



# Large Group Curriculum



Sample

Press On Large Group Curriculum  
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## INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your desire to serve as a storyteller at sports camp! This guide is intended to equip you for this important role and make your planning effective, easy, and flexible! It includes:

- o A description of your role.
- o Step-by-step planning guidelines with tips on how to use this manual.
- o Five creative and engaging Bible lessons geared especially for children.
- o High-energy songs to get your campers moving.
- o Helpful resources, tips, and much more.

Please review this guide carefully and prayerfully before you begin your role. As you prepare, get excited about the amazing opportunity you will have to share the gospel with campers and their families!

## ABOUT SPORTS CAMP

At this exciting, evangelistic camp, boys and girls from your community will sing high-energy songs, learn sports skills, play games, and hear powerful Bible truths proclaimed in a creative and child-centered way. The ultimate goal is for families in your area to hear and respond to the Gospel, becoming active participants in your church.

## A TYPICAL DAY:

- o Large Group #1: Opening (15 minutes)
- o Skills Session #1 (35 minutes)
- o Team Time #1 (10 minutes)
- o Skills Session #2 (35 minutes)
- o Large Group #2: Half Time (25 minutes)
- o Game Time (35 minutes)
- o Large Group #3: Bible Time (25 minutes)
- o Team Time #2 (10 minutes)
- o Large Group #4: Closing (5 minutes)

## ABOUT LARGE GROUP SESSIONS

Large group sessions are some of the most important times to communicate God's truth! During your large group sessions, all campers, coaches, and volunteers join together for five activities: songs, sports story, object lesson, Bible lesson, and verse memorization.

This curriculum has been written so that you and other volunteers can experience how to run the large group sessions. The different elements and their functions are listed below.

## LARGE GROUP SCHEDULE

Your Camp Director will provide you with a specific schedule, but the total time in large group activities each day is approximately 70 minutes, including the welcome. Connect with your Camp Director about when each large group session is scheduled for your camp. Below are the different large group sessions and the components of each.

### Large Group #1 — Opening (15 minutes)

Opening is your first activity of the day when children gather for camp. It includes songs, an introduction to the daily theme, and some other fun activities. Opening is also a good time to tell the sports story or work on the memory verse as a group.

### Large Group #2 — Half Time (25 minutes)

The children gather and, depending on your schedule, snack is served. An object lesson is presented while campers are eating, and a couple of songs are sung. If desired, you can also tell the sports story during Half Time, as well as incorporate some trivia and a reminder of the theme. This is a great time to work on the memory verse.

### Large Group #3 — Bible Time (25 minutes)

This is the main biblical teaching time of each day. This is done right after Half Time or toward the end of the day. A slower song can be played to help the children settle in for the Bible story.

### Large Group #4 — Closing (5 minutes)

This session is at the end of each day. Everybody comes together, reviews the theme for the day, and has a chance to sing to one last song as they get ready to go. This is also a great time to work on the memory verse as a whole group.

### Songs

High-energy worship songs speak of Jesus Christ and His love for us. Coaches and campers enjoy singing along while learning fun motions. The campers quickly develop favorite songs and are excited to come together to sing.

## Sports Story and Object Lesson

Each day you will tell a true sports story that illustrates the daily theme. Next, you will present an interactive lesson that reinforces the day's theme using objects and people you have on hand.

## Bible Lesson

Bible lessons use creative, age-appropriate content to teach campers who God is and how they can know Him personally through Jesus Christ. Each day is designed to present a portion of the Gospel narrative. On the fourth day of camp, a review of the narrative occurs and an invitation is given for campers to place their trust in Jesus Christ for their salvation.

## Memory Verse

Campers memorize and recite the memory verse over the course of the week. Memorization is a key feature of sports camp. God's Word is powerful and active. When children memorize scripture, it is stored in their hearts and minds and practiced for a lifetime.

## ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

You have been chosen as the large group leader because of your ability to share biblical truth with children, your creativity, enthusiasm, organization, and team leadership skills.

As the large group leader, you are primarily responsible for:

- o Overseeing the planning and leading of program elements of the Large Group Sessions.
- o Recruiting, directing, and meeting with the large group volunteer team.
- o Communicating with the Camp Director, coaches, and others about Large Group Sessions.

## LARGE GROUP VOLUNTEER TEAM

The volunteers you need for large group sessions will vary based on your planned program. Minimally, you will need an emcee (to kick off the program and keep it flowing smoothly), a worship leader (leads children in songs and memory work) and a Bible teacher. Additional volunteers may include musicians, sound and video technicians, or a stage crew. Certain Bible lessons include coaches and other volunteers, but these roles require minimal or no preparation.

## PLANNING CHECKLIST

### Three to six months before camp begins:

- Read the Large Group Curriculum and begin planning your large group sessions.
- Listen to sports camp music.
- Determine location for hosting large group activities with the Camp Director.
- Decide which program elements you will lead and which ones you will delegate to others.
- Recruit a volunteer team with the Camp Director.

### One to two months before camp begins:

- Meet with your volunteer team to prepare and practice program elements.
- Gather supplies for large group activities (decorations, sound system, lesson materials, etc.).
- Check with the Camp Director for support regarding supplies and planning.

### One to two weeks before camp begins:

- Go over final details with the Camp Director.
- Inform the Camp Director of any last-minute supply needs.
- Attend all camp volunteer training clinics.
- Communicate to the Camp Director, coaches, and others about large group activities and the ways you will need their involvement during large group sessions.
- Set up/decorate the large group area in advance as much as possible.
- Confirm that all volunteers and coaches will be present for their assigned large group activities.
- Inform the Camp Director of any large group needs and communicate questions or problems.
- Rehearse large group activities with the team.

### During camp:

- Lead/perform large group elements with energy and enthusiasm.
- During Team Time, be available to answer any questions coaches or campers may have about the Bible lesson and related discussion questions.
- Help camp volunteers after large group responsibilities are complete (e.g., assist with registration tables, field set up, etc.).
- Clean up the large group area and prepare the space for the next day.

- Attend volunteer meetings.
- Evaluate large group activities and identify areas to improve after camp is over.

### After camp is over:

- Fulfill your role in camp closing events and follow-up as directed by the Camp Director.
- Collect and add any leftover, usable supplies to your church supply cabinet or resource room.
- Return borrowed equipment or decorations to owners.
- Put unclaimed camper items in the “Lost and Found.”

## LARGE GROUP SET-UP

### Large Group Facility

The space for large group activities should be large enough for all campers and coaches to sit, stand, and comfortably do song motions without bumping into the person next to them. It can be inside a church sanctuary, gym, fellowship hall, or other large room.

Large group activities can also be outside on the church lawn or church parking lot. If you are outside, consider putting up a tent to protect campers from the rain and heat or plan an alternative location inside for rainy days. Keep in mind the technology and visual aids you plan to use during large group activities. Decide if an outdoor setting can accommodate your plans.

### Setting Up

Set up rows of chairs for campers and coaches or have them sit on the floor, on carpet squares, or on the grass (if outside). Clear a large space for the stage in a spot that is visible to everyone in the audience. Consider your technical needs. If you have a large group or are hosting large group sessions outside, you will need to amplify the sound, especially for the Bible lessons. Locate a good sound system and find an adequate supply of microphones for the staff who will be onstage. For safety, secure all cords to the floor with strong tape. You will also need a music player and speakers to increase the volume on the camp music. Optionally, you may want to use a large screen to display song lyrics and lesson-related visuals or to show video footage from the camp week.

### Decorating

Even though decorations are not necessary, they can enhance the theme and overall camp experience.

Make sure you incorporate all the different sports you are hosting to make things fun.

## TIPS AND RESOURCES

- o Children respond to the excitement you generate. Make the atmosphere fun, upbeat, and inviting from the very first second they enter the area!
- o A coach’s faith is a powerful example to campers. Encourage coaches to participate enthusiastically when singing, to interact with campers during lesson activities, and to help campers find Bible passages during the lesson.
- o Maintain crowd control and discipline by ensuring coaches sit with their teams, helping their campers to stay focused. To keep younger children focused, it is best to organize the large group area so teams of younger ages enter first and sit closest to the stage. If a coach is having difficulty interacting with a camper, contact the Camp Director or Head Coach.
- o Children think and act differently at different ages. Be sure to teach with children’s developmental characteristics in mind. Split the campers into groups by age for the Bible lesson in order to target the message for the child’s age level.
- o Children love to see themselves on the big screen! Have a volunteer capture video footage from each camp day and show this on a large screen as campers enter the large group area.
- o Relate to your campers’ world! Watch them during the camp week. What do they talk about? What words do they use? Which experiences from the camp day seem to impact them? Incorporate their language and experiences into your lessons as much as possible.
- o Use active learning. Children learn best when they are involved. Avoid using only “telling” techniques like a lecture. Use a variety of methods that involve children talking, seeing, and moving. We have included some interactive ideas in our stories for your convenience.
- o Keep things moving! Have your supplies in place. Be ready to move on to the next lesson before children become bored with the current one. A child’s minimum attention span is about one minute for each year of age, so a six-year-old would be able to pay attention for at least six minutes. Shorten large group activities if you have a majority of younger students.

# Press On

## WEEKLY OVERVIEW

|                           |                    |                          |                            |                      |
|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Aim for the Goal <b>1</b> | Boldly Go <b>2</b> | Stay the Course <b>3</b> | Always Be Hopeful <b>4</b> | Finish Well <b>5</b> |
|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|

| SPORTS STORY   |   |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| Senbere Teferi   | Morgan William  | Gertrude Ederle  | Liverpool vs Barcelona  | Patriots vs Giants   |
| OBJECT LESSON  |   |  |   |  |
| Board Walk   | Bold Balloons   | Jump Rope Obstacles  | Ball & Coin   | Musical Chairs   |
| BIBLE STORY  |   |  |   |  |
| <b>Paul On The Road To Damascus</b><br>Acts 9:1-9  | <b>Paul's Calling</b><br>Acts 9:10-31   | <b>Paul &amp; Silas In Jail</b><br>Acts 13-16  | <b>Paul Sails To Rome</b><br>Acts 27  | <b>Paul In Malta &amp; Rome</b><br>Acts 28   |
| KEY POINT  |   |  |   |  |
| Our ultimate goal is to follow Jesus   | We should obey God's call with boldness   | God helps us persevere despite difficulties  | Trusting what God says always leads to hope   | We should live for, share about, and serve Jesus our whole lives   |
| GOSPEL FOCUS   |   |  |   |  |
| God created us to be in a relationship with Him.  | We are separated from God because of sin.  | Jesus defeated sin to fix our broken relationship.  | Faith alone in Jesus restores our relationship.  | We can live a new life because of Jesus.  |

### Memory Verse - Philippians 3:13-14

"But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead. I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

To view the motions for the Memory Verse and other theme material, please visit the following web page: [www.baseministry.org/press-on](http://www.baseministry.org/press-on)



# CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Thank you for choosing this curriculum! At Base Ministry, we hope and pray it will be a blessing to you, your church, and your community. The opening session, sports stories, and object lessons all have a similar purpose: demonstrating the daily themes. These themes are drawn from each day's Bible lesson, which is the crux of the curriculum.

- o The opening session gives the emcee an interactive script for explaining the daily themes, providing a foundation to work from each day.
- o The sports stories provide an example of how the theme looks in everyday life. Also included are various facts and video links about the story to give the teacher context.
- o The object lessons are geared toward both visual and kinesthetic learners, providing yet another opportunity to illustrate the daily theme.
- o The Bible lessons focus on the lives of Biblical figures who learn the importance of trusting God's sovereign plan for their lives. In addition, we spend time every day talking about how the lessons are connected to the gospel of Jesus.

Our Bible lesson on Day 1 sets up the big picture of the Bible and how it reveals God's plan of redemption through His Son, Jesus. Through the life of a man named Paul—previously known as Saul—we see that God desires a relationship with each of us, even when we are aiming for our own goals. As a devout Jew, Paul's life was dedicated to following God's laws. While this was a good goal to aim for, Paul was blinded to the truth that Jesus was the Messiah, which led him to persecute early Christians. Everything changed for Paul when Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus, calling him to turn from his previous goal and aim instead for the goal of following Him. It was an amazing beginning of a lifelong mission for Paul as he learned our daily theme: **to press on, we must aim for the goal of following Jesus in everything we do!**

On Day 2, we focus on Paul's calling to be an apostle of Christ by emphasizing the bold obedience we must have when the Lord calls us to follow Him. Before his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus, Paul didn't believe Jesus was the answer to mankind's problem of sin. Sin is anything we think, say, or do that goes against God, and it deserves death. Scripture tells us we can be forgiven, reconciled, and saved only through faith in Jesus! Through Paul's interaction with a disciple named Ananias, he began to realize these

things. His new purpose in life was to boldly follow Jesus. After his change of heart, Paul took up the call to teach others about the hope of this salvation, showing us that **we must boldly go, denying our sins and obeying God's call to press on.**

For Day 3's lesson, we look at the theme of perseverance despite difficult circumstances. As Paul began his missionary journeys with another disciple named Silas, he pressed on through many challenges, including being thrown in jail during a visit to Philippi. However, their spirit of joy and trust in God was a testimony to their fellow prisoners, and after an earthquake shook the prison one night, Paul and Silas led the jailer and his family to believe in Jesus. This story teaches us that **to press on, we must stay the course, no matter what trials we face.** In addition to Paul's account, we see this truth exemplified best in the life of Jesus. To save the world from sin, Jesus pressed on to fulfill His purpose of dying on the cross and rising again to make a way for us to have a relationship with God.

Hope is the focus of our lesson on Day 4. Despite being arrested in Jerusalem, Paul's ministry continued with a promise from the Lord that he would testify before Caesar in Rome. Paul's faith in that promise was challenged during the voyage to Rome when he and those he traveled with encountered a terrible storm. Their ship and cargo were destroyed; however, Paul pressed on and was able to share the hope of God's promise with the soldiers and crew, resulting in their lives being spared. **To press on, we must always have hope in God's promises, ultimately trusting in the purpose and plan of God through Jesus Christ.** This lesson also dives deeper into the gospel story, emphasizing the everlasting hope Jesus offers to all who believe in Him!

We conclude the week on Day 5 by talking about what it looks like to finish well. After Paul's shipwreck, he spent several months on the island of Malta ministering to the people through the power of the Holy Spirit. He survived a snake bite and healed many people, while knowing that he was to appear before Caesar. When Paul finally made it to Rome, he was put under house arrest for two years, yet he boldly shared the gospel with the Jewish people. We have a similar mission of telling others about Jesus when we decide to follow Him! This whole lesson focuses on the theme that we must **press on by finishing the race well, by living out God's word, sharing the gospel of Jesus, and serving others throughout our whole lives.**

Sample

# DAY ONE

## 1

### Theme

To press on, we must aim for the goal.

### Bible Story

Road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-9)

### Key Point

Our ultimate goal is to follow Jesus.

### Gospel Focus

God created us to be in a relationship with Him.

## OPENING

Welcome to *[Insert Church's Name]*! Sports camp this week is going to be full of fun, and I want to kick things off by praying to thank God for camp and for each one of you who is here!

*Pray.*

To create the best space to learn and have fun, let's go over a few things.

*Go over expectations, sports areas, and camp details.*

Now, this week, we have one main theme for camp that will teach us some really important lessons. Our theme is **Press On!** Can you say that with me? *Press On!* Nice work. Who can give me an idea of what they think it means to press on?

*Let a few campers answer.*

To put it simply, pressing on means to keep going through difficult situations without giving up. Another way to say that is **perseverance**—that's a pretty big word. Let me give you an example using sports!

Let's say my basketball team is playing against a strong opponent, and the game isn't going the way we want. The other team is winning, and it would be easy to give up, but my team decides to keep trying our best, no matter what the outcome might be. That's perseverance. When we continue to persevere—or press on—even when it's hard, that is how we get better, learn, and achieve our goals!

While our that is our theme for the whole week, we will be learning five important things about pressing on through some daily themes. Today's is this: "To press on, we must aim for the goal." Can you say that with me? *To press on, we must aim for the goal.*

If we don't have the right goal to aim for, it is easy to give up! We also have to know which goals are the right ones to aim for. To help us remember this daily theme, we have a neat sports story about an athlete to share with you.

*Tell the sports story on Page 10.*

Great story! All week, we'll be hearing more stories like this one and reading God's Word, the Bible, to learn about pressing on. Through the life of a man named Paul, we'll see what it looks like to persevere by following God's Son, Jesus.

You know, we have a verse from the Bible that can help us do just that. Here's what it says:

*"But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:13-14)*

These verses actually come from a letter Paul wrote, and we'll be working together to memorize them. There's a lot to memorize, so can we press on and try our best? Awesome!

Even our worship time this week has songs about pressing on! Worship is one of my favorite parts of camp because we get to praise God for creating us (and have fun jumping around too)! Let's stand and sing together!

*Introduce the song team, sing, and then dismiss by sport. If applicable, consider dismissing Kickstart last so they can leave at their own pace.*

# SPORTS STORY

## Senbere Teferi

Whether we are shooting a soccer ball or running a race, it is really important to know where we should aim. After all, we don't want to run the wrong way or score for the other team.

Senbere Teferi (*pronounced sen-BEAR-ay tuh-FAIR-ee*) was one of the best female distance runners in the world, and she knew how to aim for the goal of crossing the finish line first. Having represented Ethiopia in numerous world events, Senbere even owns a world record!

In 2023, Senbere was returning to Atlanta to defend her victory in a 10K road race. Starting the race off strong, she took the lead from the very start, but two other ladies were not far behind.

In this type of race, the lead runners usually follow a police motorcycle throughout the course. This motorcycle guides the runner so they don't have to look for signs every time they need to turn to stay on the course. After all, the runners race on the streets of an unfamiliar city for several miles, so it could be easy to get lost if they didn't follow the guide vehicle. However, once the finish line comes into view, the police pull off to the side to let the runners finish on their own.

Like all other races, Senbere followed the police motorcycle as it guided her and the two other lead runners through the various turns of the course. They raced through the city, winding through streets, running over bridges, and turning corners. Senbere had only a small lead as she and the others neared the end of the race, and it was close enough that another runner might have been able to catch her at the very end.

Senbere was so focused on keeping her lead while following the motorcycle that she did not look up at the finish line straight ahead. When the motorcycle turned onto a side road only 150 meters (just under 500 feet) from the finish

### Fast Facts

*(These facts are intended to help the storyteller understand the context, but do not need to be included when telling the story.)*

- o A 10K race is 6.21 miles. Senbere Teferi won a 10K race in Atlanta in 2022.
- o Senbere is from Ethiopia. She normally races distances between a 5K and a half-marathon.
- o In this race, Senbere ran at a pace of 4:57 per mile.

For videos of the event, scan the QR code on the right to visit [www.baseministry.org/press-on](http://www.baseministry.org/press-on)



line, Senbere followed it! She veered off course for only a few seconds, but by the time she realized her mistake, it was too late. Both of the runners who were close behind passed her, and Senbere finished in third place.

Senbere was so close to winning this race for the second year in a row! All she needed to do was aim for the right goal, and she would have won. But she was so focused on "aiming" for the police motorcycle that she failed to switch her aim to the finish line when that time came, and it cost her first place.

### Interactive Idea

Create a small running course around the space and have a volunteer coach run it as the story is being told. You can also have another coach be the "guide motorcycle" that the runner has to follow.



In our lives, it is important that we aim for the right goal. The best thing we can aim for is to know God through believing in His Son, Jesus Christ. We will talk about that this week, as well as hear a similar story about a man named Paul. He thought he was following God and aiming for the right goal, but like Senbere, he missed something really important along the way. Stay tuned for that story a bit later on!

# OBJECT LESSON

## Board Walk

Every day, we will have a small object lesson that demonstrates our daily theme. Let's say the theme together! *To press on, we must aim for the goal.* Great work.

When we are aiming for the right goals in life, there are things that can distract us or cause us to get off course. I've asked my friends \_\_\_\_\_ and Coach \_\_\_\_\_ to help me show this in a quick activity. Give them a round of applause as they come up!

I have a beam here that \_\_\_\_\_ is going to walk across while focusing on his/her coach. The goal is to make it across without falling off. If you do fall, we have to start from the beginning. Do you think you can do that?

Let's try it! Ready, set, go!

*Address the camper:* Nice! It was pretty easy to accomplish that goal, wasn't it? You did a great job focusing on Coach \_\_\_\_\_. But what if there were some distractions that kept you from achieving your goal?

*Invite the distracting coaches to come up.*

Let's see if you can do it again with some distractions going on around you. Ready, set, go!

*Let the camper complete the challenge while the distracting coaches try to make the camper lose focus. The camper may or may not make it across the beam, so do the activity again if desired.*

Was that a little bit harder? Getting distracted took your eyes off the goal you were aiming for, but you did a fantastic job.

Let's give it up for our volunteers!

*Invite the volunteers to sit back down.*

## Supplies Needed

- o A 2x4 beam or a different item to balance on (this should be something long, narrow, and sturdy)
- o A few footballs or basketballs.

## Set Up

Pre-select a camper and a coach to help with the object lesson. Then, choose 4-5 other coaches who will be distractions during the second time the camper crosses the board. Prep the distracting coaches that they can pass balls over and around the camper, throw a ball to have the camper catch, be noisy in the camper's ears, and/or shout out that they have candy, money, or other desirable items; however, they cannot touch the camper.

Oftentimes, it can be challenging to continue aiming for a goal when there are distractions or when we make decisions that turn us off course. Most of the time, these distractions are things **we** want, not what God wants for us.

Let's say you get home from school and have to do your homework, but your toys or video games are sitting there just asking to be played with! Those are distractions that could get you off course from the goal you're supposed to be aiming for. This week at camp, we'll learn a lot about the goals God has for us from His Word, the Bible, and how to press on and aim for them in our lives!

Later today, we have a Bible lesson about a man named Paul who thought he was aiming for the right goals, but some things were distracting him. The ultimate goal God wanted him to aim for was following Jesus. God wants us to aim for that goal too, so let's keep that in mind as we go back to our sports and skills!

# BIBLE LESSON

## Paul on the Road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-9)

Welcome everybody! Can someone tell me one thing they have learned in their sports areas so far today?

*Let a few campers answer.*

I'm so happy you are having fun at camp, but I am even happier about this time we get to learn more about God through His Word, the Bible. What are some things you know about the Bible?

*Let a few campers answer.*

The Bible is God's Word. It's one big book that holds many smaller books with true stories describing God's ultimate purpose and plan for His creation. Before we get into today's lesson, let's talk about God's big-picture plan for us.

The Bible says that God created you, me, and all of humanity to have a relationship with Him (Psalm 139:13-14). Unfortunately, humans decided to do things their own way, which was a sin. Sin is anything we think, say, or do that goes against God and breaks the relationship God created us for.

Thankfully, God loves us even though we sin. He showed this by sending His Son, Jesus, to make a way for us to repair the broken relationship. Jesus came to earth, lived a perfect life, died a horrible death on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin, and then defeated death by coming back to life three days later (John 3:16-18). When we put our faith in Jesus and ask Him to forgive us of our sins, our relationship with God is restored, and we can begin to live a new life for Him as He created us to (Romans 6:23b).

That is the big picture of the Bible! At camp this week, we will learn some lessons from the book of Acts that happened after Jesus lived here on earth. They are all about what it means to **press on** and follow Jesus as we live the new life He has given us! Did you catch that? I just said our theme for camp this week, so let's say it all together: *Press On!*

When we follow Jesus, it can be hard to stay focused and persevere in what He wants us to do. Remember, the word "persevere" means to press on and keep going no matter what. We

### Fast Facts

*(These facts are intended to help the teacher understand the context, but do not need to be included when teaching the lesson.)*

- o Damascus is 135 miles northeast of Jerusalem, an almost two-week journey on foot.
- o In Jewish contexts, Paul used his Hebrew name "Saul", but when he ministered to the Gentiles, he used "Paul" instead.
- o Paul was a Pharisee and grew up studying the law under a rabbi named Gamaliel. This means he would have been studying what the scripture said about the messiah, way before he met Jesus.
- o The definition of "persecution" is to be harmed or suffer because of one's beliefs.

### Key Point

Our ultimate goal is to glorify and serve God.

also have a daily theme for today; can you fill in the rest of the sentence for me?

To press on, we must aim... *for the goal!* Great job! It's important to have a goal to work toward if we want to press on.

Have you ever set a goal for yourself? Maybe a goal could be learning how to speak another language or trying a new sport at camp! It's great to aim for a goal and work toward achieving it, but we have to be careful to aim for the **right** goals.

Now that we've talked about the big picture of the Bible, let's focus on a man who found out—in a pretty crazy way—he was aiming for a goal that was not what God had planned for him. This man's name was Paul. In our scripture passages, you might hear the name Saul! That's because Saul and Paul are the same person. He just used a different version of his name later on in his life. To make things easy, we'll call him Paul. Let's jump in!

### Interactive Idea

Make simple drawings that show the "big picture" of the Bible (i.e., God, sin, Jesus, faith, new life). Use the QR code to access a template, or use resources your church already has.



Paul was born into a Jewish family. The Jewish people were those who followed God. As he grew up, Paul learned the importance of following God's laws about living rightly and making sacrifices to God, while waiting for the man who would save the people from those who were in power over them. They called this man the Messiah.

These were great things to do because living according to God's law is important; however, Paul did not believe Jesus had been sent by God as the true Messiah. Rather than **only** following the law, God's goal was for people to follow His Son, Jesus. Paul didn't do that.

In fact, Paul was one of thousands of Jews who did not believe in Jesus, and he was cruel to anyone who did. His goal was to stop the believers from talking about Jesus, even if that meant throwing them in prison. When they were mistreated because of what they believed, they were suffering what we call persecution. But persecution did not stop the believers! They knew that following Jesus was worth it, so they pressed on and kept sharing the good news about Him.

Paul hated the believers so much that he went to the religious leaders, asking to visit other cities to throw more believers in prison! One of the cities Paul was sent to was Damascus. It was a two-week journey, and an amazing thing happened to Paul along the way. This story is found in the book of Acts, chapter nine. Let's see what happened:

*Read Acts 9:3-7*

Wow! Imagine being Paul! You are minding your own business, traveling along a dusty road, when suddenly, a bright light shines down on you, and you fall to the ground because it is so powerful! Then, Jesus—the very person you have refused to believe in—speaks to you! What did Jesus say to Paul?

### Interactive Idea

When it's time to tell the kids that Saul and Paul are the same person, turn it into a fun game! Have them say the names in a silly way while repeating them quickly, like a tongue twister.



### Interactive Idea

Have a few campers and a coach come up and act as Paul and the men accompanying him, as he heads to Damascus.



### Gospel Focus

God is the eternal, infinite, good, loving, holy, and just—among many other attributes—Creator and sovereign Ruler of the universe. He created men and women in His image to enjoy Him and represent Him on earth. God's desire is for us to be in a trusting relationship with Him forever (Genesis 1:27; 1 Chronicles 29:11-12; Psalm 24:1-2).



*Let a few campers answer.*

That's right. He asked why Paul was persecuting Him and told Paul to go to Damascus and wait to be told what to do next. What might Paul have been thinking? He knew this wasn't just someone pulling a prank on him; the presence of Jesus was too powerful. Let's read what happens next.

*Read Acts 9:8-9*

When Paul stood back up, he was blind!

Cover your eyes with me and pretend that you can't see anything. How would you feel if this happened to you? You'd probably have to rely on your other senses and your friends to help you get around, right? Okay, you can open your eyes now.

While it may have been strange and a bit scary when Paul was blind, he was able to think about his reasons for persecuting believers. In this moment, and the following few days, Paul realized that Jesus was the fulfillment of all the things he had learned growing up; Jesus was the Messiah. The goal God wanted Paul to aim for was to **follow** Jesus, not persecute Him.

At one point during Jesus' ministry on earth, He said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Believing in Jesus is the only way to have a relationship with God. Remember, God created us and wants what is best for us. This is especially important to think about when we need to know which goals to aim for.

Sometimes we have our eyes on the wrong goals—things like focusing all our energy on being the most popular kid at school, having the newest clothes, or being the best athlete. While these aren't bad, we shouldn't live our lives only aiming for those goals. Ultimately, we should aim to follow Jesus and what He says is best in the Bible.

Tomorrow, we will find out more about what God had planned for Paul and some of the believers who lived in Damascus. Do you remember what Paul had been planning to do there?

*Let a few campers answer.*

That's right, he was going to persecute the believers and probably throw them in prison! How do you think

they would react to knowing Paul was in their city? You'll have to wait until tomorrow to find out! Before we go to Team Time, let's pray and thank God for giving us the right goal to aim for as we press on and follow Him.

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