



Olympians
Resource
Manual



Published by Word of Life Local Church Ministries
A division of Word of Life Fellowship, Inc.

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Overview



Word of Life is a non-denominational Christian organization creating faith-defining experiences that give students and families the chance to encounter God and grow in their spiritual walks. Through high-energy camping ministries, in-depth biblical training, international missions, and local church ministries, Word of Life shares the message of salvation with those who have never heard and helps believers grow in their faith.

We are made up of four ministries:

YOUTH AND FAMILY CAMPS

High-energy Christian camping experiences for youth and families

BIBLE INSTITUTE

Collegiate-level biblical study programs

INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES

Short and long-term missions trips to share the Gospel around the world

LOCAL CHURCH MINISTRIES

Assist local churches in the evangelism and discipleship of their youth by providing curriculum, training and resources

Through each of these ministries, we create loving environments and engaging experiences where life-change happens. To learn more, visit **www.wol.org**.



“When I was a kid...” is a statement that, once it is completed, can bring back so many childhood memories.

It reflects on a different time, perhaps a different place and definitely a different culture. It’s true that today’s children are living in a much different culture than we did. That is why our whole Olympians Ministry is committed to this philosophy, **“Reaching youth whose needs constantly change with the Word of God that never changes”**. The Bible is the one constant and your greatest tool. It has everything this generation of children needs to run the race of life.

Each part of the Olympians program is designed to help children run their race well. Every meeting will consist of a time of learning from God’s Word (knowing what the Bible says), a strong focus on application (because God’s Word is applicable for all ages), and of course, FUN! Children will be challenged by their coaches to take what they have learned in the meeting with them for the rest of their week.

During the week, your children will learn to form habits that lay the foundation for their relationship with Christ. They will be challenged to have consistent time in God’s Word, to memorize verses, and to practice serving others.

The whole program is built around an Olympic theme. Children will be excited to know they can earn bronze, silver, and gold medals as they memorize verses, serve others, and spend time in God’s Word each day.

This Resource Manual will help you plan and build your Olympians ministry so that your church can accomplish its goals for evangelism, discipleship and life change in the lives of the children you are ministering to in your church and community.

Training

Youth Ministry Coaches

One of the things that sets Word of Life apart from other youth ministries is our ministry coaches. Spread throughout the country, our ministry coaches are there to partner with local churches like yours with the goal of equipping leaders to maximize the impact of their ministry to young people. Do you have a vision for making disciples? Our coaches want to come alongside you with the resources you need to make that happen. On top of that, they are just fun, awesome people to be around!

Core Training

Word of Life provides more than just a curriculum. Your children's ministry will be most effective when it combines great tools with great training. Your Word of Life Ministry Coach will be in contact with you to schedule Core Training with your leadership team. During these sessions you will dive into the culture of kids today, learn the Biblical principles that will drive your Olympians program, define your vision for making disciples, organize your leadership team and discover all the resources we have made available to you and your team.

Transfer Live

Word of Life Local Church Ministries has over one hundred, ten-minute youth ministry training videos. These videos are designed to be short, content packed videos that help in specific areas of ministry. We cover areas ranging from improving your weekly meeting, small group leader training and personal spiritual growth. Make sure you check out our website at www.transferlive.com to see all the resources available.

Coaching Staff

The adults who serve as coaches are an important aspect of your Olympians ministry. The word coach means, “To train intensively (as by instruction and demonstration).” Children need men and women who will invest in their lives by teaching them how to live the Christian life through Biblical instruction and their own personal walk as an example. Therefore, the success of your Olympians program is related to the quality of your “coaching staff.”

Your Olympians coaching team will consist of the Head Coach and the Assistant Coaches.

Head Coach

The person who takes on the role as Head Coach should be one who can lead. This person is in charge of the general operation of the Olympians Ministry and should provide overall vision and direction for the group.

The Head Coach organizes the planning meetings. This includes setting the Olympians calendar for the year, determining the order of the Bible lessons, planning for group outings, etc.

The Head Coach is also responsible for making sure all the Word of Life materials are purchased and for planning end-of-year awards.

The Head Coach will communicate with the pastor and church staff, keeping them up to date on the calendar of events and blessings of the Olympians ministry. Consistent communication with all of the Assistant Coaches is also very important. The strength of your coaching staff is dependent on communication. It is also important to keep parents of the children up to date and informed of what is happening in Olympians on a weekly basis. The Parent Connection will help you accomplish this goal.

It is true that the Head Coach takes on a lot of responsibilities. However, the Head Coach is only as good as his or her coaching team. That is why it is also important that the Head Coach knows how to delegate. The coaching team consists of a great group of people who have their own talents and abilities that, if used, will better the ministry. The Head Coach needs to empower their coaching team by letting them help make decisions and then trusting them to fulfill their responsibilities.

Coaching Staff continued

Assistant Coaches

Leading your Olympians Ministry is a team effort. The Head Coach cannot do it alone. There also needs to be several Assistant Coaches on the team. These coaches, along with the Head Coach, are the ones who put all of the planning into action. That is why it is so important that the coaching staff consist of leaders who are committed, and who plan to be at Olympians each week. Assistant Coaches are key to the evangelism and discipleship of your children.

- Each Assistant Coach will head up a PT (Personal Training) Group. They will meet with their group of kids at every Olympians meeting.
- Some Assistant Coaches may be a part of the teaching rotation for the Bible lessons taught during Coach's Challenge.
- Some Assistant Coaches will plan, prep, and lead the Games each week.
- Some Assistant Coaches will help with the coordination of Services and socials.

Leader's Reading Book

Each year Word of Life Local Church Ministries will recommend a book for all of the coaches on your Olympians leadership team to read. It is featured in the LCM Product Catalog and may be purchased on our website **www.wolstore.org**

Leadership Accountability System

The most effective discipleship comes through example. Coaches who are seeking to introduce spiritual disciplines into the lives of children should be saying, “Do as I do”.

Word of Life is committed to helping coaches grow in their personal walk with God. We believe that adults will be more effective in discipling children when they are being faithful in their own spiritual disciplines and are willing to be held accountable by others.

The Leadership Accountability System (LAS) has been developed with these thoughts in mind. The LAS tracks key spiritual growth and discipleship activities within each church’s leadership team. Experience has taught us that the Olympians ministries that routinely see the greatest impact on their children, are the teams that measure the progress of their own team members. And, doing so allows the Ministry Coach to offer encouragement throughout the year.

We encourage every leadership team to participate in the LAS. To find out more about how it works and to learn about the LAS contest, contact your Ministry Coach.

Planning Meetings

Leaders in children's ministry should seek to have a visually inspiring program that is well organized, full of interaction through creative teaching dynamics and of course, to be effective. The way to reach this level of excellence in ministry is to plan, plan, plan!

Annual Planning

Before the ministry year begins, set aside part of a day for your coaching staff to meet together and plan out the "big picture" details of the year. This would include:

1. Your goals

What do you want to accomplish this coming year? Of course seeing spiritual growth or change in the lives of the children is a great goal. But let's not stop there. As coaches, you want to be continually growing in your relationship with God as well!

2. Your teaching strategy

Putting together a teaching schedule for the year will help teachers get a head start on their Bible lessons and coaches to prepare for lesson application.

3. Calendar

Set the dates for the start and finish of the Olympians year. Discuss any special events you want to plan for or attend with the children this year. It is also very important to schedule all of your regular planning meetings at the beginning of your year. We recommend that you mark your calendars with the best dates for all of your coaches to meet on a monthly basis.

Your ministry coach can give you the dates for any leadership training opportunities as well as upcoming Transfer meetings.

4. Pray

Planning for a year in advance does take a while, but remember to also set aside time to pray. Pray for each other, for the children who will come, their parents, and for the many opportunities for evangelism and discipleship you will have this year.

Regular Planning Meetings

During these meetings you will plan out all the details for the next several weeks of Olympians. There is a simple planning meeting sheet available by going to lcm.wol.org and clicking on resources.

Here are the portions of the Olympians meetings you will plan for:

1. Opening Ceremony

Plan your ice breakers

Choose your songs (optional)

2. Coach's Challenge

Give a general overview of the content for the next 4 Bible lessons.

Make sure you have all your props from the checklists found in each lesson.

3. PT Huddle

Review the application questions that go along with each of the next 4 Bible lessons and discuss ways to make the lesson applications more personalized for your children

4. The Games

Determine what game you will play each week

Make a list of all the props needed for each game

5. Closing Ceremonies

Plan for any awards to be given out

Plan for announcements (upcoming events, etc.)

Snack (optional)

Planning Meetings continued

A regular planning meeting is also a great time for evaluation and problem solving. Problems to work through may include:

- Schedules
- Children issues
- Parental issues
- Special needs
- Weekly meeting issues that need to be worked on

Transfer Live is a great tool that can be incorporated right into your planning meetings. These short 10-minute videos can help your group to be encouraged spiritually, receive more training on a specific subject or help with a problem. Why not plan to review one of these videos as a team and discuss it during each of your regular planning meetings to continue the development of your team? You can go to **www.transferlive.com** to see all the resources available.

We recommend that you schedule monthly planning meetings. By meeting once a month your team will be able to have flexibility in your planning and be able to evaluate and address concerns with your team in a timely manner.

If your coaches are unable to meet once a month, plan to meet bi-monthly or quarterly with a monthly check-in among a few key leaders. If you have a larger leadership team, you may consider having a core team of coaches meet for regular planning.

It does not matter what your regularity is, but it does matter that you plan. Planning lays the foundation for an effective ministry.

Organizing Your Program

Before your Olympians Ministry begins for the year, you will divide your children into small groups for discipleship and choose the meeting layout that works best for your church. Here are some guidelines to help you make these decisions.

PT (Personal Training) Set up

Each member of the Coaching Staff will enjoy interacting with the children in small groups that will meet together for PT Check and PT Huddle.

The goal of these times is discipleship. You will want to match up one coach with six children. This 1:6 ratio will allow for the best and most effective small group experience. With more than six children, you will have a “crowd” that can get out of control. With six or less, will come the opportunity to encourage each child in their spiritual growth.

The number of children you have in your Olympians Ministry will determine the number of groups you divide into. This means that a larger children’s ministry will need a proportionately greater number of coaches, while a smaller ministry should have no less than four. First divide your children by age, and then by gender. The Olympians program has already been divided into 3 age groups.

CHALLENGERS

1st-2nd graders

CONQUERORS

3rd-4th graders

CHAMPIONS

5th-6th graders

If you are unsure of the age or number of children who will be attending, you may have to wait until the first meeting of Olympians to divide your children into their groups.

You will also want to match up the best coach for each group. Some coaches may prefer to work with a certain age group. This is understandable considering discipleship with a first grader will look very different than discipleship with a sixth grader.

Organizing Your Program continued

Meeting Layout

To get the most out of your Olympians meeting, we recommend you plan for 90 minutes each week. We have provided two meeting layout options for you to choose from. As you will see, the difference between the two layouts is when and how you choose to have PT Check (time designated for record keeping). Option 1 allows for all record keeping to take place within your small groups. Option 2 uses a check-in table that has leaders assigned to take care of record keeping at the beginning of your meeting. For more information about the two approaches to PT Check refer to chapter 6.

If you are in need of a shorter meeting layout, we've got you covered! You can use an abbreviated schedule that still includes every aspect of the Olympians program. Sixty minute meeting layouts have been provided for you.

MEETING LAYOUT OPTION 1

90 minute meeting		60 minute meeting
15 minutes	<p>Opening Ceremonies*</p> <p>Welcome</p> <p>Icebreakers (high energy, quick games) or review questions</p> <p>Recite Motto</p> <p>Songs (optional)</p>	5 minutes
10 minutes	<p>PT Check</p> <p>(Personal Training Check)</p> <p>Children will be divided up and go to their designated room/area to meet with PT Coach for record keeping and reciting verses.</p>	10 minutes
20 minutes	<p>Coach's Challenge</p> <p>Bible lesson</p>	15 minutes
15 minutes	<p>PT Huddle</p> <p>(Personal Training Huddle)</p> <p>Children will meet with their coach to discuss lesson application.</p>	10 minutes
20 minutes	<p>The Games</p>	15 minutes
10 minutes	<p>Closing</p> <p>Give out awards</p> <p>Parent Connection</p> <p>Announcements</p> <p>Snack (optional)</p>	5 minutes

*Churches who plan to do pledges should include them in the Opening Ceremonies.

Organizing Your Program continued

90 minute meeting	MEETING LAYOUT OPTION 2	60 minute meeting
10 minutes	<p>PT Check (Personal Training Check)</p> <p>When children arrive they will go directly to the check-in table where coaches or adult helpers will be waiting to take care of the record keeping and listen to the children recite verses.</p>	5 minutes
15 minutes	<p>Opening Ceremonies*</p> <p>Welcome</p> <p>Icebreakers (high energy, quick games) or review questions</p> <p>Recite Motto</p> <p>Songs (optional)</p>	10 minutes
20 minutes	<p>Coach's Challenge</p> <p>Bible lesson</p>	15 minutes
15 minutes	<p>PT Huddle (Personal Training Huddle)</p> <p>Children will meet with their coach to discuss lesson application.</p>	10 minutes
20 minutes	<p>The Games</p>	15 minutes
10 minutes	<p>Closing</p> <p>Give out awards</p> <p>Parent Connection</p> <p>Announcements</p> <p>Snack (optional)</p>	5 minutes

*Churches who plan to do pledges should include them in the Opening Ceremonies.

Olympians Meeting from Start to Finish

Opening Ceremonies (15 minutes)

As children arrive the atmosphere should be warm and inviting. When the Opening Ceremonies begin, it should be fun and exciting. When you watch the opening ceremonies for the Olympics, you can almost feel the energy in the air. The athletes have trained for this moment. The coaches have lived for this event. The fans are eager to see the competition. The beginning of your Olympians meeting should be full of the same kinds of energy for both the children and the coaches. This time can be used to:

- Welcome the kids
- Open in prayer
- Have an icebreaker or ask review questions from last week's Bible lesson (Icebreakers and Review Questions are available by going to lcm.wol.org and clicking on resources.)
- Recite the Olympians Motto
- Songs (optional)

Olympians Meeting from Start to Finish continued

PT Check (10 minutes)

PT Check is time set aside for record keeping. Coaches (or adult helpers) will take attendance, listen to Olympians recite memory verses, record any Services that were completed this week, collect any completed book reports and check Quiet Times.

TOOLS FOR YOUR RECORD KEEPING

Record/Award Sticker Sheet



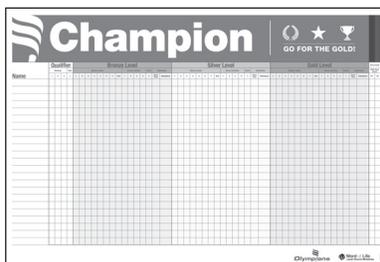
Each Olympians Quiet Time Pack includes a Record/Award Sticker Sheet for Coaches to keep track of each child's accomplishments. Record keeping is as easy as peeling the sticker off the sticker sheet and putting it in the appropriate spot on the award page inside their Quiet Time as progress is made. When the children take their Quiet Time home, parents will be able to see what stickers their child has earned and what they should work on next. The back of the sticker sheet provides space for contact information, attendance and notes. Record/Award Sticker sheets can be put in a binder by grade level or individual files can be made for each child that the leaders keep.

Individual Discipleship Sheets



This one-page form is located in your Leader's Book. Ten copies of the form are provided in each book. It gives you a snapshot of the accomplishments and growth of each child in your PT group. You can update this sheet from the Record/ Award Sticker sheet each week.

Wall Chart



What is recorded on the Individual Discipleship Sheet or the Record/Award Sticker Sheet should then be recorded on the Olympians Achievement Wall Chart. These charts are a great way to honor the children making progress and to motivate others to greater involvement. Since discipleship is teaching others to be what you already are, coaches should add their names to the Wall Chart, so the children can follow their example.

The meeting lay out (*Option 1 or Option 2*) that you choose will determine when and how PT Check is run during your Olympians meeting.

PT Check for meeting layout - Option 1

By choosing Option 1 for your meeting layout, your PT Check will take place after the Opening Ceremonies in your small group areas. After you have taken care of the record keeping you should get to know the children in your group. Ask them about their family, their friends, school, sports, their likes and dislikes.

PT Check can also be a great time for the children to share prayer requests and for you to pray for them. Taking prayer requests and writing them in the prayer section of your Quiet Time communicates your concern for the children. You can also use this time to broaden their perspective of prayer. Guide them to pray not only for sick friends and relatives but also for the salvation of individuals, for church needs and personal needs.

PT Check for meeting layout - Option 2

By choosing Option 2 for your meeting layout, your PT Check will take place at the beginning of your Olympians meeting. You will set up a check-in table for all the children to come to when they arrive. At this table there should be one Coach or adult helper for each age group: Challengers, Conquerors and Champions. Each adult will have a notebook that they will use for their record keeping.

Children will drop off their Quiet Times to be checked later and returned to them at the beginning of PT Huddle. While at the table the child should recite any verses they have memorized, turn in book reports and tell about any Services that were completed during the week.

Once they are done at the table they will head to the Opening Ceremonies.

Additional ideas for PT Check following the Option 1 meeting plan:

- ✓ Help the children learn a memory verse and/or study for a verse test.
- ✓ Ask your kids for their sports and concert schedules and mark those important events in their lives on your calendar.
- ✓ At the beginning of the year, you may consider using a few minutes of PT Check to teach the children how to use their Quiet Time. Children may look at the Olympians Quiet Time as a fun “activity book”. You can take this opportunity to help them find the verses in their Bible, read the passage together, explain the passage, give them time to fill in their QT for that day, and pray with them.

Olympians Meeting from Start to Finish continued

Coach's Challenge (20 minutes)

The Coach's Challenge is the focal point of Olympians. Everything you do either leads up to the Coach's Challenge, or flows out of this time. All other aspects of the meeting can be themed around the Bible lesson. All lessons are available by going to lcm.wol.org and clicking on resources.

This Bible Study is designed to teach your children to know Biblical truth and will challenge them to grow spiritually. Each lesson is filled with interactive elements to keep them engaged.

A great tool that Word of Life has made available to you is the Parent Connection. It is a brief summary of the Bible lesson and application that should be given to the parents to help reinforce the truths that were taught during the Olympians meeting. The Parent Connection for each Bible lesson can be found by going to lcm.wol.org and clicking on resources. This summary should be sent to the parents each week in the manner that is most effective: a printed copy sent with each child, through email, text or Facebook.

PT Huddle
(15 minutes)

This PT time is all about application. You have just come from the Coach's Challenge and now it is time to help the children in your group see how the truths of God's Word applies to their individual lives today. Be careful to not use this time to reteach the lesson. Instead, think about the specific circumstances each child in your group is currently facing in their home, at their school or with their friends.

The Leader's Book is a great tool to use for an effective PT Huddle. In this book you will find the stated application goal for each Bible lesson and three application questions (with answers) already prepared for you. By reviewing the Leader's Book prior to the Coach's Challenge, you will be ready to effectively lead the children to a personal application of the lesson. As you get to know the children in your group more, you will be able to determine what area of application you may want to focus on.

Additional ideas for PT Huddle:

If time allows, you can take this opportunity to share what you have been learning from your Quiet Time. You will want to give the children time to ask questions and/or discuss what they have learned from their Quiet Time.

Olympians Meeting from Start to Finish continued

The Games (20 minutes)

Now comes the part of your meeting the children look forward to the most: The Games! Children want to have fun. You want to teach them how to live for God. The Olympians program and your team of coaches can accomplish both successfully!

Maybe you get excited just thinking about creating and running a game time for children, or maybe it's just not your thing. We are here to help you either way!

WHERE TO GET GAMES

Whether you're a veteran game leader or a "rookie," you might be wondering where to find games. Here are some ideas:

Olympians Game List: We have a list of 60 great games for you to use! It's available by going to lcm.wol.org and clicking on resources, and it includes the time required for the games, equipment list, set up, rules, and many come with alternate ways to play for variety!

Games you already have: If you've been a children's ministry leader for a while, you may have a list of "favorites" that you can pull from. You can play them "as is," or adapt them to freshen them up.

Pull from other ministries: Often there are lists of games that come with Vacation Bible School curriculum, or that were played at a camp that your Olympians attended. These can be great because many of your Olympians will already know them, and you can remind them of the fun they had at VBS or camp!

Other Websites and Books: There are many other great resources out there. You can use Google to search for children's ministry games, use Pinterest to search for ideas, use Facebook to ask friends who are also in children's ministry, or even buy a book full of game ideas! There are a lot of great ideas out there from some very creative people!

WHERE TO GET SUPPLIES

Depending on the game and the person who created it, the list of necessary equipment can be very simple or overwhelmingly complex.

Some thoughts:

- ✓ You may already have a lot of game supplies in the gym or game closet. Take a thorough inventory, and write down what you have. This will help you as you plan future Game Times.
- ✓ Ask around. Fellow church members, neighbors, or Facebook friends may have some extra balls, cones, bases or bean bags lying around in their garage that they would be willing to give to your Olympians ministry.
- ✓ Shop around. Between stores (dollar stores, thrift stores, Walmart) and online shopping (Amazon, PE supply websites) you'll be able to find any supplies you may need, at a variety of quality levels and prices.

Closing Ceremony (10 minutes)

The Olympic Closing Ceremonies is never an afterthought for the Olympics, but a time of celebration and recognition. The same should be said about the conclusion of your weekly Olympians meeting. Celebrate the completion of another exciting meeting with:

- Awards and recognition of the children using certificates, pins, and wristbands to honor the progress they have made during the week or over the past several weeks
- Hand out the Parent Connection to each child to take home (or plan to email, text or send it out through social media as soon as your Olympians meeting is over)
- Announce upcoming activities
- Snack (optional)
- A word of prayer for God's continued blessing upon the children and leaders

Discipleship Strategy

Motto

The motto for Olympians is Philippians 3:14. This verse can be recited by your children in the translation of your choice. Reciting your motto in the Opening Ceremonies each week will help the children to learn it and also serve as a reminder to them that it is important to make good decisions to reach the goal of living their life to please God.

Quiet Time

Sometimes we think that reading the Bible every day is just for adults, but it is so important to instill good habits in children while they are still young, including reading the Bible every day. The Quiet Time is a daily devotional with age appropriate activities. That's right! The Challengers (1st-2nd graders) have a Quiet Time book that was created just for them. The same is true for the Conquerors (3rd-4th graders) and the Champions (5th-6th grades). Each day of Quiet Time has a passage of verses (less verses for the younger and a few more for the older children) and an activity that goes along with what they read. There are also prayer request/praise pages for the children to fill in as they pray for their own needs and for the needs of others.

Quiet Times for adults are included in the Leader's Packs and follow the same Scripture passages as the children's Quiet Times. Coaches who strive to be faithful in their Quiet Time will be setting an example for their Olympians to follow.

Scripture Memory

Memorizing Scripture is another important habit for children to develop. Each age group will have a specific number of verses to memorize throughout the Olympians year.

12 Verses
Challenger

18 Verses
Conqueror

21 Verses
Champion

These verses were specifically chosen for your Olympians because they teach foundational truth and have practical life application that will help each Olympian to grow.

The memory verses are printed in the front of the Quiet Times in five Bible translations. Feel free to remove any pages your children will not be using. Your Olympians should be encouraged to memorize these verses during the week and recite them to their coach during PT Check.

Each level of achievement (Bronze, Silver and Gold), has a specific number of verses to complete. Once an Olympian has recited all the verses for a level they will take a fill-in-the-blank verse test on those verses. The Silver verse test covers all of the verses for both the Bronze and Silver levels. The Gold verse test covers all the verses for the year. Copies of the verse tests for each level are available in all five translations by going to lcm.wol.org and clicking on resources.

The Leader's Pack includes a Scripture memory pack, so the coaches can be memorizing verses right along with their Olympians.

Reading Books

At a young age children are learning the importance of reading. In the Olympians program you will encourage your children to choose good Christian books to read. Reading Christian books will take them on fun adventures where they can learn many faith-based lessons taught in creative ways. Word of Life has a list of age appropriate books that we recommend. This list can be found by going to lcm.wol.org and clicking on resources. You will also want to encourage your children to check your church's library, a Christian bookstore, or the internet for other great Christian books to read.

Each child is required to read one age-appropriate book and complete a book report for each level of achievement (Bronze, Silver and Gold) for a total of three books for the year. If you work with younger children, you may consider reading a few pages of a book to them each week during PT Check until the books are completed. Word of Life has provided a Book Report Form that is available by going to lcm.wol.org and clicking on resources.

Service

Service is an act of helping or doing work for someone. Serving others is an important Biblical principle. Galatians 5:13 tells us to "serve one another." Christ set the example by coming to earth to serve rather than to be served. Service though, is not just for adults. Children can also serve. In fact it's crucial to strive to develop a servant's heart in the lives of your children. Teaching the need for service and providing service activities allow your children to follow Christ's example. Imagine what our churches will be like in the years to come as we raise up a generation of children who know the joy of serving and allowing Jesus to minister through them! Just think of the impact they can have on their own families by the simple act of service. Children can even use the gifts and abilities that the Lord has given them to serve and be an example in their community. Children who serve others through the power of God in our self-serving society can make a real impact for the cause of Christ.

Discipleship Strategy continued

Service in the Church

Within the walls of a church building, service opportunities are always available. Serving others can be done:

Behind the scenes

Most children notice those who serve from the platform during your weekly worship services. What they don't always see are the acts of service that take place either behind the scenes or during the week, when no one is looking. You can help the children see how encouraging they would be to the custodial staff if they volunteered to help clean the church, especially after Olympians. You may also challenge your children to write a letter, an encouragement card and/or a thank you note to a college student, a member of the military, a shut-in or someone who hasn't been in church or Olympians in a while.

Out in Front

As children begin to discover some of their talents and abilities, you can help them see how they can be used to give glory to God. Encourage children to to serve through music ministry, drama, puppets, etc., with a humble heart.

SERVICE IDEAS IN THE CHURCH

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| ✓ Church clean-up day | ✓ Invite a friend to Olympians |
| ✓ Thank you note to Sunday School Teacher | ✓ Music Ministry |
| ✓ Help Church Secretary | ✓ Puppets |
| ✓ Encouragement Card to College Student | ✓ Drama |
| | ✓ Nursery |

Since every church is unique we couldn't possibly list all the ways children can serve in your individual church. As you think of how your church is run and where/how your Olympians can serve, you will be able to help them think of more ways they can serve in the church. The list of service opportunities could be endless!

Service in the Home

Service in the home is sometimes forgotten. Often we consider our home as the place where we let our guard down and be our true selves. However, those times when our guard is down are just as important of a time to serve as when we are at church or out in our community. There are a number of ways that you can teach children to serve at home.

Helping with our hands

The first question that comes to mind when considering what Service in the home looks like is, “Do my chores count for Service?” The answer of course would be no. We want kids to look beyond their normal responsibilities and look for ways they can show kindness or help out in a way they weren’t even asked to by a parent. Sometimes these opportunities for service are planned out; for example, setting aside time on a Saturday to wash the car. There will also be those times when mom may be having a rough day and the child makes her a card or volunteers to wash dishes that night.

Spiritual Encouragement (family devotions)

A child can even have a spiritual impact on their family. One way would be to lead family devotions. You may be wondering, “How can a first grader lead devotions?” There are many ways that even a young child can do this. During family devotions a child can share one of their memory verses and explain what it means. They can also share about what they were taught during Coach’s Challenge at Olympians.

SERVICE IDEAS IN THE HOME

- ✓ Wash the car
- ✓ Rake leaves
- ✓ Family devotions
- ✓ Thank you note to parent
- ✓ Volunteer for extra chores

Encourage the children to think creatively and come up with their own ideas as they strive to show the love of Christ by serving their own family.

Discipleship Strategy continued

Service in the Community

Jesus set the example when it comes to serving the community. In Matthew 9:36, Jesus looked at the crowd and even though he had been teaching and helping people all day, he was still able to look at the crowd of people and be moved with compassion. As you help your children look at their community, do they see people the way Jesus did? Serving the community will help both you and your Olympians see people just as Jesus did and give you a desire to help!

When considering how to serve in the community, an Olympian may immediately think of ways they can be a help to their neighbors. They can serve by raking leaves, shoveling snow or taking a card and cookies to someone who could use some encouragement.

As you think of community, this may be a great opportunity to put together a group Service. You can plan to clean up the park, give out bottled water at a 5k, go caroling, fill shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child, and collect food for a local rescue mission or food pantry. Also, your Olympians who used their talents to serve in church through music ministry, drama or puppets could use that same talent at a Senior Center.

Reaching out to help meet the physical needs of your community is very important. So, too, is meeting the spiritual needs. Some Olympians are bold in their faith and will want to share their testimony. Some are artists and will create a Gospel tract to share. Encourage the children to invite their friends to Olympians where they will hear more about God and His Word.

SERVICE IDEAS IN THE COMMUNITY

- ✓ Park clean up
- ✓ Christmas caroling
- ✓ Shoebox ministry
- ✓ Collect food for local food pantry
- ✓ Share your testimony
- ✓ Visit shut-ins
- ✓ Ministry to Senior Center
- ✓ Parade float

These are just a few ideas. If you are still looking for more ideas for your children to serve in your church, their home and in your community, feel free to contact your Ministry Coach.

Encourage your Olympians to try serving in all three areas (church, home and community). Each Olympian will need to complete a specific number of Services throughout the year.

**6 Services
Challenger**

**9 Services
Conqueror**

**12 Services
Champion**

Coaches will be able to keep track of the Services completed by each Olympian during PT Check.

Levels of Achievement

Requirements for Qualifier

- ✓ Attend 3 meetings
- ✓ Memorize Olympians Motto

Requirements for Bronze

- ✓ Memorize Bronze Level Verses
(*Challenger – 4, Conqueror – 6, Champion – 7*)
- ✓ Take and Pass the Bronze Level Verse Test
- ✓ Read and complete a book report on one Christian book
- ✓ Complete Bronze Level Services
(*Challenger – 2, Conqueror – 3, Champion – 4*)
- ✓ Be Faithful with Quiet Time
- ✓ Be Faithful with Church Attendance

Requirements for Silver

- ✓ Memorize Silver Level Verses
(*Challenger – 4, Conqueror – 6, Champion – 7*)
- ✓ Take and Pass the Silver Level Verse Test
- ✓ Read and complete a book report on one Christian book
- ✓ Complete Silver Level Services
(*Challenger – 2, Conqueror – 3, Champion – 4*)
- ✓ Be Faithful with Quiet Time
- ✓ Be Faithful with Church Attendance

Requirements for Gold

- ✓ Memorize Gold Level Verses
(*Challenger – 4, Conqueror – 6, Champion – 7*)
- ✓ Take and Pass the Gold Level Verse Test
- ✓ Read and complete a book report on one Christian book
- ✓ Complete Gold Level Services
(*Challenger – 2, Conqueror – 3, Champion – 4*)
- ✓ Be Faithful with Quiet Time
- ✓ Be Faithful with Church Attendance

**Requirements
for Victory
Award**

- ✓ Fulfill the requirements for the Gold level for 2 years
-

**Requirements
for Triumph
Award**

- ✓ Fulfill the requirements for the Gold level for 4 years
-

**Requirements
for Steadfast
Award**

- ✓ Fulfill all the requirements for the Gold level for all six years (1st-6th grade)
- ✓ In the sixth grade year, the gold level test needs to be proctored by your Ministry Coach.
- ✓ All requirements for scholarship, including the verse test, must be completed by May 31.

Awards

As your children meet the requirements for each level, you will be able to reward them for their hard work and faithfulness. This will encourage them throughout the year to remain faithful.

As soon as a child fulfills all the requirements for Qualifier, you will want to reward them with the Olympians Qualifier Certificate. As the year progresses and the child completes the requirements for each level (Bronze, Silver and then Gold) you will also be able to reward them. You may choose to do so with a certificate and/or pin for the corresponding level. These awards should be given out during the Closing Ceremonies.

Certificates

- ✓ Olympians Qualifier Certificate (*Challenger, Conqueror, Champion*)
- ✓ Bronze Certificate (*Challenger, Conqueror, Champion*)
- ✓ Silver Certificate (*Challenger, Conqueror, Champion*)
- ✓ Gold Certificate (*Challenger, Conqueror, Champion*)

Pins

- ✓ Bronze Pin (*Challenger, Conqueror, Champion*)
- ✓ Silver Pin (*Challenger, Conqueror, Champion*)
- ✓ Gold Pin (*Challenger, Conqueror, Champion*)

Medals

In the Olympics, Olympians compete in order to win a gold medal. In the Olympians Ministry, the children will be completing levels of achievement so that they may also receive a medal.

These medals (Bronze, Silver and Gold) are to be awarded at the end of your Olympians year at an awards ceremony. Each child is to receive the medal that corresponds with the highest level that they completed.

- ✓ Bronze Medal (*Challenger, Conqueror, Champion*)
- ✓ Silver Medal (*Challenger, Conqueror, Champion*)
- ✓ Gold Medal (*Challenger, Conqueror, Champion*)

Trophies

Some children will achieve the gold medal over multiple years. A great way to encourage this level of faithfulness is to reward that child with a trophy. Trophies should be given out at the Awards Ceremony at the end of your Olympians year.

VICTORY AWARD

This trophy is awarded to the Olympian who achieves Gold Level for 2 years.

TRIUMPH AWARD

This trophy is awarded to the Olympian who achieves Gold Level for 4 years.

STEADFAST AWARD

The highest level an Olympian can achieve in the Word of Life Olympians Program is Steadfast. This trophy is awarded to the child who completes all the requirements for Gold Level for 6 years.

In Addition, Olympians who meet all the requirements for Steadfast will earn a free week of summer camp at The Wild or WOL Florida Youth Camp (available the summer of the same year the award is earned).

They will receive a \$500 scholarship to the Word of Life Bible Institute. Many other Christian colleges and universities honor this scholarship as well.

Awards continued

Rubber Wristbands

Wristbands are a great way to encourage and honor your children for reaching a goal that is separate from the regular list of achievements for Bronze, Silver or Gold and should be awarded throughout the year. There are five different wristbands available for you to select from: Olympians, Bible, Faithful, Service, and Honor.

Some ways to use your wristbands may include a child who:

- ✓ Makes Qualifier
- ✓ Shows faithfulness to their Quiet Time
- ✓ Brings a visitor
- ✓ Demonstrates Godly character
- ✓ Sets an example of leadership amongst their peers
- ✓ Performs random acts of kindness
- ✓ Has improved in behavior
- ✓ Has grown in their spiritual walk with the Lord

The wristbands may also be used to award the children who have been challenged to do more than what is required like saying the books of the Bible, memorize additional verses, etc.

“Team All-Around”

Awards in the Olympians Ministry aren’t just about individuals. The Team All-Around award can only be achieved with a team effort.

When you meet for your annual planning meeting at the beginning of the year, you will set goals for the children as a whole. Each church will determine the goals they want their Olympians team to accomplish. This may include the children collectively memorizing a specific number of verses, completing a certain number of days of Quiet Time (or a specific number of students who are “faithful to QT”) and/or completing a specific number of Services. Achieving this award is a team effort. Challenge the children to help each other memorize verses, remind each other to do their Quiet Times and even plan to do services together!

If your group reaches their goal, celebrate! Plan a pizza party or an outing of their choice at the end of the year. Some ideas may include going out for ice cream, going to a trampoline park, bowling or roller skating.

Ordering your Materials

Starting the Year

Before your Olympians year begins, you will want to place an order for additional materials. This may include:

- **Olympians Leaders' Packs** (one per leader, remember, leadership is by example)
- **Quiet Time Packs** (one per Olympian)
There are different Quiet Time packs for each age group (Challengers, Conquerors and Champions). Some churches choose to wait to place their order for Quiet Time Packs until after the first meeting. By doing so they are able to determine a more accurate number of packs they will need to purchase.
- **Wall charts** (Plan to have at least one wall chart for each age group – Challengers, Conquerors and Champions)
To get you started, your Olympians Kit has one wall chart for each age group already included!
- **Certificates** (Qualifier, Bronze, Silver, and Gold certificates are sold by type in packages of 10)
- **Pins** (Challenger, Conqueror, and Champion age groups each have their own Bronze, Silver, and Gold pins which are sold individually)
- **Rubber wristbands** (Olympians, Bible, Faithful, Service, and Honor rubber wristbands are sold by type in packages of 5. They are inexpensive and great to have on hand to reward your children with throughout the year.)
- **Leader's reading book** (plan to purchase at least one per leadership team)

Ordering your Materials continued

Ending the Year

Near the end of your Olympians year, you should plan to place an order for all the awards your children have achieved this year. This may include:

- **Medals** (Challenger, Conqueror, and Champion age groups each have their own Bronze, Silver, and Gold medals which are sold individually)
- **Trophies** (Victory, Triumph, and Steadfast)

Our online store has many items available that will enhance your ministry. You can order all your materials throughout the year by going to www.wolstore.org or by calling 518-494-6000, option 2.

Olympians Store

An exciting way to motivate your children to reach their goals is to reward them for their accomplishments along the way. It is true that most children love to earn money. In Olympians they can earn Olympians Bucks for memorizing verses, passing the verse test, being faithful to Quiet Time, completing Services, reading books, bringing visitors, etc.

Here are some guidelines for setting up and running your Olympians Store:

Find a store manager: This person needs to be someone who is good at organization. It does not have to be one of the Olympians Coaches. In fact, it would be good to fill this position with an individual outside of your regular Olympians Coaching Staff. This person will make sure the store is stocked. The store manager may also want to find additional volunteers on the night the store is open to help the children as they make their purchases.

Choosing your store location: Your store can be set up in a variety of ways. Check to see if there is an unused room in your church that can be designated for the store. If a room is not available, have the store stowed neatly away in plastic bins and bring them out each time you plan to open the store for business. You may choose to set up tables for all of your merchandise on the nights the Olympians Store is open.

Stocking the store: Store products can be purchased from several different places. Look for a variety of items that your Olympians would want to spend their bucks on. Some ideas may include stuffed animals, activity books, Matchbox cars, journals/notepads and cans of sodas. Remember to assign a buck value to each item in your store. This value can be determined by considering the actual price of the item. Also, take into consideration how many bucks a child could earn and set the price at a reasonable amount.

Olympians Store continued

Store Hours: The store does not need to be open every week. Store nights can be monthly, quarterly, or once a year. Store nights can also be used for special occasions. For example, you can open the store at Christmas time to give the children an opportunity to purchase gifts for their family members or friends.

Record keeping: Use a simple chart with the Olympians' names and all the things that they can receive bucks for accomplishing (example: \$2 for completing at least 5 days of Quiet Time in a week, \$1 for memorizing a verse, \$2 for passing the verse test, \$1 for each Service done, etc.) This chart can be filled out during PT Check and kept from week to week until store night.

Distributing the bucks: Olympians Bucks can be handed out to the children weekly or kept until the night the store is open. If you have a visitor on store night, you may consider giving them at least 1 buck to spend in the store so that nobody is left out.

Making the store night flow: When it is time for the children to visit the Olympians store, allow for one PT group to visit the store at a time. Depending on the size of your group this could take some time. You will want to keep them moving!

Resources

Going to lcm.wol.org and clicking on resources will provide your team with some useful information and tools to make your ministry successful. Your Olympians ministry has been given a specific log-in and password that will provide access to these resources including:

- ✓ Olympians Bible Study Lessons and PowerPoints
- ✓ Ice breakers
- ✓ Games
- ✓ Scripture Memory Tests
- ✓ Individual discipleship sheets
- ✓ Book report sheets
- ✓ Verse lists
- ✓ Planning meeting guides
- ✓ And so much more!

Be sure all of your leaders have the username and password to gain access to these resources.

Transfer Live

www.transferlive.com has over one hundred training videos for youth ministry. These videos are designed to help in specific areas of your ministry. We cover topics including evangelism, teaching, and personal spiritual growth.

Ministry Visits

Your Ministry Coach's job is to help your ministry be the best it can be. Not only is he just a call, text or message away he will also come to visit your ministry from time to time. His goals during these visits are to be an encouragement to your team, give constructive feedback, gain new ideas from you, and evaluate future training needs.

Resources continued

Evangelistic Events

FASCAR

Fascar is a racing themed evangelistic event. Every child brings a matchbox or Hot Wheels car to compete in several races on a 32 ft. long track to see whose car is the fastest. In the middle of the competition a Gospel message is given. This event may also include racing themed games, activities and food.

If you are interested in hosting a Fascar, contact your Ministry Coach or go to www.lcm.wol.org/events for more information.