



## GETTING READY

### 1. Welcome/Opener

**What You Need:**

- Host
- Stacks of used paper (from recycling)

**Music and Sound Effects (SFX):**

- Upbeat music to use as kids enter the room

**Large Group Visuals:**

- Theme Slide
- Impossible Shot Game Slide
- Funspllosion Event Slide

**Optional Videos (available for purchase through the 252 Media Package):**

- Theme Loop Video
- Countdown Video
- Theme Video

**What You Do:**

- Stock up on paper from the recycling for this week (as not to waste new paper).
- Have Students play Paper, Rock, Scissors until only one kids remains from each small group; then have them play Impossible Shot from the stage with recycled paper wads

### 2. Communicator Script

**What You Need:**

- Communicator
- Bible
- Host wearing appropriate running clothes with a race number pinned on the front
- Prop Box Containing:
  - Backpack
  - Plate or dumbbell weights
  - Video game console and controllers

- Sports equipment
- Box of Twinkies

*Music and Sound Effects (SFX):*

- Upbeat music to use as kids exit the room

*Large Group Visuals:*

- Download the following pictures from an image search engine
  - An unfinished house project
  - An unfinished puzzle
  - An unfinished book
  - An unfinished Lego® set
  - Unfinished vegetables
  - Crowded stadium
- Key Question Slide

**What You Do:**

- Search for the above images from your search engine of choice. Download them and have them ready to use during the Communicator script. *Note: you will use the “crowded stadium” next week as well.*
- Collect the props for the Communicator Script. Put them into the prop box and have the box on stage ready for the Communicator to use during the story.

### **3. Worship**

**What You Need:**

- Real Love
- Who You Say I Am

# Stop Draggin' My Heart Around

**Bible Story:** Stop Draggin' My Heart Around (Cloud of Witnesses) • Hebrews 12:1

**Bottom Line:** God can help you let go of what is holding you back.

**Key Question:** What gets in the way of finishing what you start?

**Memory Verse:** *But those who trust in the Lord will receive new strength. They will fly as high as eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not grow weak.* Isaiah 40:31 (NIRV)

**Life App:** Perseverance—Refusing to give up when life gets hard

**Basic Truth:** I need to make the wise choice.

## **Story: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways (Large Group, 35 minutes)**

Engage kids' hearts through a dynamic and interactive Bible story, worship, and prayer experience in a Large Group setting.

**SFX:** Play high-energy music as kids enter.

**CG:** Mud Run: Make It Through the Mayhem Theme Slide

**Optional Video (Media Package):** Theme Loop

**Optional Video (Media Package):** Countdown

**Optional Video (Media Package):** Theme

*Host enters.*

### **Welcome**

*Host has lots of energy as he or she welcomes everyone to [Name of Environment]. Host is relatable and inviting. Host can talk about something that happened culturally throughout the week like a big sporting event, movie opening (Avengers 4, Aladdin), a viral video on YouTube®, or holiday (Mother's Day, International Tuba Day, Star Wars Day, Cinco de Mayo, Memorial Day) etc. Host tells them how excited he or she is that they're there and briefly runs through what they can expect. This is especially helpful for first-time guests to make them feel like they know what's happening.*

### **Opener**

**HOST:** "What's going on, everyone! We have such a great day in store for you. And that day starts with a little bit of chaos. EVERYONE is going to play Paper, Rock, Scissors and the last person standing from each group will get to SHOOT for the Impossible Shot!!"

*Host leads groups to pla. Leaders assist with finding winners.*

*Once kids have won, bring them on stage for the Impossible Shot using recycled paper wads.*

*If the game ends quickly, you can try playing another round.*

*"(After the game) And that, my friends, is how you start a morning. Well done!"*

## **Announcements**

*Use this as an example of what to say. Make it your own and help the kids feel welcomed. Then take a moment to share any/all announcements.*

**HOST:** “I’m so excited to be here with all of you today and get a little crazy! If it’s your first time here, I want to welcome you and I would love to have a chance to meet you and get a high-five! Your group leaders are here almost every week... they’re pretty amazing. Here at Mission, we believe that this is a place for you and you belong here no matter who you are or what you believe. At the core of who we are as a church, we believe that **JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING FOR EVERYONE!**

“I have just a few announcements for you all today...”

*Share any/all announcements.*

“One of the things we do each week to help us focus on God is to sing... some of you will know the words to the songs, so we want you to shout and sing them out really loud. If you don’t know the words... they’ll be on the screen for you. Feel free to clap, jump, sing and shout along with us! The best part about this is the message of the song and how good God is! Let’s all stand up and sing together!”

*Worship Leaders enter. Host exits.*

## **Worship**

**WORSHIP LEADER:** “Thank you, *[Name of Host]*. Let’s get up and get loud as we sing and dance for who God is and what he’s done for us!”

### **Real Love**

**WORSHIP LEADER:** “That was amazing! (*Take a moment to say something about the next song*). So let’s give everything we have and worship God together!”

### **Who You Say I Am**

**WORSHIP LEADER:** *PRAY*

*Communicator enters as Worship Leaders exit.*

### **CG: Blank Bottom Line Slide**

## **COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT**

### **Introduction**

**COMMUNICATOR:** “Glad to see everyone here today. To start us off this morning, I have a few pictures to show you. When you know what’s happening in the photo, call out what you see. Ready? Here’s the first one!”

### **CG: Unfinished house**

*Pause for responses.*

“Yep . . . a house that still needs some work, I’d say.”

**CG: Unfinished puzzle**

*Pause for responses.*

“Looks like a pretty good puzzle. They just need to keep going! Next!”

**CG: Unfinished book**

*Pause for responses.*

“Seems someone is in the middle of a good book. Alright next . . .”

**CG: Unfinished Lego® set**

*Pause for responses.*

“A nice little house coming together there. And the last one . . .”

**CG: Unfinished vegetables**

*Pause for responses.*

“Let’s be honest. How many of you would say this is YOUR plate at home? Come on! I knew it!”

“Alright, so what do all of these pictures have in common? What links them all together?”

*Pause for responses.*

“That’s right . . . they are all photos of something that’s unfinished! Something got started but never quite got finished. Do you have anything in your life like that?”

## **TENSION**

**COMMUNICATOR:** “I don’t know about you, but have you ever had the feeling that no matter what you do things keep getting in the way of finishing what you started? You start something, but no matter how hard you try, you just can’t seem to ever finish what you started. Now sometimes it doesn’t really matter. I’ve got plenty of books that I lost interest in and never picked them back up. But what about things that really do matter? Like maybe you’re on a sports team and get an injury that keeps you from finishing out the year. Or you know you have to finish that project in language arts you feel like you’re running out of motivation and time to finish it by the due date. Maybe it has something to do with your relationship with God. That no matter how much you want to connect with God and grow in your relationship with Him, you feel like things keep getting in the way.”

## **TRUTH**

**COMMUNICATOR:** “Well, don’t worry. You’re not the first person to feel this way. People all throughout history have run into trouble when it comes to finishing what they start. Sometimes it’s their fault, but other times life happens, plans change, and even if they *want* to finish, they’re finding it really difficult. Something like this seemed to be happening for some of the first followers of Jesus, and they needed some encouragement.

“We find that encouragement in book of Hebrews in the New Testament. We’re not exactly sure who wrote the book of Hebrews. But we know it was written to encourage followers of Jesus to have perseverance when it came to their faith, especially when things were tough for them.”

“As we get into it this morning, I’ve asked [*Host’s name*] to help me out a bit. [*Host’s name*]!

*Host comes out wearing running clothes, ready for a race.*

**COMMUNICATOR:** “Looking sharp! Ready for the race?”

**HOST:** (*Jogging in place*) “Absolutely! I’ve got my best running shoes on, I’m aerodynamic, I carb-loaded some pasta backstage . . . I’m ready!”

**COMMUNICATOR:** “Perfect! Well, I’ve got a few other things that might help you out. Here . . .”

*Communicator takes the empty backpack from the Prop Box and hands it to the Host.*

**COMMUNICATOR:** “. . . Put this on.”

*Host does so but hesitantly.*

**COMMUNICATOR:** “Now, I know you’ve got a long race ahead of you, so I want to make sure you have everything you need.”

(*Taking out sports equipment*) “Since it is a long race, I thought you might get bored. And I know how much you love sports. So here . . .”

*Communicator takes out sports equipment and packs it into backpack.*

**HOST:** “But I . . .”

**COMMUNICATOR:** “. . . Now I also know that you sure love your video games . . . amiright? So let me make sure you have all of your favorites . . .”

*Communicator packs video game equipment and games into backpack.*

**HOST:** “But how can . . .”

**COMMUNICATOR:** “. . . And of course I couldn’t forget these weights to help keep you fit. I mean, you need to be working out. Exercising!”

*Communicator starts putting plate/dumbbell weights in one at a time. Wait for reaction and then add another.*

**HOST:** “Ok hold on a second . . .”

**COMMUNICATOR:** “. . . And since it is kind of like a road trip, I got you your favorite snacks. Here (*putting in Host’s mouth*), have a Twinkie!”

**HOST:** (*Trying to talk with Twinkie*) “Mow mat is emuff! (*Spits Twinkie out*) Now that is enough! I can’t possibly run a race like this!”

**COMMUNICATOR:** “Why not? I thought this was all your favorite stuff?”

**HOST:** “It is, but not when I’m trying to run. All this will just weigh me down!”

**COMMUNICATOR:** “I know exactly what you mean. In fact, that is exactly what the writer of Hebrews is talking about. Check it out. (*Beat. Look at Host*) Actually, would you like to have a seat before we read?”

**HOST:** (*Collapsing*) “Yes please! This thing is heavy!”

**COMMUNICATOR:** “(*Read directly from Hebrews 12:1 NIV*) ‘A huge cloud of witnesses is all around us. So let us throw off everything that stands in our way. Let us throw off any sin that holds on to us so tightly. And let us keep on running the race marked out for us.’”

“The author begins by talking about this ‘huge cloud of witnesses.’”

### **CG: Image of a Crowded Stadium**

“OK, so imagine a giant stadium filled with fans, packed in to see the race. In the chapter before this, the writer tells us who these witnesses are. They are all of the people who have gone before us in faith . . . people like Moses, Noah, Joseph—even Christians we knew who went before us like friends or family members. The stands are packed! They are ready to watch us run our race of faith. But what’s the problem?”

*Pause for responses.*

“We’re not quite ready for the race! Like [*Host’s name*] here, there are some things we are carrying with us that could threaten our ability to finish the race God has called us to. Sure we may start well, but just like [*Host’s name*] trying to run a race with all of this, it will be very difficult to finish.”

“(To Host) Hey, can you stand back up and bring all of that over here?”

**HOST:** “Sure.”

*Host peels himself off of the floor and struggles to pick the backpack up and get it back on his/her shoulders. After much struggle, he/she makes it.*

**COMMUNICATOR:** “You good? Okay. Now as ridiculous as it would be to see [*Host’s name*] lined up at the start of the race like this, there are some things that we bring to our race, too, that make it very difficult to run well. In that verse I just read, it tells us more of what to do. Let me read it again . . .”

“(Read directly from Hebrews 12:1 NIV) ‘A huge cloud of witnesses is all around us. (*Emphasizing*) So let us throw off everything that stands in our way.’”

“In this life we run with God, there are some things that will make it hard. Let’s check some out.

*Takes video games out of bag.*

“Now, there is nothing wrong with playing some video games from time to time. It can be a lot of fun! But have you ever had one of those moments where you ignore everything else in your life for a long period of time because all you can think about is beating that next level? You start to ignore your family, stop helping around the house . . . all because of a game. It happens, right? Are video games bad? No. But sometimes we need to put them aside so that we can run the race.”

*Lays video games off to the side. Pulls sports equipment out of bag.*

“Or maybe it is a sport or team we are a part of. We give all of our time to practicing and playing to the point that we aren’t working very hard in other areas of our lives like school or maybe being a part of our church. Are sports bad? No, they’re great, but sometimes we need to lay them aside so that we can run the race.”

*Lays sports equipment off to the side.*

“Now, there is another thing to mention . . .”

*Reaches in and pulls out a weight.*

“Check out what the writer says next. *(Read directly from Hebrews 12:1 NIV) ‘A huge cloud of witnesses is all around us. So let us throw off everything that stands in our way. (Emphasizing) Let us throw off any sin that holds on to us so tightly. And let us keep on running the race marked out for us.’*”

“Now the video games and the sports, those are good things that can be used wrongly. But these weights represent something that’s never good. These represent the sin in our lives. Sin is when we do something that goes against what God intends for our life. It is when we do what He has asked us not to do. And this sin can certainly keep us from running the race well.”

“*(Holding up one weight)* This one here . . . let’s say this represents how we respond to anger. Like when somebody does something we don’t like and we find ourselves yelling at him or her until we’re red in the face or ignoring that person so he or she feels left out. How we respond in anger can be one of those sins that can keep us from running the race.”

*Host reaches in backpack and pulls out another weight and holds it up.*

“Now, let’s say this one here represents jealousy. This could be when we compare ourselves to other people and start to want what they have to the point that we start holding a grudge against that person because we’re so jealous of him or her. Jealousy can be one of those sins that can keep us from running the race.”

*Host begins pulling the weights out quickly and naming them.*

“We could also have times when we make sure we do something good in front of everybody so he or she would say how great we are. Or times when we called that person a pretty nasty name because he or she cut in front of us in line for four-square. Or maybe there was a time when we saw someone’s need but were too concerned about ourselves to help him or her out.”



*Begins rapid fire pulling weights out and setting them aside.*

“All (*weight*) of (*weight*) these (*weight*) things can keep us from running the race. The fact is we may start well, but we certainly aren’t going to be able to finish.”

“But God wants us to run, *to live*, our lives with Him and for Him! Check out the last part of that verse again. (*Read directly from Hebrews 12:1 NIV*) ‘A huge cloud of witnesses is all around us. So let us throw off everything that stands in our way. Let us throw off any sin that holds on to us so tightly. (*Emphasizing*) And let us keep on running the race marked out for us.’ Thanks for your help, [*Host’s name*].”

*Host exits.*

## **APPLICATION**

**COMMUNICATOR:** “See, God has a race for each one of us. He has marked it out for us to run here and now. And the stands are full of people cheering us on. People like Noah, who was faithful to build the ark even though everyone around him was making fun of him.

Or Moses. You remember his story, right? He almost missed out on running his race because he was so convinced he wasn’t going to be a good leader and he wasn’t really a very good speaker. But God told him to lay all of that aside and he ended up leading the Israelites out of their slavery in Egypt!”

“And then there is Joseph who ended up in a foreign land and found himself being accused of things he didn’t do. And yet, he put aside all of his anger and excuses and ended up rising to second in command and saving the entire nation from a famine! And they are cheering you on!”

“And we here at [*Name of your Environment*] are cheering you on! But if we’re ever going to run, we have to be really careful about those things that distract us and hold us back. The things that weigh us down.”

## **LANDING**

**COMMUNICATOR:** “Today as you go to groups, think about the race that God has for you to run and ask yourself this question:”

**CG: Key Question Slide**

“**What gets in the way of finishing what you start?** Think about the things that might be carrying around that are keeping you from finishing the amazing things God has planned for you. And don’t worry if you’re having trouble thinking of something; you’ll talk more about this with your Small Group. Before you head to groups, though, let’s pray and thank God for the cloud of witness who went ahead of us to show us what it means to follow God with perseverance. Let’s pray.”

*Communicator leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard. After prayer, Communicator dismisses kids to Small Group.*

**SFX: Play high-energy music as the kids exit.**

**Optional Video (Media Package): Theme Loop**