



# 5. Run the race – with joy!

Age range: Primary

**Theme:** We gather as a community for collective worship that is **inspiring, invitational and inclusive**, reflecting the fact that we are a part of a diverse school family and the wider church community. This term, we are warming up for the Summer Olympics by going back in time and revisiting some Olympic and Paralympic Games from the past. We will share inspirational stories which reflect the six Olympic values of Determination, Excellence, Inspiration, Courage, Friendship and Equality and use them to help us to think about what we can learn from them.



### How does this link to your school’s Christian vision & values?

Many of the Olympic values are shared with those that are familiar to us in school, so throughout this term, we encourage you to link each week’s collective worship to your school vision – and the way that you live this out through your values. Today we are especially thinking about the value ‘Inspiration’ and some words spoken by British runner Eric Liddell (who was the inspiration for the classic film ‘Chariots of Fire’): ‘When I run, I feel God’s pleasure’. We will be thinking about the many different things that bring us joy – and some might say, bring us closer to God.

### Resources:

- The PowerPoint slides are numbered with a point in the script so you can find your way, and the parts in **bold** show you where to click on to activate the next slide or animation. There are slides to go with today’s script, but you could quite easily use this collective worship without the PowerPoint if you preferred.
- **There is also an Olympic ‘passport’ that you can create using the reflection cards for each week, and to gather some thoughts from your children as you go along. This is in a separate file and could be easily constructed from an A4 or A5 folder with plastic pockets, but will also be included in each week’s resources. You could ‘stamp’ your reflection card each week, just like you would a passport. There is space for this at the top of each card. Use as many as you have time for.**
- There is also an introductory game ‘Hands up!’ to get children to feedback their thinking about the different things that bring them joy – things that they love doing or that help them to feel closer to God
- There are some great stories and photos on the website of the charity set up in his name and to honour his memory after his death: [About Eric Liddell - The Eric Liddell Community](#) We have included some photos from this charity webpage in our story for today, generously shared with us for these resources, with our grateful thanks. The charity have also produced some materials for schools, including a short video about Eric: [https://ericliddell.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/EL100-Educational-Film\\_Subtitled.mp4](https://ericliddell.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/EL100-Educational-Film_Subtitled.mp4) The main resource (designed for pupils aged 12-14, but much could be easily adapted) can be accessed here: [Education Resource - The Eric Liddell Community](#)
- Eric was also a missionary in China, where he was also interned as a prisoner of war (and died in 1945), and is still remembered with honour: [Chariots of Fire's Eric Liddell is Chinese 'hero' - BBC News](#) There’s also an excellent BBC schools video about him: [School Radio - School Radio, Going for goals: Eric Liddell \(bbc.co.uk\)](#)
- **Reflective prayer activity:** Either, watch some running (included as slides in the PPT) or do something that brings you great joy this week, or helps you to feel closer to God – write your idea on a paper heart and add to your class wall of hearts.

### Gathering:

**Slide 1: Use the new gathering words, which will be the same each week.**



- **Leader: We are here together**
- **ALL: May we ‘GO FOR GOLD!’ in our words and actions today!**

### Engaging:

- **Slide 2: What do you really love to do? What brings you joy?**
- Discuss with a partner....
- **Slide 3: ...let’s find out what we think, in a very similar way to last week!**  
 Put your hand up if it was.....something musical  
 Put your finger on your nose if it was.....something to do with books  
 Put your elbow in the air if it was.....something sporty  
 Put your hand on your head if it was.....something arty  
 Wave at me if it was.....something to do with nature or being outdoors  
 Fold your arms if it was.....something else  
 You might want to find out a few ideas as you go along, so do spotlight individual pupils if you want to!
- **Slide 4: Over the past few weeks, we’ve been thinking about the Olympics, and the important values that are a part of sports of all sorts.**



- We've also heard about some amazing athletes from across the world and from different times. Today, we will be thinking about the Olympic value of **inspiration** and reflecting on what **inspires** us in our own lives.
- **Slide 5:** So, let's jump into our Olympic time machine again now, and go back through time and space to..... the **1924 Olympic Games**,
- **Slide 6:**...to Paris, France, which is where the first modern Olympics took place and in 1924, was home to the 8<sup>th</sup> Olympic Games since 1896. It's also where this year's Olympics is happening.
- **Slide 7:** This man, Eric Liddell was a runner for Great Britain in 1924, and became one of the most famous runners ever: he was affectionately known as the 'Flying Scotsman' (because he came from Scotland!) It's some words that he spoke that will inspire us today, so let's hear his story. Eric Liddell was born in China, but when he reached school age, was sent by his missionary parents to school in London. It was while he was still at school that he realised that he was good at sport. His favourite sport was rugby, and he was fast – very fast! Like some of you, he loved nothing better than to feel the wind in his face as he ran.
- **Slide 8:** In 1921, when he joined his brother at Edinburgh University, he was chosen to play for the Scottish national rugby team – and on another six occasions after that. He also loved the running track, and before long, it became obvious that there wasn't going to be enough time for him to run and to play rugby, and so he chose running – a decision that would make him one of the most famous athletes ever. In the early 1920s, he ran in many races – and won! Many people thought he was good enough to be in the British Olympic team.
- **Slide 9:** Eric was also a Christian and believed that God had made him good at running. He once said: "I believe that God made me for a purpose, but He also made me fast. **When I run, I feel God's pleasure.**" When he ran, he ran because he knew it was what God had made him to do, and that God enjoyed watching him as much as he enjoyed the running. When he ran fast, he looked very strange – his head would fall backwards and his arms would flail widely as he felt the wind in his face and the exhilarating sensation of speed.
- **Slide 10:** As the 1924 Olympics came closer, Eric was indeed chosen to run for Britain, but he had a very difficult decision to make. One of the races that he was supposed to be running in was on a Sunday. Eric loved running, but he loved God more, and knew that if he ran in the race, then he wouldn't be able to go to church and worship God there. So he made the decision that he wouldn't run on a Sunday, a decision that many other people were **very** surprised about. So instead of running in his best race, the 100 metres, he now chose instead to run in both the 200 metre and 400 metre races – which he'd never competed in before.
- The time for the Olympics came, and he set sail with the rest of the athletes for Paris. People were still talking about the decision that he had made, but he trained hard in the days running up to the race. As he walked up to the starting blocks, someone slipped a piece of paper into his hand. On it was written some words from the Bible, '**Those who honour me, I will honour.**' – God's words. At this moment, Eric knew that he had made the right decision, and that God would be with him as he ran this race.
- **Slide 11:** And so he ran as he had never run before. The crowds watched in amazement as his head fell back and his arms flailed wildly – the sign that he was running as fast as he could, and enjoying the sensation of the wind on his face – running in God's pleasure. He not only won the race and a gold medal, but beat the world record, running the 400 metres in 47.6 seconds. God had indeed honoured him for the decision he made – and he is still one of the most famous – and inspirational – athletes in British history.

#### **Slide 12: Responding and words for worship**

This story was made into a very famous film called 'Chariots of Fire' (*which you were listening to as you came in*) – but it's Eric Liddell's words that are going to inspire us today: 'When I run, I feel God's pleasure.'



**Going for gold!**

**5. Run the race - with joy!**

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**Guildford**  
TRANSFORMING CHURCH  
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Let's just pause for a few moments and wonder together about these words..... [*pause and talk about these questions if you would like to*]

....I wonder what Eric meant by 'feeling God's pleasure'?....

....I wonder if running helped Eric to feel closer to God?.....

....I wonder what might make you feel joy like this?....or what might make you feel closer to God?.....

### Slide 13: Responding and words for worship

We started our assembly by thinking about some of things that make us feel joy. In the quietness now, bring that thing into your mind and into your heart.

Use the silence to be grateful for the joy that you feel when you are doing your favourite thing – or feeling close to God....

And maybe, if you'd like to, say a prayer of thanks in your heart [*leave space here*]

### Slide 14: Amen

#### Sending: Slide 15

**Leader:** As we leave this place & time and go into the day ahead...

**All:** Let's go for gold\* in all that we do!



\*Again, you might need to unpick what we mean by 'going for gold' in the context of today's words.

#### To listen to / sing:

[All together as a family](#) (AAOS)

Play the theme tune from the film Chariots of Fire as children are assembling. Video version with excerpts from film on YouTube here: [Vangelis - Chariots Of Fire \(youtube.com\)](#)

### Slide 16: Reflective areas



There are links to 3 videos in the PowerPoint presentation that show people running in different settings, which you might want to use to give children reflection space in your classroom this week.

Or, cut heart shapes and leave in your reflection area for pupils to use to create a wall of hearts, reflecting the things that bring them pleasure or help them to feel close to God. You might want to remove the question on this week's reflection card 'Does it help you to feel closer to God?' if you don't feel it's appropriate for your children.

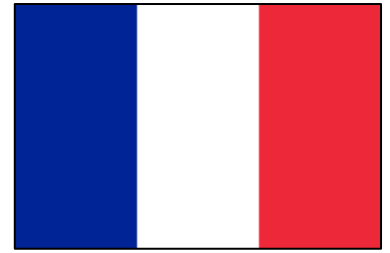


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# Inspiration

**Eric Liddell believed that God had given him the special talent of running & said 'When I run, I feel God's pleasure.' He won Olympic gold in 1924.**



**What do you really love to do?  
What *inspires* you about this thing?  
Does it help you to feel closer to God?**



**Talk together about how these different things make you feel.  
Do you all feel joy about the same things?**



**Write your thoughts onto a heart shape and display your ideas as a class.**

