

KIDZONE

Go for Gold

2

Right now the Olympic athletes are training hard. Their whole lives are focused on the big event. They must eat the right food, get enough sleep, jog, exercise and practise every day. They need the best gear and the right travel plans so their fitness peaks when the Olympics start. The race with Jesus is like that. We need to train hard to be ready. This month we'll find out how Saul (later called Paul) prepared for the race with Jesus and how we can train for this, too.

IN TRAINING

"Didn't Saul come here to Damascus to arrest the followers of Jesus? We thought he was going to put them in prison, question and beat them."

"Well, why is he now preaching that Jesus is alive, the Messiah, the Son of God?"

The people in Damascus were very confused. Then they realised that Saul was completely changed by what happened on the road to Damascus. He saw a brilliant vision of Jesus alive. The light made him blind for three days. Then he was healed and changed from an enemy to a follower of Jesus.

Saul preached so powerfully that no one could argue against him. So some Jews plotted to kill him.

Saul's friends found out and hid him. Damascus had a wall around it. Soldiers were watching the city gates to capture Saul as he left.

In the darkness of night Saul climbed into a huge basket. His friends lowered him with ropes through a hole in the wall. When the basket reached the ground he ran off and hid. Then, secretly, he went back to Jerusalem.

But the Christians in Jerusalem were scared when Saul tried to join their meetings.

"It's a trick," they said. "He's just pretending. When he finds out about us, he'll arrest us all and put us in prison."

There was a man they all trusted called Barnabas. He knew that Saul was really changed. He took Saul to a meeting and told the Christians to trust Saul.

"Jesus has changed his life," he said. "He's preaching boldly about Jesus and risking his life."

Again, the enemies of Jesus made plans to kill Saul. So his Christian friends sent Saul to his home city called Tarsus. (Tarsus is in Turkey.) Saul stayed there for several years.

"Jesus is really alive. He's the Son of God," he kept on telling his family, friends and everyone he met.

Near Tarsus was a city called Antioch. Suddenly the church there began to grow fast. Many who were not Jews became followers of Jesus. The apostles in Jerusalem were very worried.

"Are all these new Christians real believers in Jesus?" they wondered. "How will we find out if they are?"

"Let's send Barnabas," they all agreed.

When Barnabas arrived in Antioch he knew that the new Christians were real. God's Holy Spirit was working there. He was glad and stayed to teach them more about Jesus.

Then he had a great idea. "This is just the place to train Saul," he realised.

So he went to Tarsus, found Saul and brought him to Antioch. They worked together with the church in Antioch for a whole year. It was all great training for the race with Jesus.

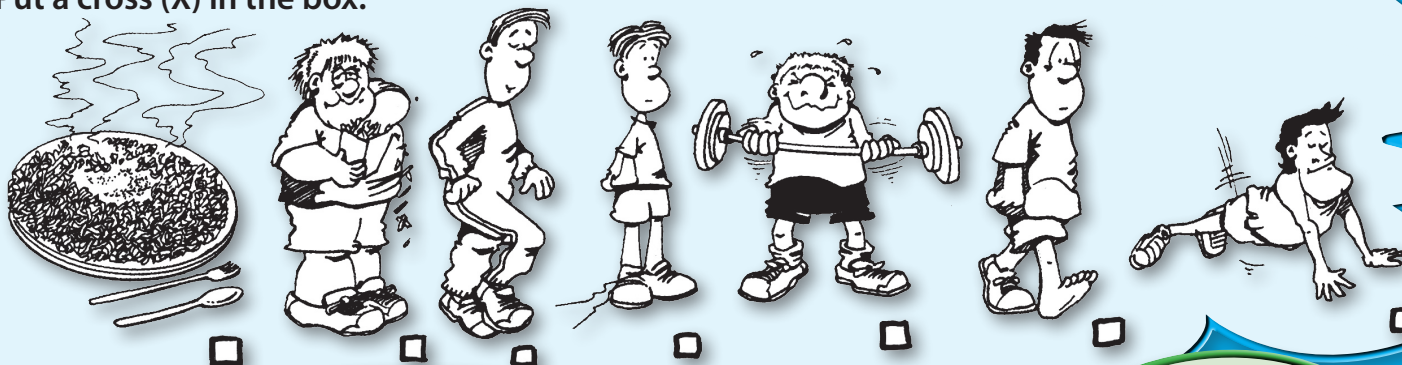
Explore the story for yourself from the Bible.

Read Acts 9:20 – 30 and 11:25 – 26.



BE AN ATHLETE!

Which pictures show good training? Tick (✓) the box. Which ones show poor training? Put a cross (X) in the box.



YOUR OLYMPIC SCRAP BOOK

Have you found any stories and pictures of athletes who have qualified for the London Olympics? What about athletes who are still trying to reach the standard? Put them into your Olympic Scrap Book.

THE RACE OF FAITH

Use this verse from the Good News Bible as a caption to make a poster. Either draw a picture or use a photo of yourself in training. Hang up your poster. Here's the verse:



Run your best in the race of faith, and win eternal life for yourself.

1 Timothy 6:12

Now learn the verse by heart.

TALKING WITH THE COACH

Pray this prayer to the Lord Jesus, our Coach:

"Lord Jesus, please help me to train well for the race of faith. Help me to listen to you as I read and hear your word to me from the Bible. Help me to grow strong as I practise the things you tell me. I want to run and win the race of life with you.

Amen."

TRAINING FOR THE RACE WITH JESUS

Look up these references in a Good News Bible. In each verse there's a key word about how to train for the race with Jesus. Find the words, fill in the blanks and then find these words in the Word Search.

1 Timothy 4:8 e _ _ _ _ _

John 6:27 f _ _ _ _

1 Peter 2:2 m _ _ _ _

James 1:19 l _ _ _ _ _

1 Timothy 4:15 p _ _ _ _ _

1 Timothy 4:7 t _ _ _ _ _

1 Corinthians 9:25 d _ _ _ _ _

1 Corinthians 9:24 r _ _ _ _

Isaiah 40:31 r _ _ _ _

James 1:3 e _ _ _ _ _

Philippians 3:14 g _ _ _ _

D	N	X	E	E	K	Q	E	J	K
O	E	Z	S	L	R	X	Q	G	X
O	T	F	I	J	E	U	Z	N	J
F	S	M	T	R	V	K	D	I	W
D	I	S	C	I	P	L	I	N	E
J	L	I	A	E	V	F	L	I	E
Q	S	Z	R	C	Y	W	A	A	J
E	X	U	P	A	K	J	O	R	Q
K	N	S	T	R	E	N	G	T	H