

Unit 5 The Promise of Guidance
Camp Venture Counselor's Guide
Letters About Focus

Aim: To know keeping our focus on Jesus throughout our lives is the key to a life that pleases God as explained in the letters in the Bible.

PROPHETS AND PROMISES PART 1

THE WORSHIP, THE WORD, & THE WAY

At the Campfire

Worship the Spirit Who Teaches Us
Camp Critter: Race Horse

Tent Time

New Testament Letters: Hebrews 12:1-3 and Philippians 3:12-16
GOT TIME? Letter: Romans 8:5
Christ Connection: Deuteronomy 11:18-20

Bible Memory Verse

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart
and with all your soul
and with all your mind."
"Love your neighbor as yourself."
Matthew 22:37, 39b

CAMPING SUPPLY CHECKLIST

- ☐ Set out mats or sit-upons in a semicircle, Counselor's camp chair
- ☐ Camp Venture Counselor's Guide on a clipboard and a Counselor's Bible
- ☐ Camp Games: Floor tape or chalk, free-standing cross, four blindfolds
- ☐ At the Campfire: Lesson 27 Worship Illustration or Storybook, Bible Memory Verse Song "Yahweh: Love The Lord Your God" and other related music
- ☐ Mailbag: Create a list of today's New Testament letter scripture references, fold it and place it in the Counselor's Bible. Put the Bible, Pen Pal Letter pencils, slips of paper, and one finish line (roll of crepe paper, banner paper, toilet paper, etc.) in any bag.
- ☐ Got Time Gear: Donuts, drinks, napkins, plates, cups, a cross, five favorite items campers typically enjoy, sturdy gold paper, markers, crayons, scissors, glue, shiny craft supplies, wide ribbon, hole punch, "New Testament Overture" song and player, 27 sheets of paper, marker, clothesline or thin cord, 27 clothespins or paperclips, Unit 5 Bible Memory Verse song, player and poster
- ☐ Today's New Testament Postcard with a stamp or sticker of eyes, glasses or binoculars
- ☐ Daily Way Lesson 27

ADD-A-VENTURE

Use additional items to create the Camp Venture experience. For example: set up a camp tent, Camp Venture Photo Board or photo album including photos of each camper, fire logs surrounded with stones as a flameless campfire, etc.



Camp Games

(30 Minutes)

Welcome to Camp Venture! Each time before we worship, we get to know each other better and have some fun with our Camp Games. First, let's dedicate this day of camp to Jesus. (Pray.) Today, our New Testament letter teaches us about focus. Let's have a race to see which team can get to the cross the fastest. But be careful! This race has an extra challenge!

GAME: RACE TO THE CROSS

PURPOSE: Campers will compete in a relay race which will help them discover how living life following Jesus can be compared to running a race.

SUPPLIES: Floor tape or chalk, free-standing cross, blindfolds

PREPARE: Stand the cross in the center of the play area. Use floor tape or chalk to create four start lines equidistant from the cross.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Form four teams of equal number.
2. Have campers on each team stand in pairs.
3. Each team stands in pairs behind a start line.
4. Give a blindfold to the first pair on each team.
5. On your signal, one camper in each pair puts on the blindfold.
6. The other camper in each pair leads his or her blindfolded teammate to the cross.
7. Blindfolded camper must gently touch the cross before being lead back to the start line.
8. Pairs switch places and repeat before handing the blindfold to the next pair in line and then going to the end of the team line and sitting down.
9. The goal is to be the first team to complete the relay race with each camper having a turn as the blindfolded camper and the leading camper.

ASK> Was it harder to find your way to the cross when you couldn't see where you were going? (Respond.) Today we will read what some New Testament letters say about focusing on Jesus. The letters say that following Jesus is similar to finishing a race. Let's learn more about that!

***Options:** Small groups can play with two teams instead of four. Limited Space? All campers are on the same team. Play the game twice; timing it each time. Challenge the campers to get a faster time on the second round of play. Or play the game as a marbles race: players (with and without blindfolds) shoot the marble toward a smaller cross or a piece of tape marking a finish line in the shape of a cross.

***Counselor Clues:** For added fun, be very generous with points (For example: 100,000 points for 1st place; 75,000 points for 2nd place; 40,000 points for 3rd place; 30,000 points for 4th place. The teams will end up with point totals in the millions at the end of camp.) Prizes for points can range from a round of applause to a grand prize for the team with the highest total points at the end of camp. The grand prize can be an ice cream party, pizza party, etc. Before closing on the last day, have the winning team invite all of the other teams to join the party. Always encourage good sportsmanship and cheering for each other.



At the Campfire

(15 Minutes)

Today we worship the Spirit who teaches us to focus on Jesus. The Holy Spirit can help us keep our thoughts focused on Jesus everywhere, every day. As we sing, pray and give our offering, let's ask the Holy Spirit to help us keep our thoughts on Jesus; on His love for us, on our friendship with Him, and on who God is and what He has done for us all. (Sing: "Open the Eyes of My Heart" while collecting the offering.)

Worship Elements:

Designate a special corner or area for worship.

Collect and lead prayer for an offering.

Perform Worship Illustration or read Storybook:

- Prophets & Promises Unit 5, Lesson 27

Say the Camper's Code together.

Today's camp critter is the race horse.
Have you ever watched a horse race?
If you look closely, you will see the horses
have little shields on both sides of their
head. Those shields are called blinders.
They keep the horse from seeing what is
going on around it. The horses are able to
focus on the finish line because they aren't
distracted by what is around them. The
race horse is today's camp critter because
we are learning about some special letters
found in the New Testament that teach us
about focusing on Jesus.

Camp Critter Song

I spied a RACE HORSE overhead.
Here is what that RACE HORSE said,
"Keep your eyes on Him—and you will win!"
I spied a RACE HORSE,
who followed the DOVE,
who followed the LITTLE LAMB,
who followed the SERPENT,
who followed the MEER KAT,
who followed the LOVEBIRD,
And the LOVEBIRD hollered,
"Yippee-kigh-yay! At Camp Venture today!"

Praise Song Suggestions

Select songs containing that focus on Jesus.

"We Want To See Jesus Lifted High"
"How Wonderful Is Your Love"
"I Love You Lord"
Worship Jamz (Volumes 1, 2, 3)

Camper's Code

I will love God with all my heart.
I will love my neighbor as myself.
I will be a light wherever I go.

Bible Memory Verse Song

"Yahweh: You Shall Love The Lord"
Matthew 22:37, 39b (NIV)

You shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart,
with all your soul,
with all your mind.

Love your neighbor as yourself,
the best commandments you'll find!
Yahweh!

I know I can go to...Yahweh!
She can, he can go to...Yahweh!
We know we can go to...
Yahweh every day!

Repeat two times getting faster each time.

Sheet music and recordings available at
www.childrensministrywarehouse.net



Tent Time

(15 Minutes)

(Tent time should take place in a corner of the classroom, under a tent or any covered space. Remove chairs and have campers sit on mats or sit-upons.)

New Testament Letters

Welcome to Tent Time! Last time we learned that God can give us peace of mind even when our problems don't go away.

(Counselor holds up mailbag.) **Today we have a mailbag with letters from the Bible about focusing on Jesus. It is wonderful to follow Jesus, but it is not always easy. It means choosing every day to do things God's way instead of your own way. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews knew that believers need encouragement to keep following Jesus. The letter explains that following Jesus is similar to finishing a race.**

If you brought your Bible, open it now and share with others. (Hand out spare Bibles. Counselor opens mailbag and removes Bible, opens Bible and takes out list of today's New Testament letter scripture references: Hebrews 12:1-3 and Philippians 3:12-16.)

Before we read, let's stand and ask God to open our eyes, ears, hearts and minds to His Word today. Who'd like to pray that for us? (Camper prays aloud.) **Be seated.**

Let's read our first letter about focusing on Jesus. (Read Hebrews 12:1-3.)

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul also compared following Jesus to a race. Let's check it out! (Read Philippians 3:12-16.)



Tent Time **continued**

(15 Minutes)

Mailbag

(Print the Pen Pal letter on a sheet of paper. Fold the paper and place it in an envelope.)

Let's open our mailbag to see if our Pen Pal will give us a clue about what today's New Testament letter has to do with your life. (Remove Pen Pal Letter from mailbag, open the envelope. Remove the letter and read.)

Hey Pals,

Do you like to race for a prize? What's the most amazing prize you can imagine? (Respond.) **Following Jesus is like being in a race in which every finisher receives the best prize they could ever imagine! To understand Paul's words to the Philippians let's run a race right now.** (Reach into the mailbag and take out the finish line.)

Directions:

1. Have two volunteers stand far apart and hold opposite ends of the finish line.
2. Choose two volunteers to be runners who stand side-by-side as far from the finish line as possible.
3. The first runner keeps his or her eyes on the finish line.
4. The second runner's body faces the finish line, but his or her face keeps turning to looking behind.
5. Have runners complete the race by crossing through the finish line.

What happened to the two runners in this race? (First runner ran more quickly and with less stumbling to the finish line because of his or her focus.)

Just as we must keep our eyes on the finish line in a race so that we don't fall or wander off track, we must keep our eyes on Jesus as we follow Him. Instead of looking back at our mistakes or focusing on things that we think are more important than God, Paul tells the Philippians to forget the past and strain towards the prize in heaven.

(Reach into the mailbag and give campers the slips of paper and pencils.) **Draw or write down something wrong that you have done, or something you treat as more important than God. Then, as your counselor passes behind you with a trash bag, crumple up your paper and toss it over your shoulder into the bag. After you toss it behind you, leave it behind and focus on Jesus instead.**

It is much easier to know what Jesus wants us to do if we know a lot about Him. The Bible is the best way we can know who Jesus is and what He has done. 1,500 years before the letter to the Hebrews was written, Moses taught the Hebrews about focusing on God's Word, the Bible. As you read it, think about your favorite way to focus on God. (Read today's Christ Connection: Deuteronomy 11:18-20.)

The life of a believer is like an exciting race toward heaven. The letter to the Hebrews says that God has already marked out a race for each one of us. Isn't that amazing? We don't need to have a strong body or be a fast runner to be in this race. It says that in this race, we just need to "fix our eyes on Jesus." That means just keep our hearts and minds focused on Him and what He wants us to do. Close your eyes and picture your life as a race. During this race you are focusing on Jesus and doing what He wants you to do. Jesus is at the finish line cheering for you. The prize is being with Jesus in heaven. Now open your eyes.

Believe and Be Focused!

Your Pen Pal



Tent Time **continued**

(15 Minutes)

Share A Prayer

Let's thank God for sending us His Word, the Bible! We can pray for each other and all who live in this world for them to hear His Word, too.

(Ask campers for individual praise and prayer requests.)

Father in heaven, thank you for sending us Your Word. You know our needs—the ones we just shared out loud and the ones that we hide in our hearts. We lift all these up to Your throne now. (Pause of silence.) We can't wait to see the way that You will answer each one. Together, we close this prayer with the words Jesus taught us to pray:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Final Five

(When only five minutes remain, begin this segment.)

New Testament Postcard

As you leave today, you'll receive a New Testament Postcard. I'm giving you this stamp or sticker of eyes, glasses or binoculars to remind you to focus on Jesus. (Place stamp or sticker in the corner box on the back of the postcard.) Take it home and add it to your collection. On your postcard, list where to find today's New Testament letters in the Bible. (You'll find the scriptures listed in the Daily Way.) Read these scriptures again to help you answer the postcard question.

Letter From Camp

Write a Letter from Camp to someone in your home to let them know what you did today. Write your favorite thing about today and something special about the letters from the New Testament you just learned. Or draw a picture about that. Sign it and take it home.

Prayer Requests

How can I pray for you this week? (As campers work on their Letters from Camp, write individual requests in your counselor's prayer notebook.)

Camper Challenge

(Hand out Lesson 27 Daily Way.) Complete your Daily Way at home and bring it back next time to win points here at Camp Venture!

Bible Memory Verse Song

Play the Unit 5 Bible Memory Verse song or the "New Testament Overture" background as campers wait to be dismissed.



Got Time?

(If time remains, choose from the connected activities in this segment.)

SNACK: FOCUS FOOD SNACK

PURPOSE: Campers will eat a snack while personally connecting to the story.

SUPPLIES: Donuts (or any snack with a hole in the center), drinks, napkins, plates, cups

DIRECTIONS:

1. Serve the snack and drink.
2. **ASK>** If you look through a small hole, like in the center of this donut, what do you see? (Campers look through hole and describe what they see.) **You can't see everything around you. Instead, you can only focus on what is right in front of you! God wants us to focus on Jesus. That means instead of looking back at our mistakes or focusing on things around us that we treat as more important than God, we should keep our thoughts focused on Jesus.**
3. Camper prays to thank God for the snack.
4. Ask the Snack Discussion Question: **"What is one thing about Jesus you can focus on?"**

GAME: BREAK FREE!

PURPOSE: For campers to know it is easier to follow Jesus when we focus on Him.

SUPPLIES: A cross and five favorite items campers typically enjoy (toys, candy, music CD, games, etc.)

PREPARE: Place the cross on the opposite side of the play area.

SAY> The letter to the Hebrews say that our sin (wrongdoing) can tangle us up and distract us from focusing on Jesus and what He wants us to do. Even good things can distract us if we treat them as more important than Jesus. (Show favorite items that represent distractions.) These favorite things are good things. They are gifts from God. But if we focus on them too much and treat them as more important than Jesus, then it is much harder to follow Jesus and His plan for us. Let's compare a race where we tangle ourselves up in things that we treat as more important than Jesus with a race where we fix our eyes on Jesus. Let's have the cross stand for Jesus.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Discuss each favorite thing and how it might be distract us from following Jesus.
2. Assign different campers to hold each item. They are to stand with their item in different locations of the play area.
3. Divide remaining campers into teams of four.
4. Each team chooses a runner.
5. Counselor times the runners as runners must race to touch each favorite item before racing to the cross. As they race they must try to keep their eyes on the cross as much as possible.
6. Counselor then times the runners as they keep their eyes on the cross and they race directly to the cross.
7. Counselor announces the differences between the timings.

ASK> How did you feel trying to keep your eyes on the cross while heading in different directions to touch the favorite things? (Respond.) That race was a picture how it is throughout our lives as we follow Jesus. When we keep our eyes on Him, and keep thinking about what He would like us to do, it is much easier to follow Him!



Got Time? continued...

CRAFT: CARE PACKAGE—GOLD MEDAL FOLLOWERS

PURPOSE: For campers to encourage other believers to keep their eyes on Jesus.

SUPPLIES: Sturdy gold paper (or gold cardboard or craft foam), markers, crayons, scissors, glue, shiny craft supplies (foil, craft jewels, glitter, sequins, shiny stickers, etc.), wide ribbon, hole punch

PREPARE: Cut paper into circles that are approximately 3-inches in diameter. Punch a hole in the top of each circle. Cut ribbon into 35-inch lengths. Preprint on circles or write where campers can see to copy:

Fix Your Eyes on Jesus. Hebrews 12:2

Choose other believers to be the recipients of the medals. If possible, arrange for the recipients to visit the class. Or, have campers hand out medals after a church service. Or, give them to counselors or students in a nearby class.

ASK> Today we learned what the New Testament letters say about focus. Who should you focus on? (Jesus.) We must keep our eyes on Jesus as we follow Him. Just as Paul encouraged the Philippians to forget the past and strain towards the prize in heaven, we can encourage believers today to keep racing toward Jesus.

SAY> Let's make a medal we can give to other believers to congratulate them for doing a good job following Jesus and to encourage them to keep on following Him. (Share information about the care package recipient(s) with the campers. Allow them to ask questions so they truly understand where and to whom their gift will be delivered.)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Copy the verse from Hebrews 12:2 onto the circle. (Preprint verse on circles for younger campers.)
2. Decorate the circles to look like medals using the shiny decorations.
3. Thread a ribbon through the hole and knot the ends together.
4. If you have time, make more medals.
5. Deliver the gifts!

***Counselor Clues:** Allow the campers to make two medals, one to keep and one to give away. Encourage campers to put the medals around the recipients' necks and explain why they are awarding that person.

***Options:** Campers may use gold paint on the medals at the beginning of the lesson time, and then complete the decorating at the end of the lesson. Or, sculpt the medals from craft clay or dough.



Got Time? continued...

DISCUSSION: MORE LETTERS ABOUT LOVE—ROMANS 8:5

PURPOSE: Campers learn of a third letter about focusing on Jesus from the New Testament.

SUPPLIES: Bible opened to Romans 8:5

SAY> The Bible says that ever since Adam and Eve chose to sin in the Garden of Eden, we have each been born with a sinful nature. That means every person will sin at some point because we are born with a desire or a wish to sin. The Bible helps us choose not to sin. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews says we should “fix our eyes on Jesus.” Paul says the same thing in a different way when he writes about having our “minds set on what the Spirit desires.” Let’s check it out. (Read Romans 8:5).

SAY> When we believe in Jesus, the Holy Spirit lives in our heart. Though we may wish to sin, when we set our set our minds on what the Holy Spirit wants us to do, we can choose to do what is right in God’s eyes. That is good news for the Romans and for us, too!

GAME: “NEW TESTAMENT OVERTURE” BOOKS ON A LINE

PURPOSE: Campers learn the books of the New Testament.

SUPPLIES: 27 sheets of paper, marker, clothesline or thin cord, 27 clothespins or paperclips, “New Testament Overture” song and player, Bible

SUPPLIES: Write the name of each book of the New Testament on a separate sheet of paper. Mix the papers so the books are not in order. Hang the clothesline in the play area at a low height so the campers can reach it.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Play the “New Testament Overture” song two times. Encourage the campers to sing along as they become familiar with the words.
2. Challenge the campers to place the New Testament books in order by hanging the sheets of paper in correct order on the clothesline with the clothespins.
3. To help the campers, play the song while they work or leave the Bible open to the table of contents for their reference as needed.
4. As campers learn the correct order of the books, try it without the aid of the list in the Bible or music.

“New Testament Overture”

Sheet music and recordings available at www.childrensministrywarehouse.net

Psalm 119:105 and the books of the New Testament sung to the tune of The William Tell Overture: Allegro Vivace

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path!
Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path!

Go to Matthew, to Mark, go to Luke and John. Go to Acts and the letter to the Romans.
Go to First, go to Second Corinthians, to Galatians and Ephesians!

Philippians and Colossians, First and Second Thessalonians,
First and Second Timothy, then Titus and Philemon!

Go to Hebrews and go to James. Go to First, go to Second Peter.
Go to First, Second, Third John. Go to Jude, then go to Revelation!



Got Time? continued...

BIBLE MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITIES

GAME: LOVE ALL AROUND

PURPOSE: Campers learn the Unit 5 Bible Memory Verse.

SUPPLIES: Unit 5 Bible Memory Verse song, player and poster

SAY> Our Bible Memory Verse tells us to love God with all of our heart, soul and mind. What does that mean to you? (Respond.) Our Bible Memory Verse also tells us to love our neighbor as ourselves. Who are our neighbors? (All the people around us.)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Campers sit in a circle.
2. Recite or sing the Unit 5 Bible Memory Verse one time together.
3. Say the first word of the verse: "Love..."
4. The camper on your right says the next word: "the..."
5. The next camper on the right says the next word: "Lord..."
6. Continue going around the circle, each camper saying the next word of the Bible Memory Verse in turn until the entire verse has been said.
7. As time allows, play again going faster each time.

GAME: RACE TO REPEAT

PURPOSE: Campers learn the Unit 5 Bible Memory Verse.

SUPPLIES: Unit 5 Bible Memory Verse poster, Bible

DIRECTIONS:

1. Practice saying the Unit 5 Bible Memory Verse together once.
2. Divide the campers into two equal teams.
3. Teams sit shoulder-to-shoulder in two lines, facing each other with several feet of space between the two lines.
4. Give a number to each camper on each team beginning with the number 1.
5. Place a Bible in the center of the space between the two teams.
6. Call out a number.
7. The camper from each team with that number races to be the first to touch the Bible.
8. The camper who touches the Bible first earns point for his or her team by saying the Bible Memory Verse correctly. (Campers may use the Bible Memory Verse poster as a reference.)
9. Continue playing by calling a different number in each round until all campers have had a turn.

DISCUSSION: GETTING TO KNOW YOU

PURPOSE: Campers get to "love their neighbors" by learning about things they sometimes focus on instead of Jesus.

DIRECTIONS: Gather in a circle and discuss some things that typically distract campers from following Jesus. (Some examples are sports, games, friends, school, hobbies, etc.) Encourage the campers by reminding them that everyone struggles to follow Jesus and nobody is perfect, but the Holy Spirit can help them focus on Jesus everywhere, every day.