racial injustice.
3. You are a winner when you do not let what other people think limit you.
4. You are a winner when you work hard to get better and better.
5. You are a winner when you tell the truth.
6. You are a winner because Jesus loves you.



LESSON 2 BE SKILLFUL, BE CARING!

Part 1: Listen to—

Look Out! Watch Out!

Look out for you, watch out for me!
I got your back, and together we'll be
Safe and secure—Christ's love is our bond.
Holding each other—together we're strong! (repeat)

I'm-a look out for you.
Please, watch out for me, too.
When you need someone to pray,
I'll be there for you today.
When you need a helping hand,
When you need to talk, understand,
That I'm here when you're up or down,
And I'm here when no one's around.

I love you as a brother.
I love you as a sister.
And I love you as a friend.
Together we're strong! Together we're strong!

Memory Verse

Instead of each person watching out for their own good, watch out for what is better for others. (Philippians 2:4)

FRIENDSHIP



Look out! Watch out! Look out! Hey!
Let's support each other, together we'll be great!
Let's teach each other, and let's educate!

I can count on you and you can count on me!
The truth is—That's what friends are supposed to be.
In love, in grace, in mercy, in faith!
As sisters and brothers with love for one another!

Think About It/Talk About It

- What have you done to look out for your friends, your siblings, and/or your parents?

Coach's Corner

- Be the heart and soul of your team!

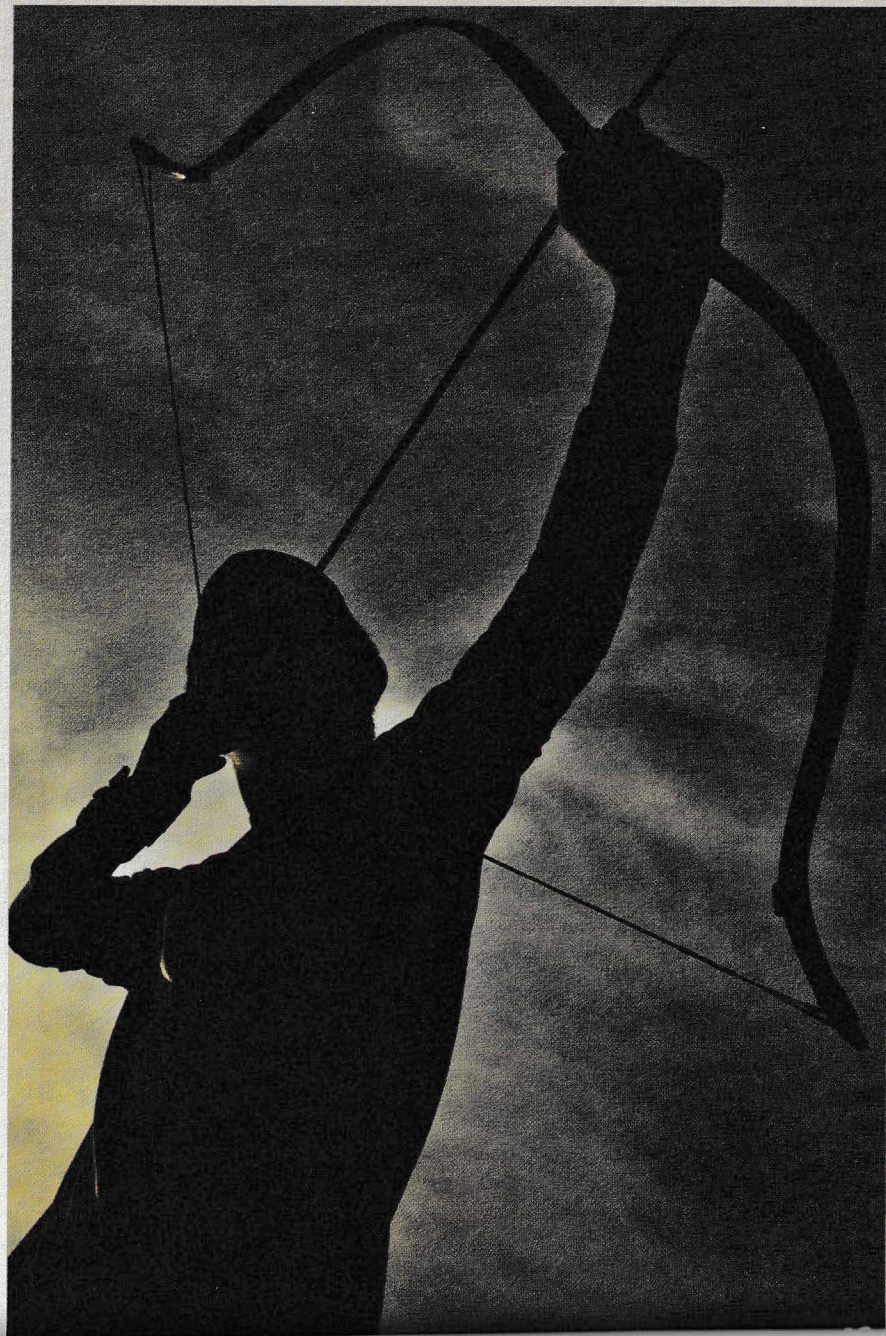
Part 2: Reading Aloud

1 Samuel 20:18-23, 35-41 CEB

"Tomorrow is the festival of the new moon," Jonathan told David. "You will be missed because your seat will be empty. The day after tomorrow, go all the way to the spot where you hid on the day of the incident, and stay close to that mound. On the third day I will shoot an arrow to the side of the mound as if aiming at a target. Then I'll send the servant boy, saying, 'Go retrieve the arrow.' If I yell to the boy, 'Hey! The arrow is on this side of you. Get it!' then you can come out because it will be safe for you. There won't be any trouble—I make a pledge on the LORD's life. But if I yell to the young man, 'Hey! The arrow is past you,' then run for it, because the LORD has sent you away. Either way, the LORD is witness between us forever regarding the promise we made to each other."

In the morning, Jonathan went out to the field for the meeting with David, and a young servant boy went with him. He said to the boy, "Go quickly and retrieve the arrow that I shoot." So the boy ran off, and he shot an arrow beyond him. When the boy got to the spot where Jonathan shot the arrow, Jonathan yelled to him, "Isn't the arrow past you?" Jonathan yelled again to the boy, "Quick! Hurry up! Don't just stand there!" So Jonathan's servant boy gathered up the arrow and came back to his master. The boy had no idea what had happened; only Jonathan and David knew. Jonathan handed his weapons to the boy and told him, "Get going. Take these back to town."

As soon as the boy was gone, David came out from behind the mound and fell down, face on the ground, bowing low three times. The friends kissed each other, and cried with each other, but David cried hardest.



Part 3: Life Today—Friendship

Omar was sitting on the curb outside of his grandparents' store. Ayo and Jimmy walked up.

"¿Que pasa, Amigo? Whatchu doing out here?" Jimmy asked.

"Just sitting here for a minute. I wanted to go to today's soccer championship game, but I promised my O-ma and O-pa that I would stock some of the shelves. There's so much to unpack I'm probably gonna miss the game," Omar shared.

"Miss the game? It's the championship, man!!! We can't let that happen. You are the world's biggest soccer fan. We gotta help ya! What can we do?" Ayo inquired.

Omar reluctantly said, "It's my problem, guys. Helpin' out 'round here is my responsibility, not yours."

"But we are your friends, more like fam, Bro'!" Both Jimmy and Ayo agreed. "We gotta help

you get the work done, so you can go to the game!" Ayo said.

Then Jimmy asked, "Don't you know that we are our brother's keeper?"

Ayo exclaimed, "That's in the Bible. It means we've got your back! We're responsible for each other. We gotta help each other out."

"Yeah Bro'! Helping you stock the shelves is our way of looking out for you. Not to mention your grandparents," declared Jimmy. "That's what friendship is all about."



An illustration of a wooden bench in a gymnasium, with a basketball hoop and backboard visible in the background.

Coach's Corner

- To have a friend, you must be a friend.

"Let's go! We gonna ask your grandparents if they mind us helping," Ayo suggested.

The boys went through the back door of the store. The drivers of the truck were unloading and stacking boxes in the back corner of the stock room. Omar counted the boxes that needed to be opened, sorted, inventoried, and shelved. "Do you think we can finish by 5? The game is at 6:30," he asked. "It's 12:45 now; that gives us about four hours, give or take a few minutes," Ayo said.

Jimmy encouraged the others, "Let's get to work. We can do things more quickly and easily if we work together. It's a big job, but we can get it done!" Jimmy stretched out his hand, Ayo placed his hand over Jimmy's, and Omar placed his hand on top.

Jimmy shouted, "Are we brothers?" And they all replied, "True that!"

Think About It/Talk About It

- List the people you consider your friends. Why?

- What title would you give this story about Omar, Jimmy and Ayo's friendship? Why?

Part 4: The Bible Lesson

Samuel 20:18-23, 35-41 CEB

(Jonathan Speaks)

You can choose friends but there's nothing you can do about the family you're in. However, sometimes friends are like fam. That's David to me. But my father is Saul, King of Israel. He and David have an interesting relationship. On one hand, Dad loves David for his music and bravery. On the other hand, Dad hates David for his music and bravery!! David is a soldier and servant in our household; but he's also my sister, Michal's, husband. Fam, for real! She loves him and so do I. I gave him my robe and sword. I know he's going to be king one day and that's all right with me!

But, he has to survive and my father put a bounty on his head. I convinced him to take it off. Then there was another battle and the people went crazy over how David protected them. Dad started throwing javelins and chasing my friend. He sent people to capture him! I again tried to convince him that David did not deserve any of this, but that only made him suspicious of me!

Finally, David came to me, scared to death, asking why was Saul doing this! Out in the field we promised to be friends forever. I loved him as much as I loved myself. So, I made a vow to David, to find out what was going on and to protect him the best way I could.

If Dad's attitude was favorable, I would let David know it was safe. If Dad planned to hurt him, I would suffer the consequences if I didn't plan for David's safe escape. I would use my archery skills to get him the needed message.

It was the beginning of the month and for the next three days, we feasted. I had told David to stay in hiding, even though as a member of our household (Remember?) he was supposed to be there. By the third day, Dad was so mad that David had not shown up, he threw a spear at me!! That made me pretty sure of his intention toward David.

The next morning, I took a servant with me to a place near David's hideaway. I shot an arrow as if I were aiming at a target. Then I sent the servant boy to retrieve the arrow. I said, "Hey, the arrow is past you!" That was our signal indicating that David needed to run; Dad was out to get him! After a quick goodbye, David made his way to safety.

Think About It/Talk About It

- What does friendship mean to you?
- What lines in the song on page 9 relate most to this story?
- Read 1 Samuel 18:3-4; then role-play in a modern-day context the pledge between Jonathan and David.

LOOK OUT FOR OTHERS!

Part 5: Sports Spotlight



Serena Jameka Williams (b. 1981) has won more Grand Slam singles titles (23) than any other man or woman in the Open Era (1968). Grand Slam tournaments (also called majors) include the Australian Open, the French Open, Wimbledon, and the U.S. Open. Serena and her sister, Venus, learned tennis from their father on the public courts of Los Angeles (Compton), California. Serena turned pro the year after Venus. Both have powerful serves. In the 2000, 2008, and 2012 Olympic Games, Venus and Serena won gold medals in the doubles tennis event. Serena won a fourth gold medal in singles.

September 2018 was an exciting year in the world of tennis. Twenty-year-old Naomi Osaka defeated her hero, Serena Williams, in the U.S. Open Finals. However, this was no ordinary win. Serena had hoped to win her 24th major tennis title, but received a game penalty including three violations, which partially led to Naomi's victory as Grand Slam Champion. Naomi had played a skillful game. Serena was angry and accused the official of cheating. Many in the crowd were rooting for Serena and booed at the result, reducing Naomi to tears.



Serena, however, using her star status to look out for Naomi, shushed the crowd, and demonstrated great care for the young star. Despite the controversy, Serena and Naomi made a bad situation into a memorable one by embracing each other as sisters and friends, celebrating Naomi's victory.

In a 2019 article in *Harper's Bazaar* magazine, Serena Williams talks about how she loves the game of tennis even though it has been hard. She said that Naomi's presence (and others) indicates how much the game of tennis has changed due to her and her sister, Venus, who were not always welcomed but just kept on winning!

What made Serena's participation in the 2018 U.S. Tennis Open so special was that she was coming back from having had a baby and from experiencing the medical traumas that often happen to black women. No matter how educated or how wealthy, black women and their medical concerns are often overlooked by medical staff. Williams almost died and yet here she was playing tennis at the top level less than a year later. She was Naomi Osaka's hero.

Naomi Osaka (b. 1997) was born in Japan to Haitian and Japanese parents. Raised in America, with dual US and Japanese citizenship, she represents Japan in tennis matches throughout the world. Despite the issues and isms present in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic American society, in Japan everyone has the same ethnicity. There Naomi is looked upon as an oddity, facing the prejudice of being mixed race—*hāfu* (a Japanese language term meaning half). People hear her name, then see her color, and they are confused. Nevertheless, Naomi is determined as Pokemon says, "to be the very best that no one ever was." After her first Grand Slam win against Serena in 2018, she won a second, the 2019 Australian Open.



Think About It/Write About It

- Write your top five ideas for maintaining friendship when participating in a competitive sport or activity. Include ways you can watch out and look out for others. _____

- Why is having good character important on and off the playing field? _____

LESSON 3 KEEP YOUR EYES ON JESUS!

Part 1: Listen to—

Jesus Says Come

The worries of this world got me thinking
I feel like I'm drowning, I feel like I'm sinking
It feels over, it feels like the ending
But if I come to you, my sadness can turn to singing

To rejoicing—

You said you'll save
You said you'll rescue. An amazing grace!
I can lean on you and when I'm not strong
And when I get tired, and when everything goes
wrong you said, "Come."
Come to me, Jesus says, Come to me—
Come to me, Jesus says, Come to me—

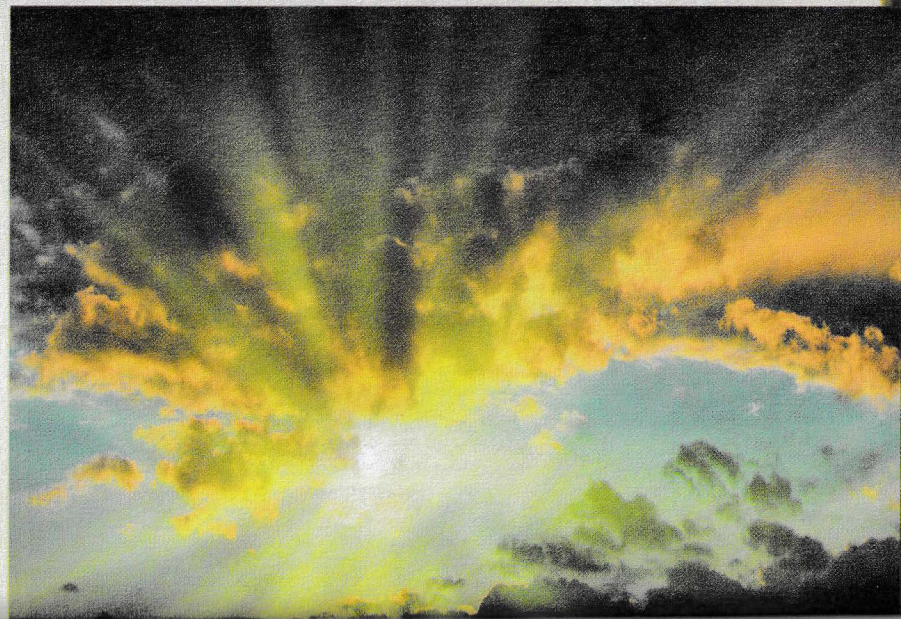
When I'm down I'm thinking, Jesus says come!
When my life is sinking, Jesus says come!
When I need some grace, Jesus says come!
When I need to be saved, Jesus says come!

Memory Verse

And Jesus said, "Come." (Matthew 14:29a)

Help me—Jesus—to make it through the trials
Save me—Jesus—from the fire
Help me—Jesus—to hold on
Rescue me—Jesus—when temptation is strong
Guide me—Jesus—to make the right choice
Speak to me—Jesus—I want to know your voice
Love me—Jesus—I know you do
Have mercy—Jesus—forgive me too.

I lived in fear but—salvation is near
I shed many tears but—salvation is near
I couldn't think clear but—salvation is near
My life seems drear but—salvation is near



Part 2: Reading Aloud

Matthew 14:22-33 CEB

Right then, Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead to the other side of the lake while he dismissed the crowds. When he sent them away, he went up onto a mountain by himself to pray. Evening came and he was alone. Meanwhile, the boat, fighting a strong headwind, was being battered by the waves and was already far away from land. Very early in the morning he came to his disciples, walking on the lake.

When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified and said, "It's a ghost!" They were so frightened they screamed.

Just then Jesus spoke to them, "Be encouraged! It's me. Don't be afraid."

Peter replied, "Lord, if it's you, order me to come to you on the water."

And Jesus said, "Come." Then Peter got out of the boat and was walking on the water toward Jesus.

But when Peter saw the strong wind, he became frightened. As he began to sink, he shouted, "Lord, rescue me!"

Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him, saying, "You man of weak faith! Why did you begin to have doubts?" When they got into the boat, the wind settled down.

Then those in the boat worshipped Jesus and said, "You must be God's Son!"

Think About It/Talk About It

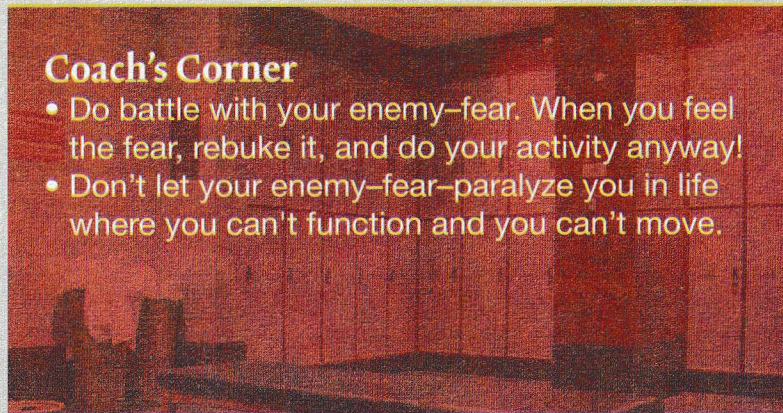
- Have you ever been in a situation in which you were afraid for your physical life?
- Have you ever been in a situation in which you were afraid for your spiritual life?

Bible Coach

- *The LORD is my light and my salvation. Should I fear anyone? The LORD is a fortress protecting my life. Should I be frightened of anything? (Psalm 27:1)*
- *Don't fear, because I am with you; don't be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will surely help you; I will hold you with my righteous strong hand. (Isaiah 41:10)*
- *Don't be afraid of those who kill the body but can't kill the soul. Instead, be afraid of the one who can destroy both body and soul in hell. (Matthew 10:28)*
- *There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear expects punishment. (1 John 4:18a)*

Coach's Corner

- **Do battle with your enemy—fear.** When you feel the fear, rebuke it, and do your activity anyway!
- **Don't let your enemy—fear—paralyze you in life** where you can't function and you can't move.



Part 3: Life Today—Refocus



“Hey Naayo!” Kendi called out as they biked around town. “Let’s stop at the smoothie place down the street!” Naayo responded, “That’s a great idea! I need to talk and you’re wise for your size. The old folks say, ‘You been here before.’” As they parked their bikes, Naayo continued, “Our bikes should be safe in the bike rack. If someone tries to ride them, they’re in for a big surprise. They don’t know anything about Holy Spirit-powered bikes!” They high-fived each other.

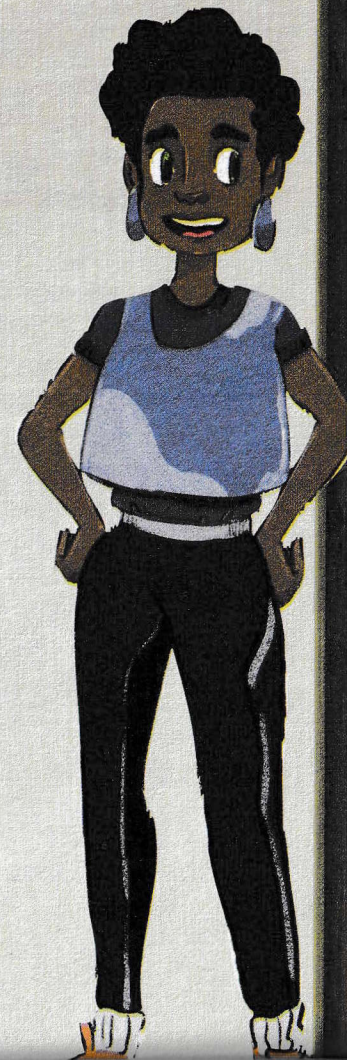
As they entered the shop, Naayo said, “Order me a strawberry banana smoothie and I’ll grab a table.” When the smoothies were ready, Kendi drooled as she made her way to the table, singing, “*All I have needed your hand has provided.*” After taking a few sips, she cleared her head of the brain freeze, then said, “What’s up? You’ve got me curious!”

Naayo said, “Well, you know, Kendi, sometimes, I get discouraged! We stay busy helping others, but maybe I need to be rescued! My used-to-be friends don’t want to hang with me anymore. They’re not interested in what

I’m doing. They say I’m always in church or hanging out with the Jesus freaks. To them, it seems as if I don’t have a life. I don’t hang out at the mall and stuff. Even though I wouldn’t mind going roller skating with them. But they don’t let me know!! Doing all this ‘church work’ may not be the look I’m going for!”

Kendi then responded, “You know, you’re like my big sister. But let me ask, what is the look you want?” “It’s just that I’m not feeling too lucky or happy!” Naayo exclaimed. “It’s not that I don’t want to hang with you guys; but maybe I need to slow it down.”

Kendi exclaimed, “Girl, you’re not lucky; you’re loved!! You know the song (*singing softly and bouncing*), ‘*I’m not lucky, I’m loved.*’ Sometimes other people just be jelly, you know, and try to bring you down. But Jesus to the rescue! Girl, you are loved by God and that should give you JOY!



RESCUE

That's what your name means, Naayo — Joy! Everything you do, put a praise on it! Keep your eyes on Jesus. Praying, reading your Bible, thinking, serving, singing!" (*With this, Kendi hits a high note. Everyone in the shop turns to look at them.*) "Oops." Then more softly, she continued, "And you know, you need others. We're your crew. Just like you're talking to me now, we're here for you."

Naayo responded, "Yeah, I get that; but I still feel left out!" Slurping her last drop, Kendi said, "That's because you've been leaving yourself out! Take some time to love on yourself. What do YOU like? Me, I love smoothies and music, and you remember that song:

When I'm down I'm thinking, Jesus says come!

When my life is sinking, Jesus says come!

Naayo joined in,

When I need some grace, Jesus says come!

When I need to be saved, Jesus says come!

Ignoring the stares, Naayo hugged Kendi real tight and said, "Thanks, Baby Sis!"

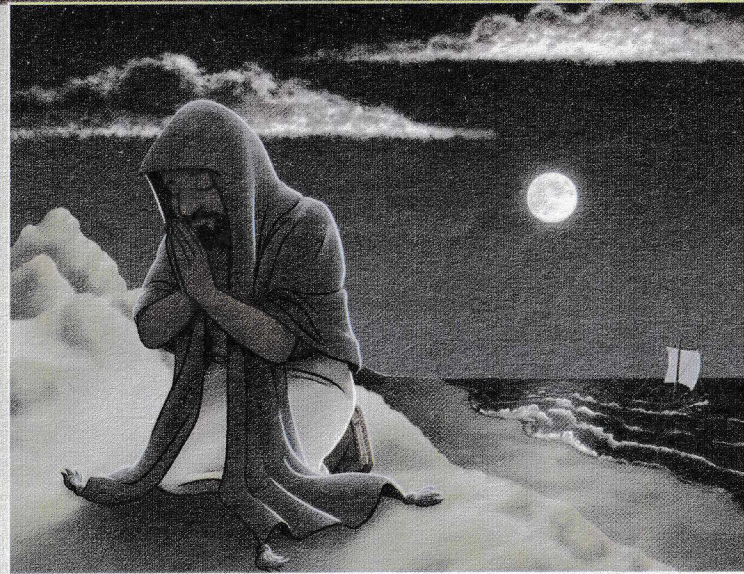
Think/Write/Talk About It

- With whom do you connect the most, Naayo or Kendi?
- Kendi used the song, "Jesus Says Come," to help Naayo refocus (keep her eyes on) on Jesus. What other songs did she use? What songs help you refocus? _____





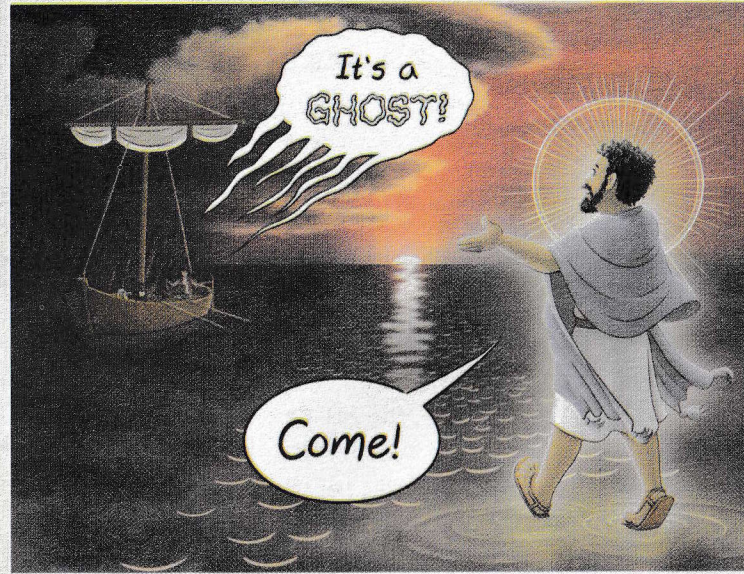
Jesus taught the people until evening. Then the people went home, the disciples got in a boat, and Jesus went to pray.



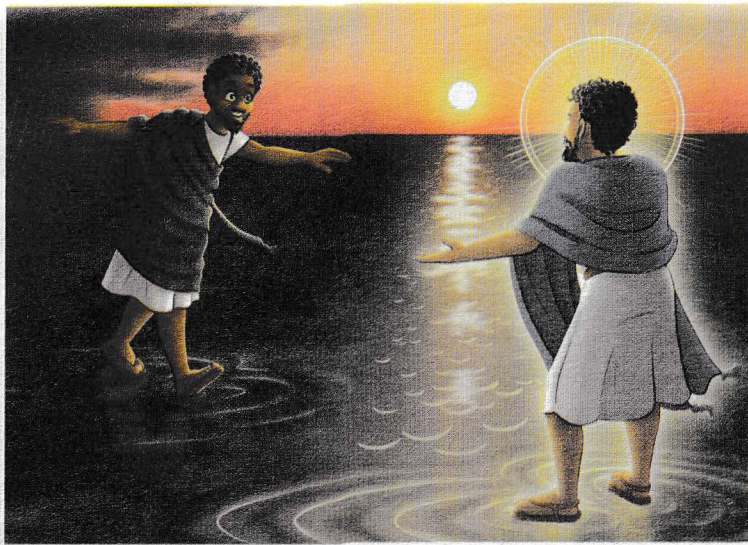
It was night. Jesus was on a mountain, praying. The disciples were in a boat, going toward the other side.



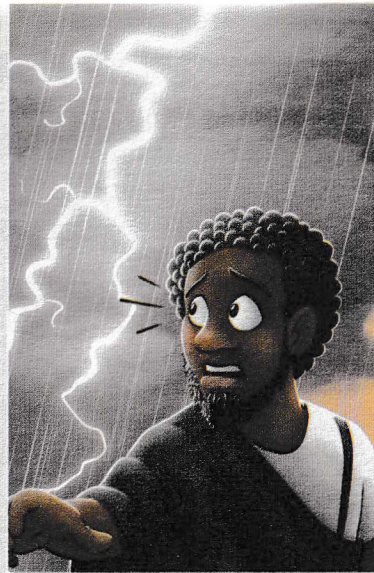
Suddenly a strong wind came up. The waves battered at the boat, which was already in the middle of the lake.



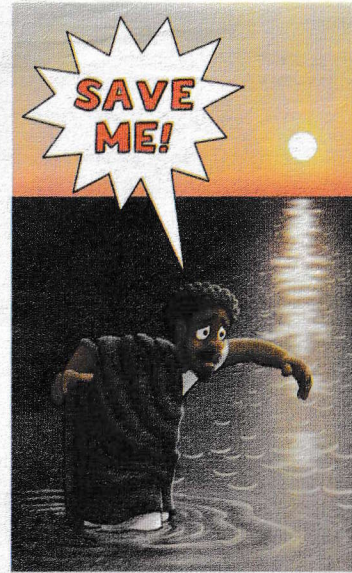
Early in the morning, Jesus walked on the water to meet the boat. The disciples were scared. But Peter wanted to go to Jesus. And Jesus said, "Come" (Matthew 14:29).



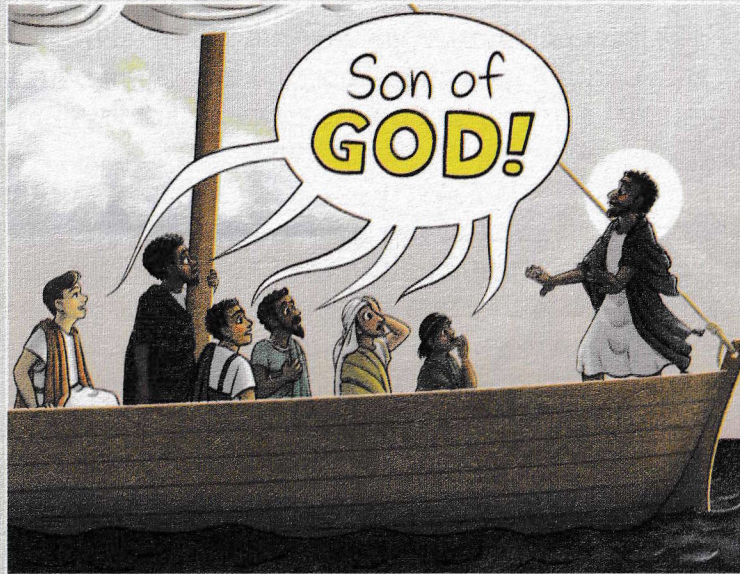
Jesus spoke encouraging words. Then Peter stepped out of the boat, walking on the water to meet Jesus. Peter kept his eyes on Jesus.



But Peter looked at the storm and began to sink in the water. He asked Jesus for help!



Jesus grabbed Peter and rescued him. He reprimanded Peter for his lack of faith, wondering why he had begun to doubt.



When Peter and Jesus got in the boat, the storm died down. The disciples worshipped Jesus as the Son of God.

Part 4: The Bible Lesson

Matthew 14:22-33 CEB (Peter Speaks)

We witnessed a great miracle. Jesus fed more than 5,000 people with a boy's lunch of bread and fish. The more Jesus prayed, the more the food multiplied. We—the other disciples and I—told the crowd to sit down. Jesus blessed the meal and we served them. Everyone ate until they were full. After the meal, Jesus told us to get into the boat and head to the other side of the lake. He dismissed the crowd and went away by himself to pray. Jesus often did this. Spending time with God helped Jesus to know his Father's will. Praying gave him the strength to teach, heal, and perform miracles.

As we sailed to the other side of the lake, a storm came up. The wind and the waves were very strong and we were far from the shore. Scary!! The storm raged until morning. Somehow, we did not drown. As the morning sun began to rise, we saw someone walking on the lake. We thought it was a ghost! We screamed! SCAAARYYY! Then all of a sudden, we heard a voice, "Have some courage, guys! It's me. Don't be afraid." It sounded like Jesus, but I needed to know for sure. I said, "Jesus, if it's you, tell me to walk to you on the water."

**COME
TO JESUS!**

Jesus said, "Come." I thought, *Walking on the water!! Who does that? Since Jesus said come, I'm going! Here I go!* I stepped out of the boat with my right foot and my foot did not sink. Then I put my left foot out of the boat onto the water. I was standing on the water and I did not sink. I couldn't believe it! My eyes were fixed on Jesus and I started walking. But then, I got distracted by the strong wind and the raging waves. I was scared, took my eyes off Jesus, and started to sink.

At the top of my lungs I cried out, "Lord, save me." Immediately, Jesus reached out and grabbed me. Pulling me to my feet, he said, "Peter, your faith is weak. Why did you doubt?" I bowed my head, thinking about what Jesus said. We got into the boat. The wind settled down. My brother disciples knelt down to worship Jesus, calling him the Son of God.

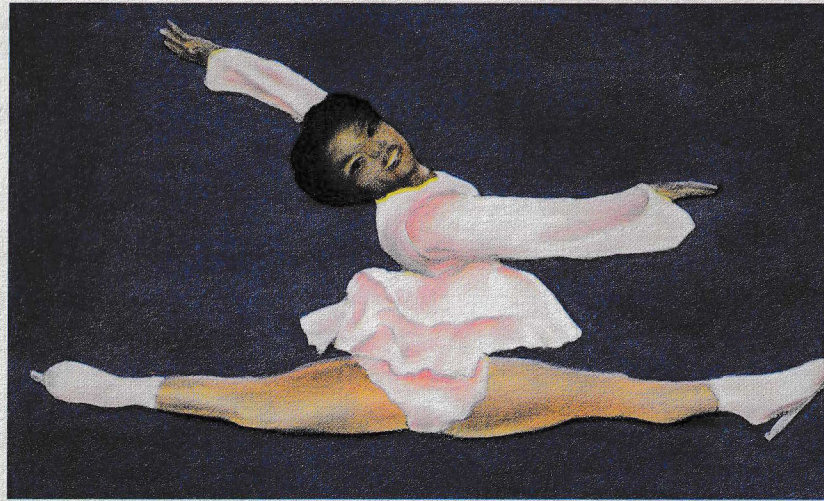
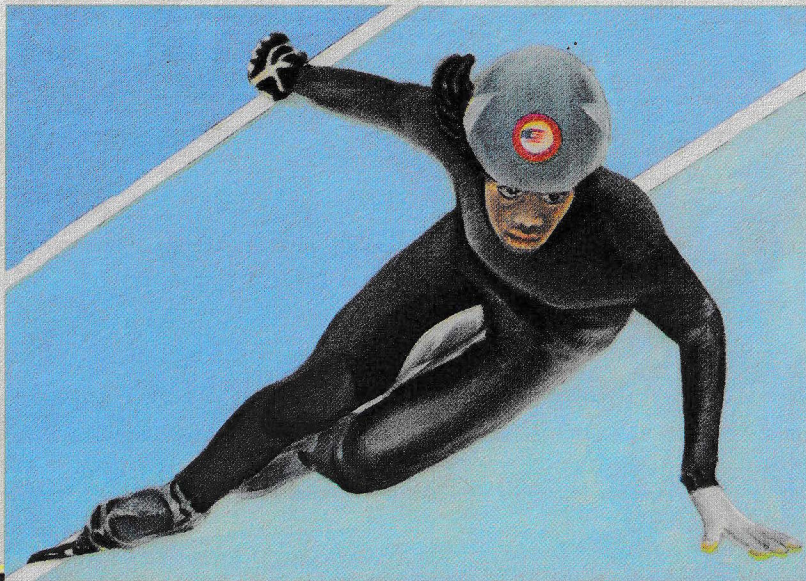
Think About It/Talk About It

- Jesus sent the disciples out on their own. Have you ever had to do something on your own that was scary or frightening?
- Jesus went alone to pray. Do you ever pray in quiet places? What might be the benefits of going away to a quiet place to pray?
- Peter asked Jesus to let him walk on water. Have you heard Jesus say, "Come?" What did he tell you?
- Have you ever doubted God? What led to your doubt? **How is your relationship with God now?**

Part 5: Sports Spotlight

Mabel Fairbanks (1915-2001) was a figure skater who overcame racial obstacles. She paid \$1.50 for a pair of skates that did not fit, but was soon sailing across the ice in Central Park of New York City. Fairbanks performed with touring shows that needed “someone to skate in the dark countries” and was a champion for equality in ice skating. While she did not have the opportunity to chase the Olympic gold in skating, she is recognized as a pioneer in the sport as a coach, mentoring Olympians including Scott Hamilton and Tai Babilonia. Mabel Fairbanks is the first Black woman inducted into the U.S. Figure Skating Hall of Fame. After she died, she was inducted into the International Women’s Sports Hall of Fame in the coach category.

- How were things different in Fairbanks’ time and now? How are they the same?
- What can we learn from the life of Mabel Fairbanks and how she handled discrimination?



Maame Biney (b. 2000)

One year before Mabel Fairbanks passed away, Maame (*pronounced Mommy*) Biney was born in Accra, Ghana, West Africa. After moving to Virginia to live with her father, she began skating at the age of six. Though starting as a figure skater, her coach noted how fast she was. Biney became a short track speed skater. She aggressively fights for position on a 111-meter track without lanes. As a high school senior, she secured her spot on the 2018 Winter Olympic team, making her the second African-born athlete to represent the United States at a Winter Olympics. She began to realize that she could go somewhere with her talent. Maame Biney is a skating champion who ‘walks on water’ at speeds of 30 miles per hour.

- Even though she did not place in the 2018 Winter Olympics, with the experience she gained, Maame Biney continues to train. How do you use disappointment?

If you were into ice skating like the girls in this photograph, which would you choose, figure skating or speed skating?



LESSON 4 A LONG WAIT!

Part 1: Listen to—

No More Sitting Down

Chant: Get up! Stand up! Pick yourself up! Walk in victory!

Every minute, every second
Always put forth your best effort
It's not where you start but when you finish
Keep working 'til the end
No matter where you're from or been
It's not where you're at, but it's where you're going

Never look back (*Never look back, never look back*)
Just look to him (*Look to him—Jesus—look to him*)
Give your best effort (*Give your best effort if you wanna win*)
You've got to put it in (*You gotta put it in, you gotta put it in*)

Do your best in everything
Give it your all—your whole being
Since God is working, we should work too
In your job, in your work, and in your school
In your church and in your community
In love and in all opportunities
If you want to know how to truly win
Your best effort—you gotta put it in

Never look back (*Never look back, never look back*)
Just look to him (*Look to him—Jesus—look to him*)
Give your best effort (*Give your best effort if you wanna win*)
You've got to put it in (*You gotta put it in, you gotta put it in*)

DYB! Do your best in everything!

Bible Coach

- *I have fought the good fight, finished the race, and kept the faith. (2 Timothy 4:7)*
- *As a result of all this, my loved brothers and sisters, you must stand firm, unshakable, excelling in the work of the Lord as always, because you know that your labor isn't going to be for nothing in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:58)*
- *Make an effort to present yourself to God as a tried-and-true worker, who doesn't need to be ashamed but is one who interprets the message of truth correctly. (2 Timothy 2:15)*
- *Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will succeed. (Proverbs 16:3)*

EFFORT

Coach's Corner

- Love your effort!
- I see you working!
- You will never regret giving your best!

Part 2: Reading Aloud

John 5:2-17 CEB

In Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate in the north city wall is a pool with the Aramaic name Bethsaida. It had five covered porches, and a crowd of people who were sick, blind, lame, and paralyzed sat there. A certain man was there who had been sick for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, knowing that he had already been there a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?"

The sick man answered him, "Sir, I don't have anyone who can put me in the water when it is stirred up. When I'm trying to get to it, someone else has gotten in ahead of me." Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." Immediately the man was well, and he picked up his mat and walked. Now that day was the Sabbath.

The Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, "It's the Sabbath; you aren't allowed to carry your mat." He answered, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'"

They inquired, "Who is this man who said to you, 'Pick it up and walk'?" The man who had been cured didn't know who it was, because Jesus had slipped away from the crowd gathered there.

Later Jesus found him in the temple and said, "See! You have been made well. Don't sin anymore in case something worse happens to you." The man went and proclaimed to the Jewish leaders that Jesus was the man who had made him well. As a result, the Jewish leaders were harassing Jesus, since he had done these things on the Sabbath.

Jesus replied, "My Father is still working and I am working too."

Coach's Corner

- You aren't a failure until you start blaming someone else!
- You're making the coaches look good!
- Your effort is paying off!

Cool Facts About Sabbath Rules

- Sabbath is the seventh day of the Jewish week. Working is not permitted. (Exodus 20:10)
- Sabbath is a special gathering for worship. (Leviticus 23:2-3)
- It was unlawful to heal on the Sabbath. (Matthew 12:10)
- Sabbath calls for cease and desist of work. (Genesis 2:2; Exodus 31:17)
- Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath. (Mark 2:23-28)





Part 3: Life Today—

“Aayo, what are you reading?” Naayo asked. Ayo answered, “This article: ‘*Most Black Kids Can’t Swim.*’” Interested, Naayo said, “We’re going swimming today! Tell me more!”

“The article talks about the history of Blacks not being allowed to use public or private swimming pools all over. For example, in St. Louis they were trying to desegregate the public pools in 1949. About 50 black people showed up to use the pool. Almost 200 white people attacked them. It was so bad that they re-segregated the pool the next day.”

Naayo exclaimed, “Wow! That is cold! Racism is real! But I know our ancestors did not just sit down and take it! How did they fight back?”

Ayo responded, “They focused on direct action efforts like dive-ins and wade-ins. Many were arrested. Finally, in 1969 (20 years AFTER St. Louis!), the Supreme Court ruled that pool access could not be limited by race. Black swimmers were still harassed and beaten. Some were asked for health certificates to prove that they were disease-free. If Blacks swam in the same pool as white people, they were separated by sex because there was a fear of black men swimming with white women. But sometimes like here in DC, when things opened up, the powers-that-be just bricked over the pools, made parking lots! So, nobody had access to public pools; you had to belong to a private club!”

Naayo, “So black people could not swim because there were no pools!!! No access! No opportunity!”

Ayo said, “The article says that even now, 79% of kids in households that make less than \$50,000 a year don’t swim. Well, that’s most black people! It says that 64% of African Americans, 45% of Latinx, and 40% of white kids don’t swim; but swim lessons reduce childhood drowning by 88%.”

“88%! WOW! That’s a lot!” Then, reading over Ayo’s shoulder, she said, “It says that 10 people drown every day in the United States. That’s a lot, too!”

“Access, opportunity, and that never-give-up effort are the reasons we now have black people swimming competitively, like Lia Neal and Simone Manuel, Olympic champions! Come on, you’ve got to share this with the rest of the group before we hit the pool,” Naayo said, with excitement. “So, they’ll know what a blessing we have, being able to swim in public pools.”

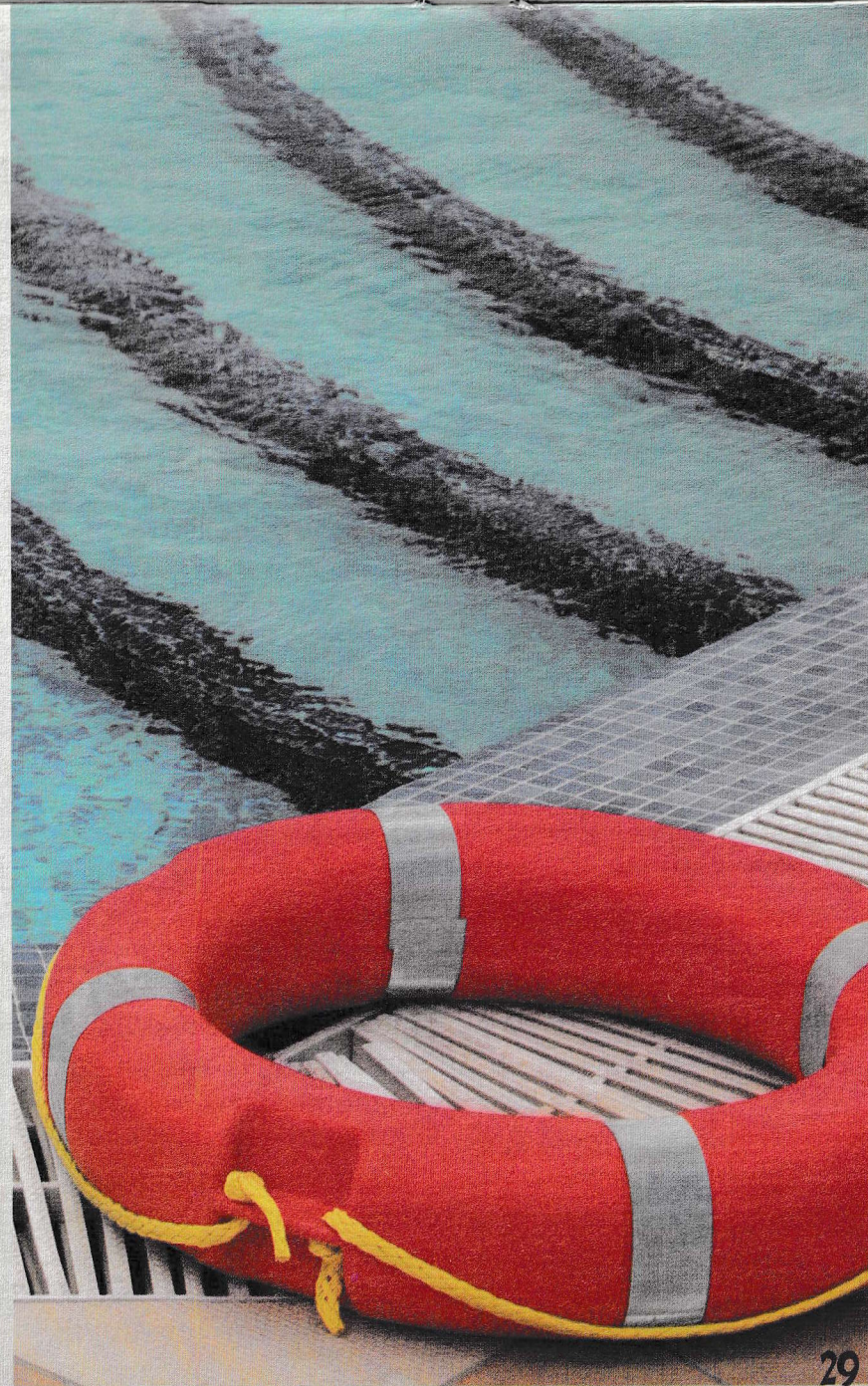
Ayo and Naayo gave each other a fist bump and shouted, “Each one, teach one!”

Think About It/Talk About It

- Why is it important to know and share our history?
- Name three key ideas about Blacks and swimming that you could teach someone else.

When You Go Swimming, BE SAFE!

- Always swim with a buddy.
- Swim only in areas that have a lifeguard.
- Stay out of the water when you are very tired, very cold, or overheated.
- Follow all rules posted at the swimming area.
- Obey the lifeguard's instruction.
- If you can't see the bottom of the pool in the deep end or the water is cloudy, don't swim there.
- Avoid swimming at night in unlighted areas.
- Don't chew gum or eat while swimming; you could choke.
- Do not push, shove, or run near the water. Horseplay can be dangerous.
- Get out of the water if you see lightning or hear thunder.
- Swim a safe distance away from diving boards and slides. Never swim under them.
- Never swim near a dam or boat ramp.
- Avoid swimming in river currents.
- **On a slide**, go down feet first in a sitting position. (You could injure your head, neck, or back going down headfirst.)
- **At the beach**, know where the nearest lifeguard is.
- Check for warning flags.
- Observe danger signs.
- Look out for dangerous marine life.
- If you swim out from shore, remember you have to swim back.



Part 4: The Bible Lesson

John 5:2-17 CEB (The Healed Man Speaks)

Today is the Sabbath. Usually, I don't pay attention to what day it is because I've been sitting here, lying here on the porch of the Mikveh of Bethsaida for what seems like forever. A *mikveh* is a pool we Jews use for healing and ritual cleansing. It is deep enough to cover your whole body, but only one person can soak at a time. I'm not able to flip myself over into the pool before somebody else does. So, I've waited, day after day, for 38 long years. But today, I got reminded that it is the Sabbath day.

See, a man standing near the pool asked me, "Do you want to get well?" I told him about all my struggles, not having anyone to help me get in when the fresh water comes in, how someone always beats me to the punch. But I do want healing! While I was still speaking, the man looked at me and said, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk!" Immediately, I could feel something in my body. I got right up, picked up my mat and walked without any special effort. It was the weirdest feeling! This man must have done it, took away my sickness. I didn't even think about the fact that it was the Sabbath. I obeyed the man's instructions and walked away, carrying my mat.

Memory Verse

My Father is still working and I am working too. (John 5:17)

But then, I was stopped by the religious leaders. "What do you think you are doing?" they asked, "You are not allowed to carry your mat. It's the Sabbath." No one is supposed to work on the Sabbath; it is a day of rest for Jewish people. Who would think that carrying a mat is work enough to get all excited about? This kind-a scared me, so I told them that the man who made me well, told me to pick up my mat and walk. The religious leaders asked the man's name, but I didn't know; and when I looked around, he was gone.

Later, this same man found me in the temple. It was the one they call Jesus. Jesus reminded me of my healing and told me to avoid sin or something worse might happen. I went to the religious leaders and told them that Jesus was the man who healed me. They began harassing Jesus because he healed me on the Sabbath. Healing was work, too! Jesus told them, as long as his father was working, so would he. I am thankful that Jesus saw me, helped me and healed me—on the Sabbath.

Think About It/Talk About It

- What is the significance to the story of it being the Sabbath day?
- Why do you need to know that this biblical pool is unlike the ones we use for recreation?
- Read John 5:17-18. What do you think Jesus meant? What do these verses mean to you?

Part 5: Sports Spotlight

Accomplished swimmers Simone Manuel and Lia Neal have benefitted from our ancestors' struggles at public and private pools. Despite a long wait, access to opportunity has led these young ladies and others like them to take up a figurative mat and swim to victory.

Simone Manuel (b.1996)

Simone Manuel's nickname is "Swimone." She is the first African American swimmer to win an individual gold Olympic medal, breaking a record at the 2016 Rio Olympics. Born in Sugar Land, Texas, she comes from an athletic family whose motto is "Do Your Best in Everything!" Do Your Best! (DYB) Simone began swimming at the age of four. After swimming across a 15-meter pool on the second day of lessons, it was obvious that she was a natural in the water. At eleven, she began to train with Houston's First Colony Swim Team, an elite club. She entered Stanford University in 2014, joining the Stanford Cardinals Women's swimming team (which included Lia Neal) and breaking all kinds of records in her freshman year. In 2019, Swimone continued her winning streak by becoming the first American woman to sweep the 50- and 100- meter freestyle races in the world championships held in Korea.

Manuel is part of the USA Swimming Foundation's Make a Splash program that offers free or low-cost swim lessons to children across the United States. She often speaks about the importance of kids learning how



to swim as a life-saving skill. This is just one way she makes a difference.

In 2019, Manuel also set a standard for diversity and inclusion by signing a contract that requires a sportswear sponsor to "provide meaningful opportunities to traditionally under-represented groups." In other words, the company that uses her face must use also the faces and abilities of other people of color to produce and represent their products.



Lia Neal (b. 1995)

Winner of the bronze medal at the 2012, London Olympics, Lia Neal is the first woman of Black descent to represent the United States in swimming. What is so great is that she is also Chinese American and speaks three languages! Lia began swimming at the age of six. Two years later, she began training at an elite swim club in New York City on a Swim for the Future scholarship. She, too, attended Stanford University and in 2016, Lia Neal put in major effort and won the silver medal in the same event as team member, Simone Manuel, at the Rio Olympics. Through her swim club, Lia actively participates in the USA Swimming Foundation's Make a Splash program, specifically Swim Brooklyn (where she lives), to raise awareness of and access to swimming opportunities.

Think About It/Talk About It

- What is your favorite sport? What type of training/practice do you need to DYB?
- If you don't play sports, what other activities do you participate in? What do you need to DYB?
- How are Simone Manuel and Lia Neal making our ancestors and our community proud? What lessons can you learn from them?
- If you were a world class athlete, how would you use your resources to help our communities and schools?

Write About It

Make a commitment to Do Your Best.

Cool Facts

- Lia Neal has three older brothers.
- Lia Neal speaks three languages:
 - English (of course!)
 - Cantonese
 - Mandarin

LESSON 5 REACH FOR THE GOAL!

Part 1: Listen to— Higher Ground

Verse 1

I'm pressing on the upward way,
New heights I'm gaining every day;
Still praying as I onward bound,
"Lord, plant my feet on higher ground."

Refrain

Lord, lift me up, and let me stand
By faith on heaven's tableland;
A higher plane than I have found,
"Lord, plant my feet on higher ground."

Verse 2

My heart has no desire to stay
Where doubts arise and fears dismay;
Though some my dwell where these abound,
My prayer, my aim is higher ground.

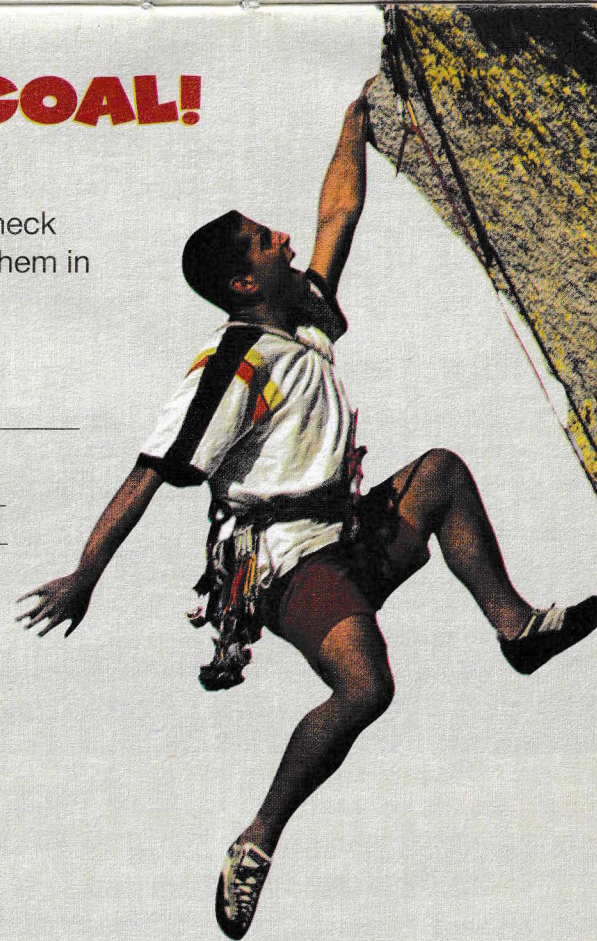
Verse 3

I want to scale the utmost height,
and catch a gleam of glory bright;
But still I'll pray till heaven I've found,
"Lord, lead me on to higher ground."*

*Singer on CD: "Lord, plant my feet on higher ground."

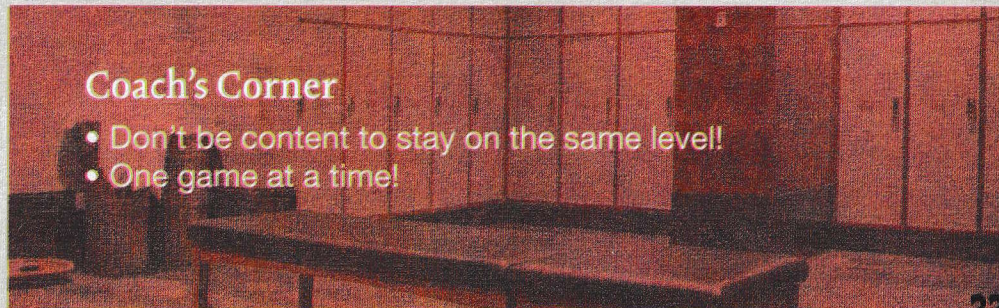
Think About It

- What are your goals in life? Check each one that you claim. Put them in order if you can.
 - Good grades _____
 - Helping others _____
 - A relationship with Christ _____
 - To be rich _____
 - Being a good citizen _____
 - Developing my talents _____
 - Having friends _____
 - Serving God _____
 - Deepening my faith _____
 - Showing love _____
 - Encouraging others _____



Coach's Corner

- Don't be content to stay on the same level!
- One game at a time!



Part 2: Reading Aloud **Philippians 3:12-16 CEB**

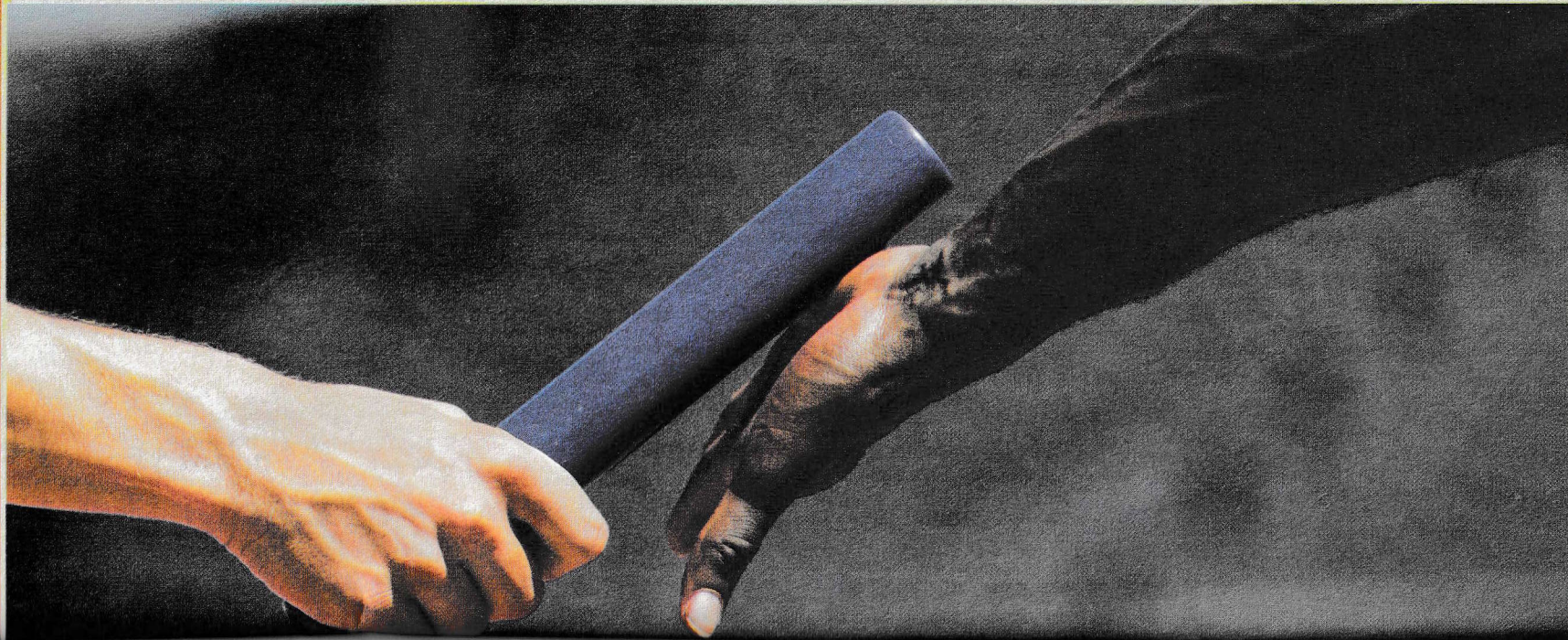
It's not that I have already reached this goal or have already been perfected, but I pursue it, so that I may grab hold of it because Christ grabbed hold of me for just this purpose. Brothers and sisters, I myself don't think I've reached it, but I do this one thing: I forget about the things behind me and reach out for the things ahead of me. The goal I pursue is the prize of God's upward call in Christ Jesus. So, all of us who are spiritually mature should think this way and if anyone thinks differently, God will reveal it to him or her. Only let's live in a way that is consistent with whatever level we have reached.

Memory Verse

The goal I pursue is the prize of God's upward call in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:14)

Bible Coach

- *Compete in the good fight of faith. Grab hold of eternal life. (1 Timothy 6:12a)*
- *This is why you must make every effort to add moral excellence to your faith; and to moral excellence, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, endurance; and to endurance, godliness; and to godliness, affection for others; and to affection for others, love. (2 Peter 1:5-7)*



Part 3: Life Today—

The Church Kids pedaled down East Capitol Street to meet Coach Wheeler at the Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune statue in Lincoln Park. Coach had said something about a surprise encounter with Dr. Bethune's life and legacy. When Naayo, Ayo, Jimmy, Omar, Kendi, and Siu arrived, they saw a table and chairs under a tent in front of the statue. They parked their bikes and sat down. The table was covered with art supplies.

"Hey y'all! Good Morning!" Coach Wheeler encouraged. "We've been meeting at this statue all summer, but I just want to make sure that you know what it means. As we walk around the statue, please repeat after me.

- I LEAVE YOU LOVE.
- I LEAVE YOU HOPE.
- I LEAVE YOU THE CHALLENGE OF DEVELOPING CONFIDENCE IN ONE ANOTHER.
- I LEAVE YOU A THIRST FOR EDUCATION.
- I LEAVE YOU A RESPECT FOR THE USES OF POWER.
- I LEAVE YOU FAITH.
- I LEAVE YOU RACIAL DIGNITY.
- I LEAVE YOU A DESIRE TO LIVE HARMONIOUSLY WITH YOUR FELLOW MAN.
- I LEAVE YOU FINALLY A RESPONSIBILITY TO YOUR YOUNG PEOPLE.

The kids dutifully repeated each statement.

When they stopped walking to look at the statue carefully, Coach said, "These are the words of Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune. This is her legacy." Jimmy said, "It looks like she's giving those children something." Naayo responded, "Dr. Bethune was fierce. I did a report on her. She even founded a college! What she's doing is handing them her legacy. That represents us, too!" Lifting a fist, Omar said, "Young people, everywhere."

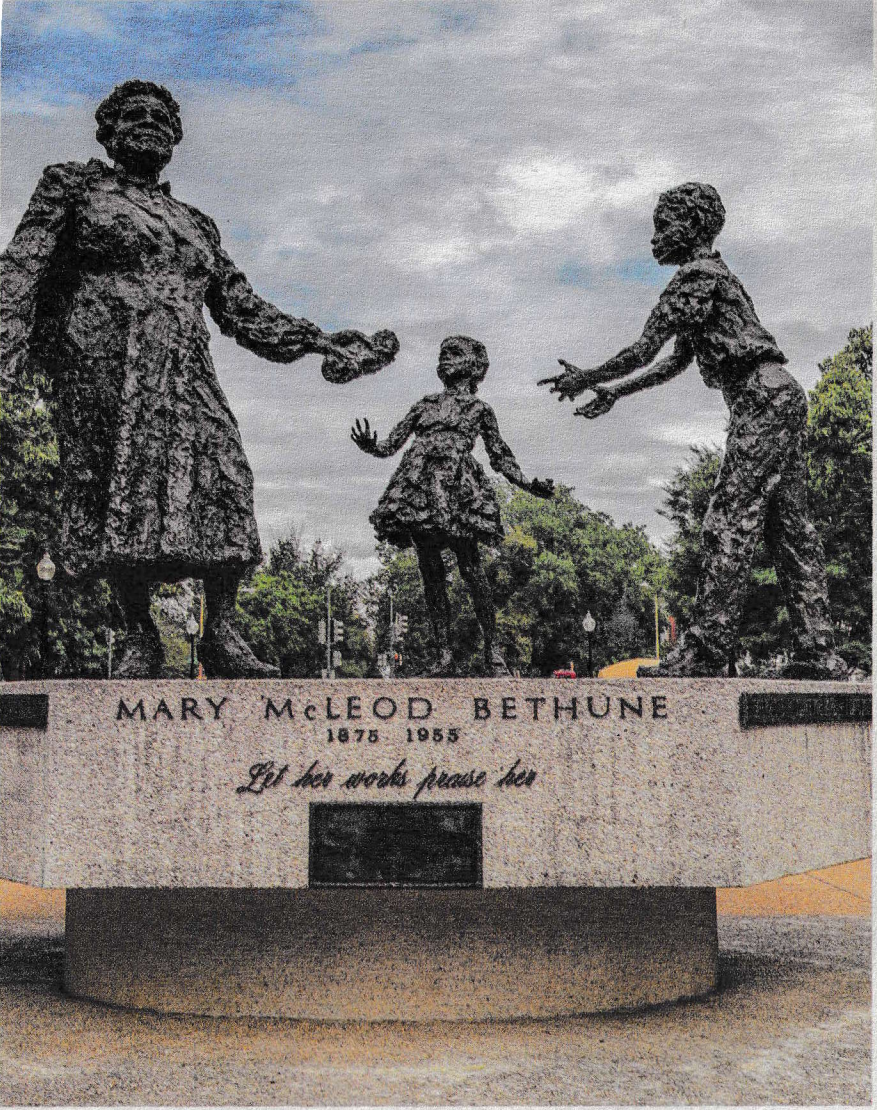
Coach Wheeler continued, "Dr. Bethune shared her dreams, hopes and values, and believed all people should work together to build a better world." As they stood back in front of the table, Siu asked, "So what's with the art supplies?"

Coach Wheeler said, "I want you to create vision boards. See, you've got to have a vision for your life. A vision board is a collage of images, words, and pictures that motivate you and remind you of your values, goals, dreams, and purpose. Use Dr. Bethune's legacy as a foundation. Feel free to walk around the statue again and read the statements. Choose one on which to build your vision and show how you are going to lift as you climb like Miss Mary did. And make me look good!"

"Yay, art!" moaned Ayo with a scowl.

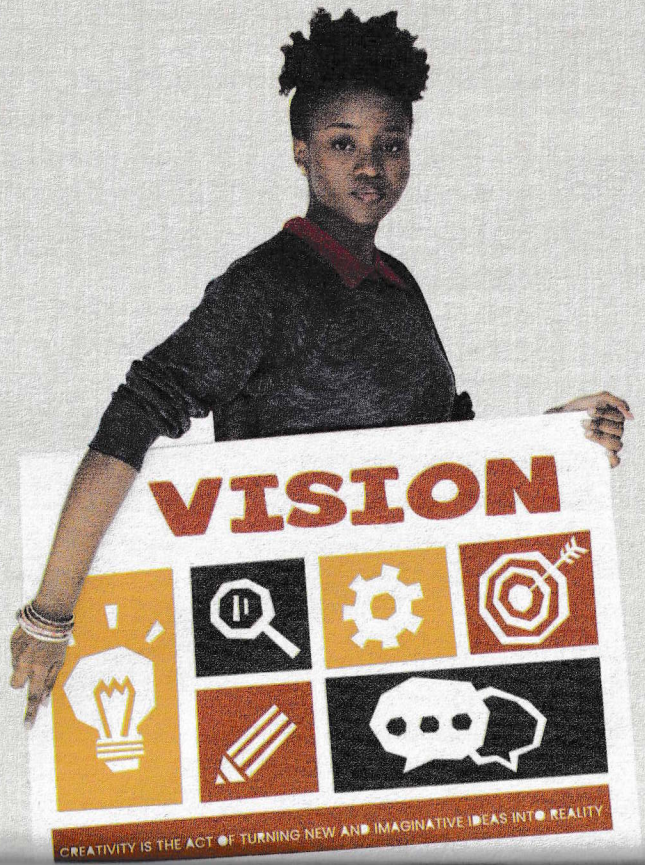
"Boy, bye! This sounds exciting," Naayo exclaimed.

"Yeah, this is fun," Kendi said. Grabbing a marker, she began to hum and to sing softly, "*Lord, plant my feet on higher ground. Lord, lift me up...*"



Cool Facts

- “Lifting as we climb” is the motto of the National Association of Negro (Colored) Women (NACW) (established 1896).
- Mary McLeod Bethune was president of the Florida chapter of the NACW from 1917-25 and was elected national president in 1924.
- The house in which Dr. Bethune lived is on the campus of the college she founded, Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach, Florida. The students call it *Mary’s House*.



Think About It/Talk About It

- What is a vision? Why is it important?
- Which one of Dr. Bethune’s legacy statements means the most to you? Explain.

PURPOSE

Illustrate a vision of what you believe God's **PURPOSE** is for your life.

Part 4: The Bible Lesson

Philippians 3:12-16 CEB (Paul Speaks)

There's nothing better than knowing Christ. Believing in his resurrection power and suffering for his name makes me who I am. Before I met Christ, I bragged about who I was and where I came from. I am an Israelite—God's chosen people—from the tribe of Benjamin. I am a Pharisee—a religious leader who strictly observes the law. As far as being religious, I was perfect. Having this identity was my blessing. I harassed the people who were followers of Jesus.

But when I met Jesus, the things I held so dear were no longer important. Jesus changed my life. I realized that by persecuting Christians, I was actually persecuting Jesus. That's what he asked me, "Why are you persecuting me?" Jesus told me that he had a purpose for my life. All other religious ideas and actions didn't matter, only Christ! Now—I preach Christ and the power of his resurrection. I am on a journey, striving to reach the goal that Jesus has set before me. That is my purpose.

See, I am pursuing the knowledge of Christ, his sufferings, his resurrection, hoping to be with him in heaven one day. If Jesus had not taken hold of me on the Damascus Road, I might still be busy persecuting Christians. Instead, I have a purpose of sharing Christ with all of you, so that you can have the same purpose and the same goal. I lost everything for Christ; but what I lost, I think of as sewer trash. What I lost is no way near worthy of having a relationship with Jesus Christ.

I am not perfect, but Jesus is teaching me righteousness and faithfulness. I am pressing toward the goal; I haven't reached it yet. By leaving behind the things I once thought were important, and reaching for the things that are ahead of me—those things that God has for me—I have life in Christ with the prize and the goal of life forevermore with him. This is my hope for the future: to stand with God's people all around the world who will one day stand in God's presence and be identified with Christ. Whatever you do, don't turn back! God is doing a good work in you. It is your purpose to keep moving toward the prize of God's call in Jesus Christ.

Think About It/Talk About It

- What is religion? What is a relationship with Jesus? How are they the same? How are they different?
- How can you have a relationship with Jesus? Read Romans 10:9-10.
- What is the benefit of having a relationship with Jesus? Read John 3:16.
- Do you have a relationship with Jesus? If not, would you like to?
- Read Acts 9:1-20 to learn what happened to Paul on the Damascus Road.

Bible Coach

- *Because if you confess with your mouth "Jesus is Lord" and in your heart you have faith that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Trusting with the heart leads to righteousness, and confessing with the mouth leads to salvation.*
(Romans 10:9-10)
- *God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him won't perish but will have eternal life.*

(John 3:16)

Part 5: Sports Spotlight

Benita Fitzgerald Mosley (b.1961)

You may have never heard of Benita Fitzgerald Mosley or of the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation. But Mosley is a 15-time All-American athlete, an 8-time national champion, recipient of a Congressional Gold Medal (1980), and a gold medalist in track (100-meter hurdles) in the 1983 Pan American Games and the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles. That Olympic medal has opened doors, giving her a sense of purpose in opening doors for others. With Special Olympics, she advocated for athletes with disabilities. As the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Women in Cable and Telecommunications, she helped women in communications to achieve their goals.

After a poor showing by the track team in the 2008 Olympics, Mosley was recruited to be the first-ever Chief of Sport Performance for the USA Track and Field team. For the 2012 Games in London, she helped the team reach higher goals of 29 gold medals. In 2017, Mosley became the CEO of the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation, USA, an organization (with chapters in 40 countries) inspired by Nelson Mandela to place sports in the lives of disadvantaged youth. Her number one goal in life is to help others achieve their dreams.

Think About It/Talk About It

- What does it mean to give back? What examples of giving back can you share?
- Benita Fitzgerald Mosley counts her gold medal as the gift that keeps on giving. What do you think that means?



Cool Facts

- Hurdling is running toward and jumping over obstacles.
- Benita's hometown in Virginia named a street after her, Benita Fitzgerald Drive.
- Fannie Fitzgerald Elementary School is on that street. It was named after Benita's mother, who helped to desegregate the schools in their county in Virginia.

Coach's Corner

- You will not be handed opportunities. Create opportunities for yourself!
- Know your core values and stick to them!

LeBron James (b. 1984)

You probably have heard of LeBron James, who is widely considered as one of the greatest basketball players of all time. A basketball sensation since elementary school, he earned the nickname, "King James," at his Akron, Ohio high school and entered the National Basketball Association (NBA) after graduation. Between 2010 and 2018, LeBron took a team to the NBA finals an unheard of eight times in a row, winning three championships. He makes everyone around him better!

As the founder of the LeBron James Family Foundation established in 2004, LeBron James is a star on and off the court. Through education and co-curricular activities, children's lives are being changed in positive ways with after-school programs, college scholarships, and the I PROMISE School. Though he calls himself, 'just a kid from Akron,' he continually lifts as he climbs, helping others to reach higher goals.

LIFT AS YOU CLIMB!

Cool Facts

- The LeBron James Family Foundation is in partnership with Akron Public Schools and the University of Akron.
- The I PROMISE School serves kids in grades 1-8 who would be at-risk of not graduating.
- In one year, 90% of I PROMISE students met or did better than set goals in reading and math.
- GOAT = Greatest Of All Time

Coach's Corner

How does this lesson help you to find your purpose?

1. A champion in life has the purpose of reaching for the prize of eternal life.
2. A champion in Christ develops and uses God-given gifts to move to higher levels in life.
3. A champion reaches back to help others as she or he moves forward in life.

