SUMMER GAMES 2016

AUGUST 5-21
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The Heart of a Champion
Let us run with perseverance. Hebrews 12:1

FAMILY GUIDE
Dear Parents,

This year our Vacation Bible School was based around the upcoming summer Olympics. Each day we focused on a different sporting event and character trait needed to cultivate the heart of a Champion. Through music, crafts, games and Bible teachings we discovered how we can apply those lessons to our life with Jesus.

The summer games are almost here and we’ve put together a little family guide to help you use them as a platform for discussing life and faith with your family.

You’ll find fun facts about the Olympics and Brazil, as well as ways to be praying for the host country and all the athletes. We highlighted the five events we discussed at VBS, but really many of the questions could be asked when watching any of your favorite events. With each section you’ll find a list of questions called “Connections”. Use these to help your family make connections with what they are seeing on the screen and what they experience in everyday life.

This is just a starting point. Please don’t feel like you have to watch every event or have super long theological conversation each day. Our goal is just to help spark natural and genuine conversation about faith, family, dedication, and purpose.

If you find this is something your family really connects with, we encourage you to research Christian celebrities that have taken a bold stand for Jesus and used their talent as a platform to tell others about him. We were blessed at VBS to hear from one of these amazing athletes, Madeline Manning Mims. She will return to Rio as a Chaplin for TEAM USA. She is a beautiful example to us all, showing us that we can use any talents God has given us to bring glory to Him.

Keep encouraging your child to use their talents to honor the Lord.

Your Partners in the Journey,

The Children’s Ministry Team
of First Church Tulsa
The Official Olympic Flag
“Created by Pierre de Coubertin in 1914, the Olympic flag contains five interconnected rings on a white background. The five rings symbolize the five significant continents and are interconnected to symbolize the friendship to be gained from these international competitions. The rings, from left to right, are blue, yellow, black, green, and red. The colors were chosen because at least one of them appeared on the flag of every country in the world.”¹

A City, Not a Country
“When choosing locations for the Olympic Games, the IOC [International Olympic Committee] specifically gives the honor of holding the Games to a city rather than a country.”¹

Watching from home
The Olympics were televised for the first time in 1936.

The Summer Olympics are held every 4 years.

The Olympic Motto
Olympic motto: Citius, Altius, Fortius ("Swifter, Higher, Stronger").¹

Laurel Wreath
“In Ancient Greece a crown of Laurel Branches was given to special people, such as winners in competitions in poetry or sports, such as the Ancient Olympic Games.”²

National Anthem
After the medals are awarded for each event, the national anthem is played from the country of the gold medal winner.

Rio 2016
At this Olympics, over 10,000 athletes from 204 countries will compete over 16 days in over 34 sports.³

¹ http://history1900s.about.com/od/greateventsofthecentury/a/olympicfacts_2.htm
² https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laurel_wreath
A Symbol of Unity
The Olympic flag is designed to be a symbol of unity and peace among all the people of the world. God also calls us to live in unity, peace, and love with all his children from around the world.

“...Walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Ephesians 4:1-3

A City on a Hill
Every one pays close attention to the city that is hosting the Olympics. In the same way, God has honored us by claiming us as his children. People are watching us, and showing love and mercy to others is a great opportunity to point them to Jesus and tell them how much He loves them.

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.” Matthew 5:14

Life Motto
The Olympic motto is a call to be your very best. The world tells us we have to do this in our own strength, but Jesus says when we call on Him, He becomes our source of strength.

“...They who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” Isaiah 40:31

Victory in Jesus
“... thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 15:57
Brazil Fun Facts

Official Name: Federal Republic of Brazil
Capital: Brasilia
Population: 183,888,841
Official Language: Portuguese
Largest Religious Group: Christian

“Brazil is the largest country in South America and the fifth largest nation in the world. It has borders with every South American country except Chile and Ecuador.”

“Brazil has the greatest variety of animals of any country in the world. It is home to 600 mammal species, 1,500 fish species, 1,600 bird species, and an amazing 100,000 different types of insects.”

“The Brazilian landscape is very varied. It is most well known for its dense forests, including the Amazon, the world’s largest jungle, in the north. But there are also dry grasslands (called pampas), rugged hills, pine forests, sprawling wetlands, immense plateaus, and a long coastal plain. Brazil has many different soils and climates, so it can produce a great variety of crops. Its agricultural exports include sugarcane, latex, coffee, cocoa beans, cotton, soybeans, rice, and tropical fruits. Brazil is also South America's most industrial nation, producing chemicals, steel, aircraft, and cars.”

Host of the 2016 Olympic Games: Rio de Janerio, Brazil

The Rio Games will be the first time the Olympics are held in South America.
How you can pray for Brazil

The nation of Brazil has made great progress in many of these areas, but still needs prayer for the following:

- Pray that the government would stand against corruption and work for the benefit of all its citizens.

- Tens of millions of people in Brazil live in poverty. Pray that the education and health care sectors can be reformed and available for all who need them.

- Pray for breakthrough both spiritually and socially, to break the cycle of crime.

- Christianity is the largest official religion of Brazil, but much of it is syncretistic, meaning Christian beliefs mixed in with other spiritual beliefs. Pray that the truth of the Gospel would be seen and God would point out anything that does not align with His will.

- Pray that everyone would find freedom in Jesus Christ.

http://www.operationworld.org/braz

Write down other ways you want to pray for the country and people of Brazil.

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Opening Ceremonies

Opening Ceremony Procession Order
“During the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games, the procession of athletes is always led by the Greek team, followed by all the other teams in alphabetical order (in the language of the hosting country), except for the last team, which is always the team of the hosting country.”

The Olympic Flame
“The Olympic flame is a practice continued from the ancient Olympic Games. In Olympia (Greece), a flame was ignited by the sun and then kept burning until the closing of the Olympic Games. The flame first appeared in the modern Olympics at the 1928 Olympic Games in Amsterdam.”
“The flame itself represents a number of things, including purity and the endeavor for perfection. In 1936, the chairman of the organizing committee for the 1936 Olympic Games, Carl Diem, suggested what is now the modern Olympic Torch relay. The Olympic flame is lit at the ancient site of Olympia by women wearing ancient-style robes and using a curved mirror and the sun. The Olympic Torch is then passed from runner to runner from the ancient site of Olympia to the Olympic stadium in the hosting city. The flame is then kept alight until the Games have concluded. The Olympic Torch relay represents a continuation from the ancient Olympic Games to the modern Olympics.”

1 http://history1900s.about.com/od/greateventsofthecentury/a/olympicfacts_2.htm

A Light for Jesus
The people who carry the torch are former Olympians that have been to the Olympics and are excited to tell others about what is coming. Just like those Olympians we get to “carry the torch” of the Gospel. Once we have experienced the amazing love of Jesus, we are excited to tell other people about it so they can come to know Him too! We don’t have to carry a physical torch, instead we shine for Jesus in the way we love others.

“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” Matthew 5:16
I SPY..

While you watch the opening ceremonies see if you can spot the countries we talked about at VBS as they enter the stadium. They may not all be present at the Olympics this year.

Egypt  Romania
Malawi  Uganda
Mexico

Are you learning about any countries you haven’t heard of before?

PRAY FOR THE ATHLETES

Please pray that all the athletes:

- Will be at peace and their nerves will not get in the way of showing the world what they can do.
- Will show good sportsmanship and be kind to their fellow competitors.
- Will be judged fairly and based on how they perform.
- Remain safe and healthy.
- Will have a good time and enjoy being at the Olympics.
WEIGHTLIFTING
DATES OF COMPETITION: AUGUST 6-10; 12-16

**FUN FACTS—**

Male weightlifting was first an Olympic event in 1896.¹

Women’s weightlifting debuted at the 2000 Sydney games.¹

The country with the highest gold medal count in weightlifting is: China with 24 gold medals.²

Americans have won 16 gold medals in weightlifting.²

While you usually think of needing strong arms for weightlifting, the power and stance from your legs is just as important.³

¹ http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/olympics/7904107/Olympics-weightlifting-guide.html
³ http://breakingmuscle.com/olympic-weightlifting/20-tips-that-will-make-you-better-at-olympic-weightlifting

**LESSON FROM VBS—**

“A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.” Ecclesiastes 4:12

We are strongest when we rely on Jesus, help others, and receive help from our brothers and sisters in Christ.

**SCRIPTURE FOCUS:**

“I can do all this through him who gives me strength.” Philippians 4:13
OBSERVATIONS-
Write or draw what you see and learn from watching the Olympic weightlifters.

CONNECTIONS-
What type of things do you think the athletes do to build their muscles?
What else requires strength, besides being able to pick up heavy objects?
Who does our strength come from?
How do we become stronger spiritually?

The more we use our faith muscles, the easier it becomes for us to look to Jesus for the strength we need everyday!
FUN FACTS-
Male swimming was an event in the first modern Olympics in 1896.¹

In 1912, women were allowed to swim competitively at the Olympics.¹

The country with the highest medal count in swimming is:
   The USA with 520 medals²

Michael Phelps, a swimmer, holds the highest record of gold medals won in the Olympics, a total of 18 won in three Olympics!³

Swimming takes a lot of energy so it is super important for all swimmers to eat lots of nutritious foods that include protein and healthy fats.

¹http://www.doheny.com/blog/dohenys-fun-olympic-swimming-trivia
²https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_at_the_Olympics
³https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Phelps

LESSON FROM VBS-
Just because you are a Christian does not mean that life is always easy. There will be some difficult days. However, when we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, it is easier to remember He is walking along side us! This gives us the encouragement we need to endure!

SCRIPTURE FOCUS:
“Finally, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”
   Philippians 3:14
ENDURANCE

**Observations**
Write or draw what you see and learn from watching the Olympic swimmers.

**Connections**
Do you think the swimmers always feel like training?

What motivates them to keep going?

What is something you don’t always feel like doing, but know you should?

Why is it important for you to push on?

What is your motivation?

Remember God is always with you, cheering you on!
Ask Him for help when you feel like giving up.
Trust in His endurance to help you persevere.
**FUN FACTS**

“In Olympic gymnastics, men compete on parallel bars, high bar and pommel horse while women compete on the uneven bars and balance beam. The only overlapping events are vault and floor.”

“At the Rio Games, a total of 324 gymnasts will be competing in the three disciplines in the Olympic sport of Gymnastics — Artistic, Rhythmic, and Trampoline.”

“The University of Minnesota estimates that the average age of an Olympic gymnast on the U.S. women's team is 16.”

“Becoming an Olympic gymnast requires intense training, even at a young age. While still a child, the gymnast will have to devote between 20 and 30 hours of her time every week to the sport.”


**LESSON FROM VBS**

Jesus is our centering point. When we make him the center of our lives, he shows us what to take on and what to let go of. He is our solid foundation.

**SCRIPTURE FOCUS:**

“Give careful thought to the paths for your feet and be steadfast in all your ways.”

Proverbs 4:26
Observations

Write or draw what you see and learn from watching the Olympic gymnasts.

Connections

If you could do one of the gymnastic events, which one would you choose?

What do you think makes the balance beam so difficult?

What else do gymnasts have to learn to balance in life if they are going to reach their goal of competing in the Olympics?

What all do you have to balance in your life?

How do you feel when you are off balance in life?

Remember to keep your eyes fixed on Jesus. He will show us the steady path He is calling us to take. He will bring balance to our life, if we follow Him.
**FUN FACTS—**

What Americans call track and field is known as “athletics” in most other countries.

“American Bob Beamon broke the Olympic long jump record at the Mexico City 1968 Games by nearly two feet — it was so long that the measuring device could not record it.”*1

“[Track and Field is] the venue with the largest field of athletes -- numbering 2,000 men and women in all at the 2016 games in Rio.”*1

“More medals are awarded for athletics than any other Olympic sport – a total of 141, including 47 golds.”*1

1 http://www.chiff.com/olympics/olympics-athletics.htm

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**LESSON FROM VBS—**

When we have our eyes set on a goal, it is not enough just to dream about it, we must take the steps we need to get there. It is the same in the Christian life. Jesus has given us the discipline we need to make good choice each day that lead us down the path God has planned for us.

**SCRIPTURE FOCUS:**

“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.” 1 Corinthians 9:24
**Observations**—
Write or draw what you see and learn from watching the Olympians.

**Connections**—
What do you think keeps the runners committed to their sport?

Besides running, what other commitments do these athletes make to reach this level in their sport?

What makes the victory of winning a medal so sweet?

What are you passionate about?

What can you do now to help you prepare and train for what God is calling you to?

*God has big plans for you, but he won’t snap His fingers and suddenly make you an Olympic athlete. We get to know Him more as we put in the work required and stay committed to the path He has called us to.*
**FUN FACTS—**
As an Olympic discipline, the javelin throw was introduced in the 1906 Intercalated Games for men.¹

Javelin was first showcased for women in the 1932 Summer Olympics.¹

It has been included in the decathlon since its introduction in 1912.¹

The javelin must be held at its grip and thrown overhand, over the athlete's shoulder or upper arm. Further, the athlete is prohibited from turning completely around such that his back faces the direction of throw.¹

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Javelin_throw

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**LESSON FROM VBS—**

There are lots of things in life that want our attention, but Jesus is the most important and life giving. When we focus on Jesus, He brings joy in the midst of stress, peace in the middle of chaos and direction when we need it most.

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**SCRIPTURE FOCUS:**

“Finally, brothers and sisters, be joyful! Work to make things right with one another.”

2 Corinthians 13:11a
FOCUS

OBSERVATIONS-
Write or draw what you see and learn from watching the Olympians.

CONNECTIONS-
What would happen if the athlete was not focused on where he/she is throwing the javelin?

What happens when we don’t focus on Jesus?

What are things that try to steal our attention?

What are some simple ways we can choose to focus on Jesus everyday?

When we keep our eyes focused on Jesus, He brings joy and peace no matter how crazy our world looks.
Closing Ceremony Procession Order
The traditional part of the closing ceremonies starts with the "Parade of Flags", where flag bearers from each participating country enter the stadium in single file. Behind them march all of the athletes without any distinction or grouping by nationality. This "Parade of Athletes", the blending of all the athletes, is a tradition that began during the 1956 Summer Olympics at the suggestion of Melbourne schoolboy John Ian Wing, who thought it would be a way of bringing the athletes of the world together as "one nation."

Looking Forward
Towards the end of the closing ceremony the city hosting the next Summer Olympics will introduce themselves to the world with a fun display of music, dancing and artistry that showcases their culture and builds excitement for what will come in four years.

Athletes-
Was there a particular athlete or sport that caught your attention? Although the games are over and they won’t be on TV everyday, continue praying for all those involved.

For some Olympians they know this will be their last Olympics. A large part of their life and focus is changing. Pray that God shows them new talents and passions they can pursue.

Others will return to training so they are ready for the next round of competition. Pray that God will give them perseverance, wisdom and balance in their life as they train.

Pray for all the athletes that they will not find their ultimate worth in their performance, but in Christ.

Pray for Christian athletes that they will be given opportunities, boldness and the words they need to share the love of Jesus with their teammates, coaches and the world.
One body

God calls us to live the same way. He places us in specific families, countries, and cultures for a reason. Those things that make us unique are meant to be celebrated and shared. They do not need to divide us. The more we learn about and get to know people from other countries, cultures, and backgrounds, the better we understand our God who created and loves them all.

“There is one body, but it has many parts. But all its many parts make up one body. It is the same with Christ.”
1 Corinthians 12:12

“Live in harmony with one another.”
Romans 12:16a

I’m praying for:

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Amazing Athletes

Eric Liddell, Olympic Runner and Missionary- “God made me fast. And when I run, I feel His pleasure.”

Madeline Manning Mims, Olympic Runner and Chaplin- “I didn’t know that I was an athlete,” she says. “Who knew that these big feet and long legs were made to run around in circles to glorify Jesus.”

Shawn Johnson, Olympic Gymnast- She came to a point while training for the London 2012 Olympics that she realized, “I was giving my heart and soul and getting to a place I was not proud of all to get that gold medal again.” That’s when it really clicked that, “He [Jesus] will always be my greatest reward.”

Allyson Felix, Olympic Runner- “‘I always looked up to my mom and dad,’ says Allyson, who trusted in Christ at a young age. ‘They are such strong examples of faith. They have such strong belief systems. But they also lived it day in and day out. It was so encouraging to me.’”

“I never expected to be a professional athlete,’ she says. ‘I had to really trust Him and His plan for my life. We always have our own idea of how our life is going to go, but we really have to follow the Lord’s will. I had to trust Him in regards to injuries and other life situations.’”

Jacob Wukie, Olympic Archery- "Since I am confident that He [God] is in control and has a plan for my life, I am able to give my best and let the rest lie in His hands," Wukie said. "He has given me the talents and abilities that I possess; He has taught me to love those around me and what it means to push hard.”

3 http://www.fca.org/magazine-story/2016/07/01/golden-girl
4 http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/e/eric_liddell.html
5 http://www.iamsecond.com/seconds/shawn-johnson/
6 http://www1.cbn.com/700club/madeline-manning-mims-miracle-across-finish-line
What do you love to do?

What talents has God given you? (not just sports, any kinds of talents)

What can you do to grow in that skill?

How can you use your passions and talents to bring glory to Jesus?

Go out and shine for Jesus in everything you do!!!
The Children’s Ministry of First Presbyterian Church, Tulsa...

Where our mission is to encourage children and their families to trust and know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and grow in faith; connect with others in FPC’s Christ-centered community; learn to serve Christ at home, school and the neighborhood.