



GETTING READY

1. Opener/Closer

What You Need:

- Host
- Two kids with their four Small Group Leaders
- Workout clothes for the Host
- Two life vests with bungee cords attached
- Laundry basket full of ball pit balls
- Two large buckets
- Host's phone

Music and Sound Effects (SFX):

- Upbeat music to use as kids enter and exit the room
- Fun music for the game
- SFX: Cheering crowd

Large Group Visuals:

- Theme Slide
- Perseverance Slide
- Blank Bottom Line Slide
- Bottom Line Slide
- Blank Memory Verse Slide
- Memory Verse Slide

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

- Theme Loop Video
- Countdown Video
- Theme Video
- Life App Video
- Theme TransBack Video
- 60-Second Countdown Video

What You Do:

- Attach a bungee cord to each life vest so that when a child is wearing it, you could use the bungee rope to pull him back safely. Make sure the cord is ALMOST long enough to reach the middle of the room from the wall, so the kids will have to stretch to reach the ball pit balls in the middle of the room. (You may need to have the Leaders stand closer to the center if the cords don't stretch enough for the kids to move all the way in from the corners.)
- Pre-set the four buckets in the four corners of the room.

2. Bible Story

What You Need:

- Storyteller
- Pre-selected Small Group Leader
- Bible
- Three giant, empty boxes
- Baguette
- Staff
- Hammer
- "GO [LEADER'S NAME]" banner

Music and Sound Effects (SFX):

- SFX: Cheering crowd

Large Group Visuals:

- Blank Bottom Line Slide
- Bottom Line Slide

What You Do:

- Pre-select a Leader and let him know what you need him to do.
- Make a banner out of posterboard that says "GO [LEADER'S NAME]!" (Fill in your actual Leader's name.)
- Save one of the giant boxes for next week's Bible 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.

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: Theme Slide

Optional CG (Media Package): Theme Loop Video

Host enters, dressed in workout clothes.

Optional CG (Media Package): Countdown Video (30- or 60-second version)

Optional CG (Media Package): Theme Video

Opener

HOST: "Hello, everyone! It's great to see you today. If we haven't met before, my name is [your name], and I'm your Host here in [your environment's name]! I've been training all month for my very first mud run. It's going to be so awesome, and I'm going to get soooooo muddy! I can't wait!

"I've heard that doing a mud run is really challenging, so I've been doing lots of training. That way I can make it through the mud and the mayhem with perseverance!

CG: Perseverance Slide

Optional CG (Media Package): Life App Video

"Perseverance is refusing to give up when life gets hard.

Optional CG (Media Package): Theme TransBack Video

"All of you have done a great job helping me this month with my training, so I thought maybe you might help me again today. Does anybody feel like helping me train? *(Pause for response.)* Awesome! I'll need four kids up here on stage, and each of you bring your Leader, too.

Bring up four kids and their four Leaders.

(To the Leaders and kids on stage) "Today we're going to strengthen our core. Core strength definitely helps when you're slipping and sliding through the mud!

(To kids) "Kids, each of you will need to wear one of these.

Give each kid a life vest with a bungee cord attached.

(To Leaders) “Leaders, each of you will need to hold onto the other end of the bungee cord.

Leaders grab the other end of the bungee cord that’s attached to their kid’s vest.

“Now I need each pair of contestants to go to a different corner of the room. Audience, you can scoot back so you’re away from the middle of the room and closer to the walls. Why? Because our Leaders will stay put in the corners, while the kids will run to the center to try to grab as many of these ball pit balls as they can.

Set down the laundry basket full of ball pit balls in the center of the room.

“It’ll be tough to do that since they’re being held by those bungee cords! But I know they can do it. *(To the kid contestants)* When you grab the ball pit balls, bring them back to the corner and give them to your Leader. At the end of the game, whichever team has the most ball pit balls in their bucket wins! Okay, let’s get 60 seconds on the clock. Everyone else, cheer them on. On your marks, get set, go!

If you don’t have a countdown video, set a 60-second timer on your phone.

SFX: Fun music

Optional CG (Media Package): 60-Second Countdown Video

Comment on the action. If the kids are having a tough time reaching the center of the room, have all Leaders take a few steps toward the center until it’s easier.

“That was amazing! Great job, teams! Thanks for showing me how it’s done. It looks like [Leader and kid] got the most points, but ALL of you showed some serious core strength and perseverance! Let’s give them all a hand.

Get the props back from the contestants and dismiss them to their seats.

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.

“Let’s take some time to worship God and thank Him for being our awesome Creator. Everyone stand up and get ready to sing!”

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

Communicator enters as Worship Leaders exit.

CG: Theme Slide

Setting up the story

STORYTELLER: “Hello, everyone! My name is [your name], and I want to share an awesome verse with you from the book of Hebrews. (*Hold up Bible.*) I love this verse because it tells us how we can persevere and live God’s way every day!

“Now, the book of Hebrews is actually a letter that was written to Jewish Christians who lived in Jerusalem. The really cool part is that it’s full of great stuff for us, too! Here’s what it says in Hebrews, chapter 12, verse 1.

Open the Bible to Hebrews 12:1 (NIRV) and read.

A huge cloud of witnesses . . .

SFX: Cheering crowd (*start this sound effect right when the Storyteller starts reading, so that it “interrupts” her*)

. . . is all around us.

(*Looking confused.*) “Well, that was strange. Let’s try that again.

A huge cloud of witnesses . . .

SFX: Cheering crowd

. . . *is all around us. (Pause.) 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.*

(Shrugging) “I have a feeling we’ll find out what that cheering was about in a minute. But did you catch what the verse was saying? It was saying that living your life is a lot like running a race. Let’s take a closer look.”

heavy weights

STORYTELLER: “I’ve asked [Small Group Leader’s name] to help me show you what I mean.

Pre-selected Leader joins you on stage.

“Let’s pretend [Leader’s name] . . . is you! Let’s see what happens to him on this very normal day. He’s enjoying his favorite breakfast . . . *(nod to the Leader to get him to say his favorite breakfast)* . . . and everything seems to be going fine. But then his mom asks him to pick up his dirty clothes before school, and he gets pretty mad about it. He has an argument with his mom and he says some mean things. Oops.

Hand the Leader a giant (empty) box to hold. Act like it’s really heavy.

“Then, at school, [Leader’s name] gets frustrated because he wants more time at recess. He gets so mad that he kicks his backpack. But, unfortunately, when he kicks his backpack, the backpack gets knocked into his classmate’s water bottle, which spills all over her project. Yikes!

Stack another giant box in the Leader’s arms.

“Then [Leader’s name] sits down at his desk, and his teacher passes out a spelling test. [Leader’s name] realizes that he forgot to study for the test and he doesn’t know any of the answers. He thinks about maybe *(gasp!)* peeking at someone else’s test and copying their answers onto his test!

Stack another giant box in the Leader’s arms.

“That sounds like a pretty bad day for [Leader’s name], doesn’t it? I don’t think it was the kind of day God had in mind for him, either. You see, when we do something that we know is wrong, that’s called sin. Saying something mean, doing something that hurts someone else, cheating on a test—those are all examples of sin.

“Do you know what sin does? Sin is like a heavy weight. *(Point to the boxes in the Leader’s arms.)* It holds us back. If [Leader’s name] wanted to run a race, there’s no way he could do that if he’s carrying all this heavy stuff.”

Throwing off sin

STORYTELLER: “That’s why the verse in Hebrews says this: *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 (Hebrews 12:1 NIV).*

“If [Leader’s name] wants to run a good race—if he wants to live a life that follows God—what does he need to do? *(Pause for response.)* That’s right. He needs to do what the verse says. He needs to throw off the sins—our bad choices—that hold him back. He needs to choose to live the way GOD wants him to live instead. He needs

to tell God he's sorry and ask God to help him keep from sinning the next time. He needs to trust God and remember that God is always with him.

(To Leader) "So, [Leader's name], are you ready to 'throw off' those things that are holding you back? Go ahead!"

Leader dramatically tosses the boxes to the side.

SFX: Cheering crowd

"Wait—did you hear that? It's that cheering crowd again!"

cheering section

STORYTELLER: "Here's the deal. [Leader's name] isn't running his race alone. He isn't going through life by himself. He can always talk to God and ask Him for help. And that's not all!"

"Remember, Hebrews 12:1 says this: *A huge cloud of witnesses is all around us.*

SFX: Cheering crowd

"A 'cloud of witnesses' means that there are lots and lots of people who have followed God who have gone before us. We can read about them in the Bible.

"For example, Joseph chose to forgive his brothers even though they were terrible to him. He ended up saving grain and saving the whole nation of Israel.

Hold up the baguette.

"Moses wasn't a good speaker, but he kept going back again to Pharaoh to ask him to free God's people.

Hold up the staff.

"And how about Noah? Everyone laughed at him, but he built that giant boat because God asked him to.

Hold up the hammer.

"When we remember how other people persevered and trusted God, it helps US persevere and trust God, too. It's like we have a cheering section standing on the sidelines, yelling and screaming and clapping to get us to run the BEST race that we can.

Put down the other objects and hold up the "GO [LEADER'S NAME]" banner.

"They're saying, 'GO [LEADER'S NAME]!' Go YOU!"

"Let's give [Leader's name] a big hand."

SFX: Cheering crowd

Lead applause and dismiss the Leader to his seat.

wrapping up THE STORY

STORYTELLER: *(Hold up Bible.)* “Those heroes in the Bible? They kept going even when things got tough. And you know what? So can you.

“God has placed other people in your life, too—people who can help you, like your parents or your grandparents or your friends at church. They’re all part of your cheering section, too.

“The next time you’re going through something hard and you’re tempted to make the wrong choice, I want you to imagine that Joseph and Moses and Noah are cheering for you. I want you to remember that I’M cheering for you, and your family’s cheering for you, and your Small Group Leader is cheering for you, too. And I want you to remember that GOD is cheering for you. We’re all cheering for you, because we want you to let go of anything that holds you back.

CG: Bottom Line Slide

[Bottom Line] “God can help you let go of what is holding you back.

“You just have to ask Him. In fact, let’s do that now.”

CG: Blank Bottom Line Slide

Pray

STORYTELLER: “Dear God, we know that sometimes we get distracted by the things that are happening in our lives. We get mad or frustrated, and we make the wrong choice. But we really don’t want to do that anymore. Will you please help us to let go of all those things that are holding us back, so we can focus on running the race You’ve set before us? Help us to live Your way and to trust You every day. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name, amen.”

Host enters as Storyteller exits.

Closer

HOST: “I don’t know about you, but I definitely want to throw off the things that hold ME back. I want to run the kind of race that GOD wants me to run. I think that’s the best kind of race training I could EVER do!

CG: Bottom Line Slide

“Remember, **[Bottom Line]** God can help you let go of what is holding you back.

“He can help you **[Basic Truth]** make the wise choice and follow His way. All you need to do is ask! And remember, when you read your Bible, you’ll learn about all those heroes in your cheering section—your ‘cloud of witnesses.’

SFX: Cheering crowd

“You’ll see how they had perseverance and how they **[Basic Truth]** trusted God no matter what.

“Our memory verse is Isaiah 40:31.

CG: Blank Memory Verse Slide

"It's a great reminder of how God can give you the strength you need to keep going. Let's say it together.

CG: Memory Verse Slide

"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 (NlrV).

"It's so good to know that we can always depend on God. He'll give us what we need to make it through whatever we might face in life.

"You'll get to talk about that some more in Small Group. You can head that way now. I'll see you later!"

Dismiss kids to their small groups.

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

CG: Theme Slide

Optional CG (Media Package): Theme Loop Video