Date: 7/31/2021

Title: Go for Gold!

Theme: Christians are in a race even more important than the Olympics.

Object: Picture of Suni Lee and her gold medal, Suni on the balance beam; gold silver and bronze medals.

Text: 1 Corinthians 9:24-25 NIV - 24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. 25 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

Has anyone been watching the summer Olympic games on TV?

Have you seen the gymnastics and the swimming?

The Olympic games are played every four years in a different city of the world.

This year they are being played in Tokyo, Japan.

The Olympic Games is a gigantic competition between athletes from all over the world.

There are more than 10,300 athletes competing for medals in the Olympics.

These athletes come from 206 countries around the world.

There are 339 events in 41 sports.

The athletes compete for medals that look like this. [Show picture of medals, explain gold, silver and bronze]

So far in the Olympic games, the USA has won 16 gold medals, 17 silver medals and 11 bronze medals for a total of 44. We are in first place for total medals.

One of the most interesting competitions is women’s gymnastics.

Everybody was hoping Simone Biles would win her sixth gold medal in gymnastics, but she has dropped out of the competition.

But another American gymnast named Suni Lee has just won the gold medal in the women’s all-around competition. Here is a picture of her with her gold medal.

The all-around competition has four events: the vault, the uneven bars, the balance beam, and the floor exercise. Suni Lee had the best combined score on all of those events and she won the gold.

Here is a picture of her on the balance beam. It looks like she’s doing a back flip and landing on the beam.

Now I brought a balance beam with me today. Who would like to participate in our own Olympic games?

Whoever can stand the longest on one foot on the balance beam is the winner.

The athletes that compete in the Olympics have worked long and hard to get better at their sport.

And when they compete in the Olympics, they will keep their eye on the prize and not let anything stand in the way of doing their very best to win a gold medal.

Now you and I may not be in the Olympics, but the Bible says we are in a race that is even more important than the Olympic games. [Read text again]

The Bible says that being a Christian is like being in the Olympics. We are in the race of living a Christian life.

And just like the Olympic athletes, we need to train in order to win the race we are in.

How do we train to be the best we can be at living the Christian life?

God has given us a training manual. It is the Bible.

The Bible tells us all about God’s commandments and how God wants us to live.

And God has given us a trainer to show us what it is like to be a Christian. That trainer is Jesus.

If we read the Bible and spend time talking to Jesus, then we will be able to run the race and win the gold.

Everyone who finishes the race loving and trusting Jesus is a winner.

If we finish the race, and fall into the arms of Jesus, we don’t just get a gold medal, we get to walk on streets of gold in the kingdom of God forever.

Do you want to go for the gold? Let’s keep our eyes on Jesus and finish the Christian race!