

**One truth shared:** Jesus shows real strength on our behalf leading us to leave sin and focus on him.

*Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

**Hebrews 12:2**

## Keep life in focus, Jesus is our strength

If you are going to run a race, how do you prepare? Even if you are not the running type, I think you know. Equipment like shoes, running shorts, and a good T-shirt are very important. You'd want to map the course online, if possible, even walk the course beforehand. You would need to decide on a strategy for the course. For example, where are the hills, and what are the difficult spots? What pace should you set? There are also things you'd need to eliminate. You wouldn't wear your winter gear like a bulky jacket, a school backpack, Chromebook, maybe even your phone. You'd need to replay the map in your mind as you're running the course. And when you hear steps of other runners behind you, you need to remind yourself to just keep looking forward.

Running a race is a lot like going through the daily grind of life.

It's easy in life to get wrapped up in digital distractions and be overwhelmed with people drama. God snaps his fingers and says, "Hey, stay focused!" Focus on what Jesus has done for you. Remember how and why he persevered, even enduring the cross. He carried out his mission, as hard as it was, by keeping focused on the joy that was to come. The joy set down before him is all about you. He followed his Father's plan to save you. He went through it all so you would be with him. He longed for eternity with you.

Life takes a lot of endurance like running a race. Each day has its own temptations and challenges. But don't lose heart! Don't give up! Jesus is your strength. He runs with you. He runs ahead of you. He even promises to carry you.

**Prayer:** Dear Lord, when the road of life gets rugged and I feel overwhelmed, remind me of your love and sacrifice. You suffered so much because in your eyes, I'm worth it to you. Help me lay down my sin at your feet and live my life at peace with you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## Foundation Teen Facilitators Guide

Year B – Lent 6

Rethinking Religion

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### Keep life in focus, Jesus is our strength

*Starting the Discussion: This first section is intended to be light and easy, to engage and get the conversation going. Have a little fun with these questions.*

Provide a broom and ask the students to balance it on one hand for a whole minute without moving their feet. (Take turns, allowing as many as possible to get a turn. Students should notice it is easier to balance if you look up vs. looking at your hand.)

*Connecting: This section serves as a bridge between the opening conversation and the body of the study/discussion. It should get the group thinking about the topic/text even before they've looked at it.*

It's hard to stay focused in life. Some say that being a teenager is harder today than it was "back in the day." What do you think? What new challenges to your faith are there compared to former generations? Any new blessings that support your faith?

*Digging In: Here we want to dig into some texts or the text for the day and see what Scripture says. The questions are meant to be open ended to give a beginning of a scriptural conversation. These are a guide for a spiritual and scriptural conversation.*

- Read Hebrews 12:1-3: Fixing our eyes on Jesus.
- Brainstorm a list of the "things that hinder" and "sin that easily entangles" from verse 1.
- If there are so many things that hinder our faith in Jesus and sin entangles us, why even bother "running the race of faith"?
- Look again at verse 2. What provided endurance for Jesus to face death on the cross? (*The joy set before him. Us. His dedication to completing the Father's plan. Trusting that after the sacrifice was made it would be enough.*)
- Agree or disagree and tell why. It wasn't the nails, but it was you that kept Jesus to the cross.
- Name someone who really encourages you to "keeping running" in your faith? What would it take for teens to be of better support for each other?

*Conclusion: Here we want to wrap up the discussion, perhaps circling back to the "connecting question" above.*

*Follow up.* Review the list of people you wanted to invite to church and to Easter (during the discussion for Lent 2 on Feb. 25). There were at least three people from your friends, family, neighborhood, or school. How have the invites gone? Are there things that got in the way? Pray over the list together again. Ask God for the opportunity and boldness to share an invite so many more can fix their eyes on Jesus.