

THEME: Keeping Jesus Central

LOOKING BACK

- What was the most important thing you did or heard from the last session?

CONNECT

Jesus Is the Center

Resources

Bibles, whiteboard, markers, a few papers with “race activity” directions (*directing them to either stay on track OR become distracted*)

Ice Breaker Activity

Things to Prepare: Whiteboard and markers

Activity: Have kids sit around a whiteboard while you draw a picture of a rectangular box. Tell them that the box is a room. No one knows what is inside. Invite children to guess what is inside. Then, start drawing a small window on one of the sides of the room. The window will reveal something about the One who is in the room. Through the window, part of a crown is visible, or perhaps part of a robe or a sandal. (*This room is a metaphor for the Bible, so it is King Jesus in the center of the room, sitting on a throne.*) Draw more windows of different sizes and shapes. Show how each one reveals a bit more about who is in the room.

Alternatively, prepare this in advance: Take a cardboard box and cut “windows” into each side. Only cut three sides of the window so you have a flap that can open and close. Then, place a royal object inside the box (for example, a crown). During the session, invite the children to open a window and see if they can guess what is behind it. The more windows they open, the easier it will be to see the picture behind them.

Discuss

- Who do you think is in the middle of this room? Jesus
- How do you know? He is wearing a crown, has long flowing robes, and is on a throne.
- How many windows do you think this room has, and why? 66 windows, since there are 66 books of the Bible. Each window represents a book of the Bible.
- This room is a metaphor for the Bible. What does this metaphor tell us? The more books of the Bible we read, the more we will learn about Jesus, the better we will know Him. Jesus is at the center of the Bible. Jesus is at the center of HIS Story. He is also at the center of History!

Jesus is at the center of the Bible, and this is a reminder that we should keep Him central in our lives. Today, we will learn about how to do this.

TRUTH TO KNOW

Faith Focus: We Need to Keep Our Eyes on Jesus

Introduction

We want to help you know the Truth and will do our best to tell you what is true, but you don't just need to take our word. You need to read it in the Bible for yourself. So we will open the Bible and read the Truth each time we meet. This week's "Truth to Know" is found in **Hebrews 12**.

Did you know the Bible tells us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus?

Background to This Bible Passage

Jesus had already ascended to Heaven, and now His disciples were helping share the message about Him with lots of people. In the book of Hebrews, the writer explains how important it is to put off the old ways of living, try not to be distracted, and persevere through challenges.

The Unfolding Story - Your Interactive Teaching

Read **Hebrews 12:1-3**.

The book of Hebrews reveals that followers of Jesus are described as running a race. It is a race that has already been marked out for us. God has prepared it for us ahead of time. As we run this race, we are called to run with perseverance and to always have our eyes fixed on Jesus.

- Why is it important to keep our eyes on Jesus? *Jesus needs to be at the center of our lives, so we need to be able to see Him. Life has many challenges and distractions, so getting off track is very easy as we are running the race. Jesus is the One we follow, and He will lead us to the finish line.*

Activity Suggestion - The Race Activity

Aim: To think about the ideas of running a race and having our eyes focused on Jesus.

Things to Prepare: a few papers with "race activity" directions (*either to stay on track OR to become distracted*)

Activity: Ask for a few volunteers to simulate running in a race. Each person will choose a slip of paper that tells them how they will run. One or two of them will be given a paper that says they'll get distracted while running. They will need to think about what that might look like. Start the race: GO! See if you can spot the one(s) who got distracted while running.

Discuss

- Who got distracted? How could you tell? *The one(s) who got off track and went in a different direction. They ended up at a different endpoint.*
- Those who got distracted and off track, how did that feel? *Have them share their thoughts and feelings about not being sure what they were following and where they would end up.*
- How do you feel when you get near the end of a race? *Tired, you need to push yourself to keep going.*
- When does the race in **Hebrews 12** end? *When our life on earth ends or when Jesus comes back. The climax of our time will be the return of Jesus.*
- Keeping Jesus at the center of our lives helps us to stay on track as we run our race.

- Read **Colossians 3:1-16** (NIV). What does it say about keeping Jesus at the center of our lives?
 - **Colossians 3:2**: “Set your minds on things above...” This means we should think often about Jesus and His teachings.
 - **Colossians 3:16**: “Let the Word of Christ dwell among you richly...” We should read His Word and try to know it well.
- What are some practical ways to keep Jesus as the “main thing?”
 - Think about Jesus regularly and often each day. How can we do this? Talk to Him when we wake up, pray the Lord’s Prayer before getting off our beds, pray before meals and sleep, etc.
 - Read the Bible each day, looking through lots of windows (reading different books of the Bible) over time. What is the best way? A reading plan or a Bible Reading App.
 - Learn more about the last days of the race – what will happen on earth before Jesus returns?
 - Have Christian friends with whom we can talk about Jesus and how to run our race with our eyes on Him.
 - Memorize scripture, perhaps with friends and family.

READY TO GO

Thinking about how this affects our lives and how to respond to the signs we see.

Think about what you can do to keep Jesus as the main thing in your life.

TIME FOR ACTION



1. **“STOP & THINK” Action Point**

Take two minutes to think about your own life. Is Jesus central in your thoughts and your life? Is there something keeping you distracted or getting you off track sometimes?



2. **“PAUSE TO PRAY” Action Point**

Pray and ask God to guide you in your own race. Ask Him for ways to help you fix your eyes more on Jesus.



3. **“GO & DO” Action Point**

Decide on at least TWO new habits that you would like to start doing to keep Jesus as the main thing in your life. Share these with one other person, and then begin to do them!

SPRINGBOARD

Discuss what topic you would like to do together next time. After this session, you may wish to follow up next time with one of the following sessions:

- News of Jesus to the World
- Focus on the Cross
- Whose Life Is It Anyway?

FOR DEEPER STUDY

For those who want to study further the themes raised in this session.

For Study

1. **Colossians 3:4** (NIV): “When Christ, **who is your life**, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.” How does this verse connect with today’s lesson? What are some of the benefits of having Christ in our life?
2. **Matthew 14:22-33**: Where was Peter going when he was walking on the water? Where do you think he would have been looking? What caused him to fall in? What can we learn from this experience, considering today’s lesson?

For Memorizing

1. **Colossians 3:2** (NIV): “Set your mind on things above, not on earthly things.”
2. **Hebrews 12:2** (NIV): “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.”

For Observation

1. Look up **Hebrews 10:25**. The Bible says we should not stop meeting with our Christian friends. Look at your own church and/or youth group. How do you think being in community can help us keep our eyes on Jesus?
2. Look at how TIME is measured. It is BC (Before Christ) and AD (Anno Domini, which means “the year of our Lord”). Some people who don’t follow Jesus or believe He is the Messiah in recent years have not wanted to use these notations for time in history. They have opted to use BCE (Before the Common Era) and CE (Common Era) instead of BC and AD. Isn’t it interesting how, no matter what we call these time periods, they will always be centered upon Jesus and His first appearing on earth? This shows how central Jesus is, not only throughout the biblical narrative but in how we even define History. Notice how the word History is HIS Story?!

For Action

1. [Watch this short video](https://ca.ltw.org/watch/features/jesus-in-every-book-of-the-bible) to hear one pastor’s understanding of Jesus being present in some way in every book of the Bible. Which one did you find the most interesting, and why? (<https://ca.ltw.org/watch/features/jesus-in-every-book-of-the-bible>)

Before the Next IN:Tribe

1. Take the 28-Day Challenge! Research has shown that forming a new habit can take up to 28 days. Keep track (in a daily journal or on a chart) of TWO new habits you have decided to follow today to make Jesus the main thing in your life. Be sure to share how this went with someone at the next IN:Tribe.
2. DRAW the Encampment of Israel in the Wilderness!

After Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, God gave them a specific pattern for how to set up their camp. They were to keep this pattern for the next 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. Read **Numbers 2** and draw an aerial view map of the arrangements of the twelve tribes of Israel around the Tent of Meeting. Where was God in this arrangement? How does this connect to today’s lesson? Bring your map to the next IN:Tribe meeting to compare with others who did this.