



YouthBytes.org - A Powerful Tool for Youth Workers

YouthBytes is a simple, yet effective tool in the hands of those who have a passion to reach and teach this generation. The Episode Guide is designed to help you implement YouthBytes into your particular setting at whatever level you choose: from a full meeting schedule to just a small video to enhance your meeting. We encourage each worker to add his or her own stories, experiences and illustrations to make your particular scenario work. The discussion questions are also just a starting point and we encourage each group to go further and deal with local issues and topics that might be relevant.

Each YouthByte Episode will include :

- Video summary
- Icebreaker
- Primary Lesson
- Facts, figures and illustrations used in the episode
- Key Scriptures
- Discussion Questions
- Complimentary story

We look forward to getting your feedback and comments for these Episode Guides. Also let us know what subjects you would want new YouthBytes to cover. As always, testimonies are welcome. Comments, ideas, and testimonies can be sent to feedback@youthbytes.org.

Disc 6 ~ Run The Race Short Cut



Video Summary

This episode looks at our life and the race we all run towards eternity in Christ. Most humans hate discipline and veer away from anything that causes pain or discomfort. But in our relationship with Jesus, there will always be pain and tests that come our way. These issues that show up give us the chance to pull on the grace of God and allow His strength to empower us as we run towards the finish line.

In our society, television, the movies, our friends, and family put pressure on us to succeed quickly, and that success should be attained at any cost. Forget your name & reputation, do whatever you need to do to win. God however does not play by our rules. He requires us to run this race and have success through the principles He has in place; discipline, faithfulness, servanthood, and sacrifice are such virtues. When you apply these to life, you won't need to resort to "creative" ideas to win!



Icebreaker ~ Motivational Running

A fable is told about a dog who loved to chase other animals. He bragged about his great running skill and said he could catch anything.

Well, it wasn't long until his boastful claims were put to the test by a certain rabbit. With ease the little creature outran his barking pursuer. The other animals, watching with glee, began to laugh. The dog excused himself, however, by saying, "You forget, I was only running for fun. He was running for his life!" That does make a difference! Motivation is the most important factor in everything we do.



Primary Lesson ~ Run the Race and Run it well

The race we each endure in Christ is a marathon—not a sprint. It begins the moment you receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior, and it lasts until you die or Jesus returns. As an amateur long distance runner in high school, I know that the key is not how fast you start the race, but how consistently you run. Hebrews 12:1 states that we should: *“lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.”* The sin and weight that besets you can be expressed in many ways. It can be emotional baggage, hurts and rejections from your past, re-occurring sins, bad attitudes or a desire to finish quickly so you can do something else. It would be like running with a bag of rocks on your back. Sure, you could run, but only for a short time. To have real success in this race, you need to put away anything that will hinder your ability to run and run for a long time.

Many young people feel that fast is better when the Bible teaches the opposite. God is interested in your ability to run all through your life at a consistent, disciplined pace. As the race progresses, the effects on body, mind, and spirit take their toll, and many resort to shortcuts or cheats to finish the race. My mom used to say this “Cheaters never win and winners never cheat.” Sure, it is corny, but it is true! The crown and reward only belong to those who finish the race and finish well.

Jesus had many opportunities to take a shortcut and avoid the cross, but he knew that God had prepared a path for him to run on and unless he finished the race we would have nothing to look forward to. Having the ability to run fast is good, but being able to run for long, extended periods of time is the key to finishing well. How many have started well, but through one circumstance or another they quit running, believing that one mistake or one slip up disqualified them from running? God is for you and will cheer you across the finish line, just don't quit running.



Facts, Figures & Illustrations

At the Olympics, glory doesn't only go to those who win. Dorando Pietri was in a state of collapse as he entered the stadium for the final yards of the 1908 marathon. The Italian fell five times before an official helped him across the finish line. Pietri was disqualified but his indomitable spirit made him an international celebrity. A similar display of courage enabled Derek Redmond of Great Britain to finish the 400 meters in '92. Hobbled by a torn hamstring near the half-way point, Redmond hopped the rest of the way with the help of his father, Jim, who rushed from the stands to aid his son.

Runner's high is said to occur when strenuous exercise takes a person over a threshold that activates endorphin production. Endorphins are natural pain killers released during long, continuous workouts, when the level of intensity is between moderate and high, and breathing is difficult. Workouts that are most likely to produce endorphins include running, swimming, cross-country skiing, long distance rowing, bicycling, weight lifting, aerobics, or playing a sport such as basketball or football.



Key Scriptures (From New King James Version, unless otherwise noted)

Hebrews 12:1 ~ Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

Philippians 1:6 ~ being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 14:12 ~ This calls for patient **endurance** on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus. (NIV)

1 Corinthians 9:24 ~ Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.

Hebrews 12:11 ~ No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. (NIV)

1 Thessalonians 1:3 ~ We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. (NIV)

Galatians 5:7 ~ You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?

Revelation 2:10 ~ Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.



Discussion Questions

1. God has built you for endurance and you have the ability to run long distances. Why do you choose to run short distances instead of long distances?
2. What are the sins or weights that easily beset you or keep you from running the race? Are you aware that they are there or have you been wondering why you can't finish the race and have not taken their presence and power into effect?
3. In this race there will always be people, circumstances that want to distract you or slowly take you out of the race. What are these things in your life? Is it friends, reputation, emotions? Discuss what these are and how you can keep your focus.
4. God is a patient father and will do whatever it takes to empower you to finish the race. The only thing He won't do is go against your will. As long as you stay in the race and get back up when you fall, you will win. Are you out of the race now because you think God is mad at you or that He is somehow displeased with your poor running skills? Discuss God's mercy and His willingness to see you win.



Complimentary Story ~ Stepping Out

Certain land animals use speed in the pursuit of prey or avoidance of predators. The cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*) can run as fast as 75 mph over the plains of Africa, and the pronghorn antelope (*Antilocapra americana*) can reach 55 mph over the plains of North America. Humans are not among these animals built for speed. The very fastest human can achieve a sprint of 20+ mph for very short distances.

So things were bound to go wrong when a 19-year-old male, driving the A67 highway near the Dutch town of Blerick. He was seeking to impress his two passengers by putting his car on cruise control at 20 mph, getting out of the car, and running alongside it. He planned to jump back in and drive on, but the moment his feet hit the ground, he fell over and slammed headfirst into the asphalt. He was admitted to the hospital with severe brain damage, and died the next day. *12 April 2004, Netherlands*

Source: <http://www.darwinawards.com/darwin/darwin2004-10.html>