

RUN FOR YOUR LIFE



Theme: *Being a Christian is like running a marathon*

Scripture: *1 Corinthians 9:24 -*

Props: *Hand towel, wristwatch, running shoes (optional)*

Optional beginning: *(Have Bible and towel already sitting on a chair. Wait until children are in place then run up the aisle and on stage, out of breath.) Whew! (Look at watch.) Not bad! I'll be with you in a minute. (Pick up towel and wipe your brow, etc.) I'm in training, you know. I'm going to run the marathon.*

Or begin here: Do you know how long a marathon is? Over 26 miles! Did you know that in the Bible Paul says that being a Christian is like running a marathon?

It's here in 1 Corinthians 9:24. He says, "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize...They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever."

Have you seen what they put on the winner's head when he wins the marathon? A laurel wreath, which is like a crown made of leaves. Do you think it would last very long? No, it would dry up and fall apart. But at the end of our Christian life God gives us a crown that will last forever. He gives us eternal life and then we get to be with him and Jesus forever. Pretty cool prize, huh?

But if you're going to run a race you need to train. That's what Paul says: "Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training." How does a runner train for a race? *(Practice running, diet, sleep, etc.)* How do we train for our race as Christians? *(Practice being a Christian! Practice obeying God's word, reading the Bible, praying, trying to do the right things, etc.)*

So we need to keep in practice and keep running our Christian race even if it looks like the finish line is very far away. There's a great prize waiting for us at the end. And you don't have to be the first one to cross the finish line: all you have to do is finish the race and you'll get a crown that will last forever.

That's something we should pray about: Our Father, help us to run our Christian race in a way that will make you proud. Help us to make it to the finish line and to receive the crown that you have waiting for us. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Song: "O, Jesus, I Have Promised"