

TANNER KRISTOFFER EVAN KELSEY MARIO VAN WITH MYKELTI AND FRANCES  
STINE POLAHA HOFER REINHARDT PEEBLES WILLIAMSON FISHER

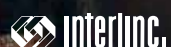
# RUN THE RACE

ROADSIDE ATTRACTIONS PRESENTS A WTA GROUP PRODUCTION A RESERVE ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION A 10TH LEPER PRODUCTION A CRYSTAL PRODUCTIONS "RUN THE RACE" TANNER STINE KRISTOFFER POLAHA EVAN HOFER KELSEY REINHARDT MARIO VAN PEEBLES  
WITH MYKELTI WILLIAMSON AND FRANCES FISHER PRODUCED BY JENNIFER RICCHIAZZI CSA AND REGINA MOORE CSA WRITTEN BY KEVIN EDELMAN AND PAUL MILLS DIRECTED BY DAN O'BRIEN CASTING BY KATHERINE TUCKER COSTUME DESIGNER KRISTOPHER S. KIMLIN EDITOR TIM TEBOW BILL REEVES ERIC WEIR  
THEY BRUNSON ROBBY TEBOW ERIK DELLENBACK JOE KOSAKOWSKI EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS DARRIN MOOHMAN AND JAKE MCENTIRE PRODUCED BY KEN CARPENTER AND JAKE MCENTIRE EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JAKE MCENTIRE JASON BAUMGARDNER AND CHRIS DOWLING WRITTEN BY CHRIS DOWLING  
RunTheRaceMovie.com | @RunTheRaceMovie  
IN THEATERS FEBRUARY 22

THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD.  
THE LOVE OF A BROTHER.



"BEHIND THE SCENES" YOUTHWORKER GUIDE





# RUN THE RACE

## Intro

You probably have a bunch of teenagers in your youth ministry who may have learned how to behave in church, and yet haven't really given their lives to Jesus. They know a lot about Him, but they might have a bunch of questions that keep them from stepping across the line and surrendering to Him. Where is God when bad things happen? How could He allow really bad people to thrive, and really good people to be taken from us too early? A childlike faith seems nice, but what if you're not a child anymore and this whole faith thing seems ridiculous? An upcoming film tries to show an answer to those kinds of questions.

## The Film

*Run the Race* is the story of Zach, a star high school running back with big plans on earning a scholarship to help him and his brother Dave escape their small town and their alcoholic father who abandoned them when their mother died. A busted knee threatens Zach's dreams of a full-ride to college. For much of the film, Zach questions why God would allow such tragedies to happen.

Zach's brother Dave was the team's quarterback—but had to leave the sport after a hit to the head the previous season resulted in seizures. He later joins the high school track team with his own hopes of a college scholarship. Along the way, Dave, with help from their godmother, holds on to the faith their mother taught them.

And Zach decides to stop running from God.

## This Youthworker Guide

*Run the Race* poses tough questions and is meant to stir up conversations about faith. Teenagers can benefit from the lessons taught in the film. Some of the topics include:

- *When Faith Doesn't Work* – How do we handle those situations when God seems to ignore our pleas – when trusting Him makes no difference in the situation?
- *Unresolved Issues and Our View of God* – Unresolved issues with parents (in this movie, the dad) influence how you see God. An unwillingness to forgive is crippling.
- *God's Presence in Difficult Times* – Although it seems counterintuitive, even when we run from God, He is present and waiting for us to turn to Him.

One of the film's producers said, “*Run the Race* is set against the background of high school football and track. It's about two brothers in a small Southern town trying to fight their way out of a hard set of circumstances. The bonds of brotherhood are strained but ultimately strengthened. It's a strong brother movie, with a redemption theme.”

Tim Tebow's brother, Robby, is the executive producer of this film, and Tim himself has a cameo appearance in it. No doubt that many people will wonder if this movie is Tim's story. While there aren't direct parallels, Tim and Robby have a strong belief in the power of brotherhood.



You have in this “Behind the Scenes” Youthworker Guide a complete resource that will enable you to engage your students with those important topics – using the movie as a starting point and moving from there to Biblical truth. Here are the elements that are included in this project:

- **Promotion**

In the four weeks before the theater showing, you will be able to take advantage of these resources like the Trailer and Movie Clips, Flyers, copies of Tim Tebow’s new book, *This Is the Day*, “Insider” emails with additional resources, and more.

- **Pre-Movie Youth Meeting Guide**

The week before the movie event, use the youth meeting plan we provide that includes a warm up activity, transition questions, film clips, trailer, Bible study outline about faith, and a sign-up sheet for the movie.

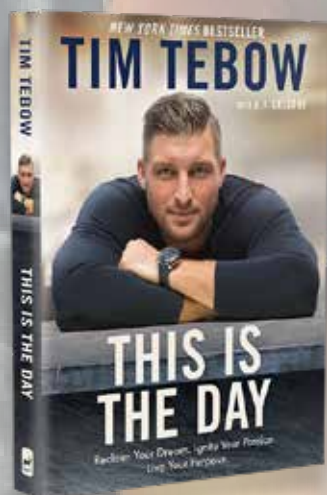
- **Movie Night Ideas**

On the evening that you take your group to see the film, use the after-movie discussion guide about dealing with unresolved issues and forgiveness, a film clip you can show (using your phone or iPad if you happen to go for dessert in a restaurant), and flyers to promote the Sunday Morning session.

- **Sunday Morning Session**

After seeing the film on the weekend, run the Sunday Morning session that includes a warm up activity, transition questions, film clips, trailer, and Bible study outline about God’s presence in difficult situations.

You can be sure that a LOT of people are really hoping and praying for you and your efforts to use *Run the Race* to help young people find new life in Christ!



## ***This Is The Day***

To get your group ready to see *RUN THE RACE*, Executive Producer Tim Tebow’s book publisher is giving Chapter 2 – “Get In The Game” – of Tim’s brand new book *This Is The Day* to you!

Go to [WMBooks.com/TimTebow](http://WMBooks.com/TimTebow), download it, and share it with your students!





# RUN THE RACE

## FILM CLIPS

### WHEN FAITH DOESN'T WORK

#### Film Clip 1

During the “meet the parents” scene, Ginger’s dad asks, “And, what do you think about Jesus?” Zach explains that he knows a lot ABOUT Jesus, not sure he can make sense of the questions he has. Ginger’s dad responds, “You’re not the first person sitting at this table to wrestle with his faith. Trust me.”

#### Film Clip 2

Zach talks to God: “Childlike faith, huh? You stack the cards against me, and then You just expect me to ... believe in You? Well, I’m not a kid anymore. It’s not that easy.”

### UNRESOLVED ISSUES AND OUR VIEW OF GOD

#### Film Clip 3

Conversation in the waiting room waiting for word from Dave’s surgery. The godmother says of the dad, “Losing your momma hurt him too. I’m not saying that his behavior is excusable, but it is forgivable. You’d be surprised how things can start to change when you forgive someone.”

#### Film Clip 4

Zach asks, “What kind of man walks out on his two sons after his wife dies of cancer?” Dave responds, “A broken one.” Zach asks, “And that’s a good enough answer for you?”

### GOD’S PRESENCE IN DIFFICULT TIMES

#### Film Clip 5

Zach surrenders to God. “Why is this so hard? Every time I come and pray to You, it’s so hard. I did it for my Momma, and You didn’t help me then. And I don’t understand it and I never will. I’m begging that You’ll hear me now, ’cause I’m done running. I’m done running. If You want me, I’m right here. I need You. Just help me. Just help me. I’m right here.”

Don’t miss doing a followup series after your group has seen *RUN THE RACE*! The official RTR six-session Bible study and Leader Kit includes all you need: one Bible study book, one DVD, and extra leader resources. Get them at [LifeWay.com/RuntheRace](http://LifeWay.com/RuntheRace)



## PROMOTION IDEAS

You know how hard you have to work to get your message across amid all the other marketing noise, the din of social media, and the whiz-bang of YouTube. You'll appreciate that we've brainstormed a few ideas that you can use to make your youth group anxious to see this movie. Take a look.

### Football Coach

Play up the high school sports angle – have a man who fits the part, wearing a ballcap and with a whistle on a lanyard around his neck, blow the whistle and burst into the group about five minutes after the leader has started giving his or her “talk” – the coach should interrupt, and shout a different coaching slogan each week. For instance:

- “T. E. A. M. – Together Everyone Achieves More!”
- “Hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard!”
- “Victory requires payment in advance!”
- “There's no ‘I’ in ‘TEAM’!”

Use his interruption as an opportunity to talk about your entire group going to see *Run the Race*.

### Flyers

You might be surprised at the numbers of “new” kids who will come to your movie event if invited by a friend. Make inviting friends easier by making up some flyers for your young friends to have in their backpacks, ready to hand out to their friends. You'll find a customizable template to use in the back of this Youthworker Guide.

### Special Guests

Invite a different Special Guest to each of your youth meetings in the month leading up to the opening of *Run the Race*. Interview the guests about what they think makes a person successful, or how they approach their roles. Some ideas:

- Two football coaches from rival schools
- Two running backs from rival schools

- A school Principal – who brings the most recent championship trophy his school has won
- The President of the main school's football booster club
- A track coach – who talks about the similarities and differences between the sports of football and track

### Social Media

Use the social media apps that are popular with your kids to send messages and images that might stoke the enthusiasm for this movie event. Start with some football- and track-related memes, and after a week or so mix in some info about when, where, how much, etc.

### “Brother” Playlist

Use Needtobreathe's song “Brother” and other songs brotherhood-themed songs from the interlinc playlist.





# RUN THE RACE

## TIMELINE

Too often youth leaders have a “ready, fire, aim” mentality when dealing with opportunities like *Run the Race*. The demands of youth ministry do call for much flexibility, creativity, and “just in time” delivery of awesome programming. The nature of teenagers means that we have to adapt, make do, and generally roll with the punches.

That kind of off-the-cuff ability works well much of the time – but sometimes an opportunity comes along that is too big, too exciting, and way too cool to let slide. Occasionally we are given a chance to create a ton of ministry effectiveness ONLY if we plan, prepare, promote, and perform with the best of our ability. *Run the Race* is just such an opportunity!

Since we understand youth ministry (being youth leaders ourselves), we’ve created this resource to help you make the most of the upcoming *Run the Race* movie. All the planning has been done for you – all you have to do is make this strategy happen. Easy!

## Now

- ❑ *Become an “Insider”* – Go to [tryouth.com](http://tryouth.com) if you haven’t already signed up to be an “Insider.” You’ll receive all kinds of practical resources that will help you make the most of this movie opportunity.
- ❑ Determine when you’ll take your group to the movie – Many youth leaders will want to take their groups to see *Run the Race* on the Friday night of the film’s opening weekend. Or, take the group on a Saturday night, which makes a compelling reason for the kids to come to your Sunday morning follow-up program. Either way, plan your show date, and then back-fill all the ideas listed below.

## Early January

- ❑ *Tim Tebow Video* – Tim has a strong interest in this film, and he wants to help you motivate your group to take advantage of it to reach their not-yet-Christian friends. He’s made a short video greeting that you can show your group. – and send out on all your social media channels. Cool stuff!

- ❑ *Show the Trailer* – It will introduce your students know to the film, and give you a chance to encourage your kids to invite their unchurched friends to attend a showing of the movie with them.

## Six Weeks Out

(the second week in January)

- ❑ *Start Praying* – Have your students identify two “I wanna ask ‘em” friends that your church’s prayer team can start praying for.
- ❑ *Start Promoting* – Place movie posters in the best places and have lots of flyers available. (A template is included in these materials.)
- ❑ *Show the Trailer* – The more that your students know about the film, the more likely they will be to invite their unchurched friends to attend a showing of the movie with them.

## Four Weeks Out

(the fourth week in January)

- ❑ *Keep Praying* – Your church’s prayer team could plan a prayer chain to be in action during your *Run the Race* movie showing and event.

- ❑ *Keep Promoting* – Bring back the Tim Tebow video, send out memes based on the movie to all of your social media channels, and have the “Football Coach” start showing up to your youth meetings!
- ❑ *Start Selling Tickets* – Do what some professional sports teams do and sell only pairs of tickets. That way you’ll encourage your students to take an unchurched friend with them to the movie.
- ❑ *Show Tim Tebow Countdown Video* “Four weeks til we’re going to *Run the Race*!”
- ❑ *Show the Trailer* – The more that your students know about the film, the more likely they will be to invite their unchurched friends to attend a showing of the movie with them.
- ❑ *Share the “BROTHERS” Playlist* – Text it to all your students, share it on your social posts. Ask your students to follow it and share it with their friends



## Three Weeks Out

(the last week of January)

- ❑ *Keep Praying* – Your church's prayer team could plan a prayer chain to be in action during your *Run The Race* movie showing and event.
- ❑ *Keep Promoting* – Encourage your students to use social media to tell their friends about the movie. Keep sending out those emails and handing out those flyers. Have a *Run the Race* insert about your event placed in your church's bulletin, and ask to make an announcement from the pulpit during your church's services.
- ❑ *Keep Selling Tickets* – By now you should have an idea if you need to reserve even more seats for the showing at the theater.
- ❑ *Announce Special Meeting* – Make a big deal out of the pre-movie session you'll be having at your regular youth group meeting time.
- ❑ *Show Tim Tebow Countdown Video* "Three weeks til we're going to *Run the Race*!"
- ❑ *Show The Trailer* – The more that your students know about the film, the more likely they will be to invite their unchurched friends to attend a showing of the movie with them.
- ❑ *Share the "BROTHERS" Playlist* – Text it to all your students, share it on your social posts. Ask your students to follow it and share it with their friends.

## Two Weeks Out

(the first week of February)

- ❑ *Keep Promoting* – The more that your students know about the film, the more likely they will be to invite their

unchurched friends to attend a showing of the movie with them.

- ❑ *Keep praying for the kids, promoting the movie, and selling tickets.*
- ❑ *Show Tim Tebow Countdown Video* "Two weeks til we're going to see *Run the Race*!"
- ❑ *Show the Tim Tebow Video* – Take advantage of his popularity to lend some excitement and meaning to seeing a movie at the theater.
- ❑ *Share the "BROTHERS" Playlist* – Text it to all your students, share it on your social posts. Ask your students to follow it and share it with their friends

## One Week Out

(the second week of February)

- ❑ *Pre-Movie RTR-themed Meeting* – Use the first Leader Guide and Student Guide included with this material. It uses a clip from the film.
- ❑ *Finalize Transportation* – Make sure you have enough vehicles, drivers, and all the materials you plan to have in each vehicle.
- ❑ *Confirm Tickets* – Make sure you have ordered enough to handle inevitable last-minute additions.
- ❑ *Show Tim Tebow Countdown Video* "One week til we're going to *Run the Race*!"
- ❑ *Show the third Tim Tebow Video (TBD)* – Take advantage of his popularity to lend some excitement and meaning to seeing a movie at the theater.
- ❑ *Keep praying for the kids, promoting the movie, and selling tickets.*
- ❑ *Share the "BROTHERS" Playlist* – Text it to all your students, share it on your social posts. Ask your students to follow it and share it with their friends.

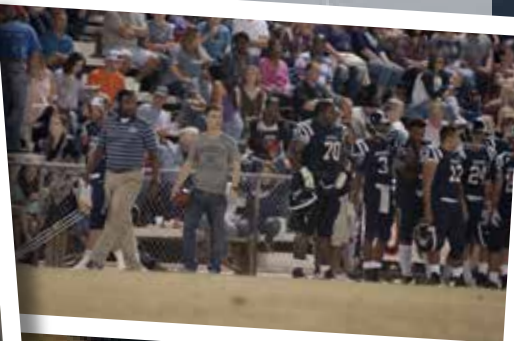
## Movie Week

(the third week of February)

- ❑ *Show Tim Tebow Countdown Video* "This is THE WEEK we're going to 'Run the Race'!"
- ❑ *Show the Tim Tebow Video* – Take advantage of his popularity to lend some excitement and meaning to seeing a movie at the theater.
- ❑ *Reconfirm Transportation* – Make sure you have one or two cars on standby in case you have a lot of "walk ups" – kids who just "show up" to see the movie and who you had no idea were coming.
- ❑ *Reconfirm Ticket Count* – See "Reconfirm Transportation" – You're better off having a few too many tickets than too few.
- ❑ *After-Movie Discussion* – A complete guide is included in these materials. Just after seeing a movie is the best time to talk about it!

## Sunday Morning After the Film

- ❑ *Follow-Up Meeting* – Use the Leader Guide and Student Guide included with this material.
- ❑ *Within 24 hours* – Have your volunteer leaders personally contact each student who attended the movie showing.





# RUN THE RACE

## PRE-MOVIE SESSION

### WHEN FAITH DOESN'T WORK

### Theme

Faith, Doubt

### Objective

Students will learn that faith is reasonable, and something that must be chosen based on facts.

### Warm Up

**Sky Skating** – You'll need a blindfold, a sturdy board (three or four feet long), a couple of bricks or blocks, and two burly guys. Announce that this game is a test of “board skills” while blindfolded. Ask for a volunteer to be a Sky Skater – hopefully, one who is good on skateboard. Blindfold the Sky Skater and have him or her step onto the board. Stand beside the Sky Skater and have him or her place a hand on your shoulder for balance. Then have your burly guys lift the board off the blocks. While you verbally encourage the burly guys to lift the board higher, the guys start moving the board a bit, but don't lift it at all. Instead, you begin to slowly lower yourself toward the floor. The Sky Skater will think that he or she is being lifted to shoulder height.

At this point, one of the burly guys exclaims that he can't hold the board any more. Shout, “You've gotta jump off! Jump! JUMP NOW!” The Sky Skater will jump, but he or she doesn't realize that the board is only a few inches from the floor instead of a few feet. The “landing” is hilarious. Reward your volunteer with all kinds of accolades and congratulations.

### Transition

Gather the group together and talk through these kinds of questions:

- What made that activity so much fun to watch?
- How might this activity be an illustration of faith?
- What kind of “faith” did the Sky Skater show?
- Does God trick us like we tricked our Sky Skater?

Explain that what we know determines what we do – how we act on that faith. The Sky Skater “knew” that the board was a few feet up but discovered that it wasn't. Sometimes, what we “know” isn't

true. At other times, we might know a lot about something or someone, but aren't willing to act on what we know. In that case, knowledge is different from belief. This film clip from the *Run the Race* movie illustrates this situation.

### Film Clip

During the “meet the parents” scene, Ginger's dad asks, “And, what do you think about Jesus?” Zach explains that he knows a lot ABOUT Jesus, not sure he can make sense of the questions he has. Ginger's dad responds, “You're not the first person sitting at this table to wrestle with his faith. Trust me.” Show **Film Clip 1**.

### Transition

Talk through these three questions:

- What's the difference between knowing *about* someone, and knowing someone?
- What illustration can you think of to show how knowing all about something or someone isn't nearly the same as knowing how to do something, or actually knowing the person?





“Wrestling with faith” – that’s a great way to put it. Each of us has doubts. Let’s explore why having faith in God isn’t a dumb thing to do.

## Bible Study

Hand out the Student Guides and use this outline to teach about faith.

*Faith is Reasonable* – For many, “faith” is, well, a little suspect. It’s certainly not something that a thinking person needs. Faith, for many, is a stubborn belief in something regardless of the facts.

Show **Film Clip 2** where Zach talks to God: “Childlike faith, huh? You stack the cards against me, and then you just expect me to ... believe in You. Well, I’m not a kid anymore. It’s not that easy.”

**1 Corinthians 15:1-7** – ...*I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ... For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that **Christ died** for our sins according to the Scriptures, that **He was buried**, that **He was raised** on the third day according to the Scriptures,*

*and that **He appeared** to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, **He appeared** to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time...* (The bold phrases are facts.)

- Doubts are real. So are facts. The resurrection of Jesus is a fact that you can rely on when you experience seasons of doubt.
- Faith isn’t blind – nor blindfolded! Faith considers the facts and determines what is reasonable.
- You don’t have to commit intellectual suicide to have faith. Faith is founded on facts, not on hoping something you know isn’t true to be true.

*Faith is a Decision* – In **Psalm 13:1-6**, David had real doubts. What he was experiencing made him wonder if God was really there – if He was really going to follow through on His promises. But, David chose to trust in God’s unfailing love.

**EX:** Hiker falls over a cliff, and clings to a small branch on the cliff face. He yells, “Help! Is there anyone up there? Help!” God answers, “I’m here. I’ll rescue you. But you’ll have to let go of the branch first.” The

hiker pauses, thinks, and then yells, “Is there anyone ELSE up there?”

- Faith isn’t something that you come to naturally. You have to choose it.
- What are you holding onto that is keeping you from choosing faith?

*Faith is an Action* – **EX:** Man begs God to let him win lottery. Three times the lottery comes and goes, but he doesn’t win. The man complains to God – he asks, “Why didn’t you help me win the lottery? Weren’t you listening to my prayer?” God suddenly appears and says, “Hey, I heard you. Meet me halfway on this. Buy a ticket.”

**James 2:14-19** – *What good is it... if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.*

- We live by faith when we put into action that which we believe.



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- Faith, like wisdom, is a skill – we get better at it the more we practice it.
- It comes into play especially when we attempt something that would be impossible without God’s involvement. Otherwise, we are merely operating in our own abilities, not God’s.

**(Matthew 17:20 – “Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”)**

- However, keep in mind that we are saved by grace through faith, not by works... **(Ephesians 2:8-9)**

## Wrap Up

You might be, like Zach in *Run the Race*, one of those people who have gone to church a lot, who knows lots of Bible verses and church songs. But, going to church doesn’t mean you’re a Christian – just like sleeping in your garage doesn’t mean you’re a car. Maybe now is when you need to move what you *know* in your head eighteen inches south to your heart. Who knows? Maybe seeing *Run the Race* is just what you need to cross that line and decide to have faith in God.

## Movie Trailer

Encourage your group about your *Run the Race* movie event. Give them the specific details about when, where, how much – and urge them to bring a friend!



## This Is The Day

To get your group ready to see *RUN THE RACE*, Executive Producer Tim Tebow’s book publisher is giving Chapter 2 – “Get In The Game” – of Tim’s brand new book *This Is The Day* to you!

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# ***RUN THE RACE***

Faith is \_\_\_\_\_

**1 Corinthians 15:1-7**

Doubts are \_\_\_\_\_ .

So are \_\_\_\_\_ .

Faith isn't \_\_\_\_\_

You don't have to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

to have faith.

Faith is a \_\_\_\_\_

**Psalms 13:1-6**

Faith isn't something that you come  
to \_\_\_\_\_ .

What keeps you from \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ faith?

Faith is an \_\_\_\_\_

**James 2:14-19**

We live by faith when we

\_\_\_\_\_ that which we believe.

Faith, like wisdom, is a \_\_\_\_\_

It comes into play especially when:

Keep in mind that:



# RUN THE RACE

## POST-MOVIE DISCUSSION GUIDE

### UNRESOLVED ISSUES AND OUR VIEW OF GOD

#### Theme

Forgiveness

#### Intro

You probably experience it every time you see a movie in a theater. You're leaving the theater, and the conversation goes along these lines: “I really liked that move.” “Yeah, me too. I didn't really expect him to do that.” “Yeah, me neither.” And so it goes for the next several minutes. We don't often engage in very meaningful conversation about the message of a film, but we do like talking about what we've just experienced.

In the case of *Run the Race*, let's see if we can move the discussion into areas of relational and spiritual importance. Doing so will require some effort and preparation, but the results might blow away everyone involved. So, carefully plan for the hour after the movie. Common sense will tell you that's the time when your young friends will be most willing to talk about it.

#### Go Someplace

Where you go after the movie depends on the size of the group you have. Find someplace neutral where you can talk without being interrupted – a restaurant near the theaters with a “back room” would be ideal. Make sure that your participants know that you're going to “debrief” the film so they'll be ready to talk when the time comes.

#### Generate Discussion

Once the food has arrived and things seem to be settling down to a dull roar, start getting some feedback about the movie by asking questions like:

- What surprised you about the movie?
- How would you summarize this movie in a tweet?
- What character did you identify with most?
- What emotions did you feel while watching the film?
- What do you think the “big message” of this movie is?
- Finish this sentence, “Dude, you have GOT to see this movie because...”

#### Get Serious

While you get out your iPad (or laptop, or whatever you have), explain that the attitude that Zach had about his father heavily influenced how Zach responded to God. He was blameful of his dad. He was unwilling to forgive. Explain how unresolved issues with our parents can really skew our view of God into something that isn't true of Him at all. Parents are people too, and we need to be able to forgive them when they've let us down and hurt us deeply.

Show the “**Unresolved Issues**” film clips – **Film Clips 3 and 4**. The first one is of the conversation in the waiting room waiting for word from Dave's surgery. The surrogate grandmother says of the dad, “Losing your momma hurt him too. I'm not saying that his behavior is excusable, but it is forgivable. You'd be surprised how things can start to change when you forgive someone.” In the Clip 4 Zach asks, “What kind of man walks out on his two sons after his wife dies of cancer?” Dave responds, “A broken one.” Zach asks, “And that's a good enough answer for you?”





Walk through this short Biblical discussion about the importance of forgiveness.

Read **Matthew 6:14-15**. Ask:

- Do we have to forgive everyone, or just some people?
- What are ways we can let someone know that we have forgiven him or her?
- How should we go about asking for forgiveness?
- Are there people in your life that need the same forgiveness that was given to you?

Read **Ephesians 4:3-32**. God calls us to get rid of anything that is not Christ-like. He says that in order to be more like Him, the hatred and angry parts of us must be rooted out. Discuss:

- When was a time you were truly hurt and needed God's help to move on?
- Why does God want us to get rid of all of these things?
- Is being angry wrong?

## Wrap Up

All of us have been hurt by people, and in turn have hurt others. We all are in need of God's forgiveness.

**John 3:16** tells us that God loved us so much He sent His son to die on a cross for us. Now THAT is forgiveness! If there is someone that you need to forgive, do it with the power of Jesus!



# RUN THE RACE

## SUNDAY MORNING SESSION

### GOD'S PRESENCE IN DIFFICULT TIMES

#### Theme

Difficulties; Comfort In, God's Pursuit

#### Objective

Students will realize that God knows them intimately, is always with them, and still loves them.

#### Warm Up

**Capture** – Gather your group in a large area to play this variation of *Capture the Flag*. Choose a person (the “Runner”) who will attempt to steal the opposing team's flag at the far end of the playing field or room. The Runner must work alone. All the others position themselves in groups of 4 or 5 people between the Runner and the goal. (Stagger them to anticipate movement of the lone opponent.) When the signal is given, have the Runner attempt to get to the other end of the area to steal the flag. Each group must move together and attempt to encircle the Runner to stop him or her from reaching the goal. The easiest way to capture the Runner is to form a chain by holding hands in a circle. To escape, the Runner

looks for a weakness in the group's defense (i.e. capture team's arms stretched out leaving holes to run underneath, someone letting go of a hand and breaking the secure circle, etc.) Groups need to work together so they don't run over and into each other. The game stops when the Runner eludes capture and grabs the flag. If the groups are close enough, the Runner will be caught several times during the process. You can replace the runner after each capture.

#### Transition

Gather the group together and discuss these kinds of questions:

- How is this game like a person trying to avoid God?
- The English poet Francis Thompson wrote a poem that attributed a unique name to God: “The Hound of Heaven.” What would be some of the characteristics that come to mind when you hear that name for God?
- How do you think God sees you?
- What does He want from you?

Explain that knowing that God is with you and chasing after you can be both good and a bit unnerving. It can be good because He is always there wanting you to acknowledge Him. It can be unnerving for the same reason: He is always there even when we think we can hide our actions from Him. No matter what happens to you, God wants to let you know that He is there for you. He wants to restore your life. He wants you to know His love for you. This film clip from the *Run the Race* movie illustrates this situation.

#### Film Clip

In what could be the key scene from the film, Zach surrenders to God. He exclaims, “*Why is this so hard? Every time I come and pray to You, it's so hard. I did it for my Momma, and You didn't help me then. And I don't understand it and I never will. I'm begging that You'll hear me now, 'cause I'm done running. I'm done running. If You want me, I'm right here. I need You. Just help me. Just help me. I'm right here.*” Show **Film Clip 5**.





## Transition

Discuss, “How does knowing that the Creator of the Universe wants a personal relationship with you and that He will do whatever it takes to get to you make you feel?” Explain that the truth of God’s presence in difficult times is far more comforting than having to deal with those things all on our own.

## Bible Study

Use this outline to teach from **Psalm 139:1-12** and **Ezekiel 34:11-12**.

**God Knows Us, Inside and Out (Psalm 139:1-6)** He knows us better than we know ourselves. He can empathize with what we are experiencing. Speaking about Jesus, **Hebrews 4:15** says, *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet He did not sin.* And, even though He knows everything about us, He loves us like crazy!

- Does that fact that He knows you inside and out make you a bit nervous? Why or why not?
- Why would David write, “Such

knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty to attain”?

- Don’t answer this aloud – what about you, your thoughts, your activities, your conversations, do you wish that God *didn’t* know about?

### God Is With Us, At All Times

**(Psalm 139:7-12)** Sometimes, especially when we experience difficulty and tragedy, we get the feeling that God has somehow become distant – that He either doesn’t know what we are going through or doesn’t care. We sense that He has abandoned us. Nothing could be further from the truth! Especially in those difficult experiences, He is *with* us. He told the Apostle Paul, *“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”* **(1 Corinthians 12:9)** If anything, He is *closer* to you during painful experiences than ever!

- Imagine you’re talking with a friend who has just experienced something really bad. Now that you know that God understands what your friend is going through, and is very close to him or her, what would you say to help your friend?
- What is comforting about the fact that God is with us at all times?
- Don’t answer this one aloud either – what places do you go to,

or things that you do, that you’d rather that God wasn’t with you?

### God Wants to Rescue Us

**(Ezekiel 34:11-12)** In this Scripture, God calls us His “sheep.” Sheep aren’t too bright. (When was the last time you saw one in the circus?) They wander off and forget how to get home. When they’re standing in the shade and the sun moves, they forget where the shade is. So, sheep need someone to watch over them, protect them, and rescue them. Jesus called Himself “the good shepherd” **(John 10:11, 14)** – and He told a teaching story about a shepherd who leaves the 99 sheep to fend for themselves while he went to rescue the single lost lamb. **(Luke 15:1-7)** That’s what God wants to be for us – the One who cares for us, protects us, and rescues us. We might wander, take a million steps away from Him, but we only have to take one step back and He is there to save us.

- What makes sense to you about people being like sheep?
- What don’t you quite get about God being like a shepherd?
- What would you tell a friend who said to you, “I tried religion – it didn’t work”?



## RUN THE RACE

### Wrap Up

How you handle the closing of your meeting will be determined by many factors – you’ll know best how to proceed. You might ask for everyone to bow their heads and close their eyes as you ask these questions – and to look up at you if they answer “yes” to a question. Be sure to take note of

who looks at you so you can tell his or her small group leader about it.

- Are you willing to say, like Zach did in *Run the Race*, “I’m done running. If You want me, I’m right here. I need you. Just help me”?
- Do you have some thoughts or actions that you know aren’t right,

and want to experience God’s forgiveness?

- Do you have friends or family who need to quit running from God and let Him into their lives?

Finish with a prayer, and then invite those that looked up at you to tell about it to their small group leaders.

Don’t miss doing a followup series after your group has seen *RUN THE RACE*! The official RTR six-session Bible study and Leader Kit includes all you need: one Bible study book, one DVD, and extra leader resources. Get them at [LifeWay.com/RuntheRace](http://LifeWay.com/RuntheRace)





# ***RUN THE RACE***

## **God Knows Us, Inside and Out**

**Psalms 139:1-6**

Does that fact that He knows you inside and out make you a bit nervous? Why or why not?

Why would David write, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty to attain"?

Don't answer this aloud – what about you, your thoughts, your activities, your conversations, do you wish that God *didn't* know about?

## **God Is With Us, At All Times**

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## **God Wants to Rescue Us**

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What makes sense to you about people being like sheep?

What don't you quite get about God being like a shepherd?

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# RUN THE RACE

IN THEATERS FEBRUARY 22ND

THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD.  
THE LOVE OF A BROTHER.

WE ARE GOING!