

MCUSA Session - Olympics



Theme Notes

Curriculum Title	Messy Summer Games {Family Olympics}
Bible Verse	Philippians 3:14 'I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.' (NIV)
Bible Story	<p>Daniel - There are multiple stories from Daniel that you can focus on for the session depending on the theme you'd like to dive into.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Daniel 1 - Daniel chooses a healthy diet/training plan ● Daniel 2 - Daniel honors God and gives God all the credit/honor for his accomplishments ● Daniel 3 - Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego are saved in the furnace (God can do the impossible.) ● Daniel 6 - Daniel in the Lion's Den (Nothing is impossible for our God.)
Messy Reflection to share with team	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In what ways has our Messy Church grown and developed? How can we encourage further growth? 2. How can we equip and train each other as we each continue to grow in Christ? 3. Have you ever seen something "impossible?" 4. Are there any seemingly impossible things you are praying for right now?
How does this session help people grow in Christ?	<p>As families explore the story (or a part of the story) of Daniel they can learn many lessons about leading a Christian life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Daniel 1 reminds of the importance of feeding our souls through prayer and scripture. ● In Daniel 2, we are reminded that all we do should be for God's glory. ● We learn the story of Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego in Daniel 3 and are reminded that nothing is impossible for God. We are also reminded of the importance of doing the right thing even when it might be difficult or scary. ● Finally, in Daniel 6 we see Daniel saved from the lions in their den which reminds us of God's power to save as well as the importance of holding strong in our beliefs even when doing so is terrifying.

Activities

1. Olympian Prayer Station	Activity Notes
	<p>Materials Needed: pictures of Olympians with names noted, paper picture frames or cardstock to stick the photos on, glue dots or glue sticks</p> <p>Directions: Select an Olympic athlete photo and glue the photo to the frame/ paper. Write his/her name under the picture. Say a prayer for this athlete. Take the framed photo home and keep this person in your prayers.</p> <p>Note: Indoor or Outdoor</p> <p>Talking/Thinking Points: It takes years of dedication and training to become an Olympian. Similarly, it takes dedication and time to become the best Christian you can be. How can you “train” yourself to best follow Jesus?</p>

2. Trainer/Coach Thank You Cards	Activity Notes
	<p>Materials Needed: cards, envelopes, decorating supplies, list of local coaches w/ addresses (possibly from local school districts/sports associations)</p> <p>Directions: Create cards thanking local coaches for the time and energy they dedicate to training children and youth.</p> <p>Notes: Indoor or Outdoor</p> <p>Talking/Thinking Points: Think about any coaches you’ve had. What did you learn from them? What made them a great coach? As you create your thank you card, say a prayer for the coach you are creating it for.</p>

3. Streamer Race	Activity Notes
	<p>Materials Needed: streamers</p> <p>Directions: Have each participant race to unravel the roll of streamers as quickly as possible once time begins. The winner is the first one to completely unroll their streamer.</p> <p>Notes: Indoor or Outdoor</p> <p>Talking/Thinking Points: When you think of streamers do you think about parties? As you unroll the streamer celebrate that you worship a God that can do the impossible.</p>

4. Sponge Relay	Activity Notes
	<p>Materials Needed: large sponges, buckets (mark half of the buckets with a fill line), water</p> <p>Directions: Set up the game course by placing empty buckets across from buckets filled with water. Divide participants into teams, if needed. Handout sponges. Once the game starts, teams will race to fill (up to the marked line) their bucket by soaking up water with their sponges and then running to the empty bucket and wringing it out.</p> <p>Notes: Outdoor</p> <p>Talking/Thinking Points: As you raced to fill up your bucket with the sponge leaking water, did you get discouraged? Do you think Daniel ever got discouraged when he was faced with obstacles to practicing his faith? How do you think Daniel would have overcome these obstacles? How did you overcome them in this activity?</p>


5. Beach Ball Relay	Activity Notes
	<p>Materials Needed: beachballs (enough for every two participants), marked beginning/ending points</p> <p>Directions: Have participants pair up and stand back-to-back. Once the game starts each group will race with the beach ball between their backs to a marked finish line. Participants can not touch the ball or hold it up with their hands.</p> <p>Notes: Indoor or Outdoor</p> <p>Talking/Thinking Points: How did your partnership work? Did you feel that your partner “had your back?” As Christians, we have someone that always has our backs: Jesus.</p>

6. Training Plan	Activity Notes
	<p>Materials Needed: printed calendar for the current or next month, writing utensils</p> <p>Directions: Brainstorm ways that you can feed your soul and train to become a better Christian (e.g., reading Scripture, spending time in prayer, performing acts of service). Create a training plan on the calendar with the different activities. Take the training plan home and use it to help you practice your faith in the coming month.</p> <p>Notes: Indoor or Outdoor</p> <p>Talking/Thinking Points: Athletes spend a lot of time training to get better at their sport. Similarly, we can become better Christians if we spend time practicing our faith.</p>

7. Three Legged Race	Activity Notes
	<p>Materials Needed: bandannas or other band to use to tie participants legs together, marked beginning/ending points</p> <p>Directions: Have participants form teams of two and stand side-by-side. Have participants loosely tie their side- by-side legs together so that each team has only 3 legs. Start the game and have teams race to the finish line.</p> <p>Notes: Indoor or Outdoor</p> <p>Talking/Thinking Points: Although it was probably a lot harder to race tied to someone else, did you appreciate knowing that you were part of a team? How do you think Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego felt about not being alone when they were sent to the furnace?</p>


8. Frozen Medals	Activity Notes
	<p>Materials Needed: plastic “gold” medals frozen into cups (hang a medal into a plastic cup and then fill with water and place in freezer)</p> <p>Directions: Hand each participant a frozen medal and have them race to get the medal out using any available means.</p> <p>Notes: Outdoor</p> <p>Talking/Thinking Points: When you first learned of this challenge, how did you feel? Did you dread getting cold? How do you think Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego felt when they learned they were being sent to the furnace?</p>

9. Drag Your Friend Race	Activity Notes
	<p>Materials Needed: large, old towels (or tablecloths), marked beginning/end points</p> <p>Directions: Have participants form teams of two and line up at the starting line. One team member will drag the other on the provided towel/cloth to the start finish line.</p> <p>Notes: Outdoor</p> <p>Talking/Thinking Points: Which person, on each team, was responsible for the team's performance? While we might work hard and practice, ultimately, who should we give credit to for our successes? After all, God is responsible for who you are - all the talent you have was given to you by Him!</p>

10. Olympic Ring Artwork	Activity Notes
	<p>Materials Needed: toilet paper tubes, paint in the Olympic ring colors (red, green, yellow, blue, black), paper</p> <p>Directions: Create your own Olympic ring artwork by dipping the ends of the toilet paper tubes into the paint and pressing onto the paper.</p> <p>Notes: Indoor or Outdoor</p> <p>Talking/Thinking Points: The Olympic rings symbolize unity. Can you think of any symbols in your faith that unify us as Christians?</p>

11. Pass the Water Relay	Activity Notes
	<p>Materials Needed: buckets, water, plastic cups</p> <p>Directions: Have the participants form into teams and give each participant a cup. Each team must transfer the water from one bucket to the other using a cup relay (one person fills their cup from the full bucket and then dumps their cup into the next player's cup and so on). The winning team is the one that ends up with the most water transferred (up to a fill line) in the shortest time.</p> <p>Notes: Outdoor</p> <p>Talking/Thinking Points: To be successful in this task you had to stay focused on what you were supposed to be doing. In the same way, Daniel stayed focused on God even when others, including the king, tried to distract him. How can you stay focused on serving Jesus and shining His light in the world?</p>

12. Sack Race	Activity Notes
	<p>Materials Needed: burlap sacks or garbage bags, marked beginning/ending points</p> <p>Directions: Provide each participant with a sack and have them carefully get inside. Once the game begins, each participant must make their way to the finish line while remaining inside the sack.</p> <p>Notes: Outdoor</p> <p>Talking/Thinking Points: Was this game easy or difficult? Who can you rely on when confronted with difficult situations or obstacles in your path? Who did Daniel rely on?</p>

<p>13. Olympic Torch Craft</p>	<p>Activity Notes</p>
	<p>Materials Needed: toilet paper or paper towel tubes, aluminum foil, red/yellow/orange tissue paper</p> <p>Directions: Wrap aluminum foil around the paper tube and stick tissue paper inside to make it look like flames are coming out the top of the torch.</p> <p>Notes: Indoor or Outdoor</p> <p>Talking/Thinking Points: The torch is a symbol for the Olympic Games which put on display all that humans are capable of athletically. The fire in your torch can serve as a reminder of all that God is capable of doing. Remember God is capable of impossible things - like keeping Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego safe inside a fiery furnace.</p>

<p>14. Frozen T-Shirt Race</p>	<p>Activity Notes</p>
	<p>Materials Needed: frozen t-shirts* (thoroughly wet t-shirts and then place in plastic bags in the freezer in advance of the Messy Church) for each participant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A great way to get a large collection of t-shirts is to ask for donations or search in local thrift stores.</i> <p>Directions: Hand out a frozen t-shirt to each participant and have them race to unfreeze the shirt and put it on. The first to have the shirt completely on is the winner.</p> <p>Notes: Outdoor</p> <p>Talking/Thinking Points: How cold were you when you were trying to get the shirt on? How hot do you think the fiery furnace described in Daniel was? God was able to protect the three men from the heat even better than a frozen t-shirt!</p>

15. Water Balloon Toss	Activity Notes
	<p>Materials Needed: pre-filled water balloons</p> <p>Directions: Have participants form teams of two. Give each team a water balloon and have them begin by standing just a foot or so apart. Have one participant gently toss the water balloon to their partner. Once the balloon has been caught, the person who caught it should take one step back and then toss it back. This process should be repeated until the water balloon drops/is broken. The winning team is the one that ends up standing furthest apart.</p> <p>Notes: Outdoor</p> <p>Talking/Thinking Points: What did you need to focus on in order to succeed in this challenge? What do we need to focus on in order to be successful in life?</p>

16. Standing on Eggs (Science Experiment)	Activity Notes
	<p>Materials Needed: two (or more) cartons of eggs</p> <p>Directions: (After demonstrating this science experiment you can let participants have a turn.) To stand on the eggs, first remove shoes. Next, you can carefully step onto the eggs, which are cradled in the carton. The design of the carton/eggs enable weight to be evenly distributed so that the eggs do not break.</p> <p>Notes: Indoor or Outdoor</p> <p>Talking/Thinking Points: Walking on eggs without breaking them seems like an impossible task. However, our God specializes in doing the impossible. What are some impossible things you'd like to see God do?</p>

Celebration: An impromptu Drama

Ask for 6 volunteer characters: Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Darius. Once selected the actors just need to listen to the story and follow the directions given by the reader. Actions are underlined in the script below.

Just like we can learn a lot about the importance of focus and training from the lives of Olympic athletes, we can learn a lot about living a Christian life from Daniel.

Let's take a closer look at some of the lessons we can learn from Daniel with an instant drama...

Let's have our actors come on up and stand to the side as our story begins

Look! Here comes Daniel. Watch how Daniel enters the room. Daniel has been chosen to serve King Nebuchadnezzar. He was chosen because he is both smart and strong. See how Daniel can read a book while doing jumping jacks.

Here comes King Nebuchadnezzar. Watch as everyone bows to the king. King Nebuchadnezzar wants the menserving him to eat his food and drink his wine. See how the King invites Daniel and his friends to eat and drink.

Daniel doesn't want to eat the king's food or drink his wine. See how Daniel makes a disgusted face and gives a thumbs down to the king. Daniel says that he will eat his vegetables for 10 days and show that he will be even healthier. Watch as Daniel eats some carrots and corn on the cob.

10 days have now gone by. Look at how strong Daniel is. Watch as Daniel flexes his arm muscles. Not only is Daniel strong physically he is really wise, as well.

Daniel is joined by his friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They are all really excited to see each other and give each other high fives.

King Nebuchadnezzar is getting tired. See how the king lies down and goes to sleep. Hear him snore. See how he is tossing and turning. The king is having a troubling dream. King Nebuchadnezzar wakes up scared. He really wants to know what his dream means. The astrologers that he calls first cannot tell him so he calls Daniel. See how the king waves to Daniel and calls him over.

Watch as the king tells Daniel about his dream. Daniel is able to tell him what it means because Daniel relied on God to help him. Daniel doesn't think he is any smarter than anyone else; he knows that all that he can do is because of God.

The king is really impressed. See how King Nebuchadnezzar gives Daniel a thumbs up. He makes Daniel ruler over all of Babylon. At Daniel's request he puts Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in charge of Babylon so Daniel can stay at the royal court. King Nebuchadnezzar is really proud of himself. He decides to have a big statue built and to have the people worship it. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego won't worship this idol,

though. See how they shake their heads and make x's with their arms.

King Nebuchadnezzar is mad. He sends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to the fiery furnace. See how the three friends walk over there. They are not scared; they know that their God will protect them.

King Nebuchadnezzar goes over to where Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are to see if they are still alive. They are! God has saved them. Everyone claps their hands to celebrate just how powerful God is. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are really tired from their adventure - see how they yawn. They decide to go sit down.

King Nebuchadnezzar decides to retire. Watch how King Nebuchadnezzar goes back to his seat.

Watch as King Darius enters the room. He is in charge now and he thinks he's pretty great. See how he checks himself out in a mirror and makes faces. After listening to some of his advisors, Darius decides to make a law that everyone has to worship him.

Daniel won't worship Darius, though. See how he makes a big thumbs down sign.

Even though Darius likes Daniel he decides he has to send him into the lion's den since he made the rule. Watch how Darius points at Daniel and send him over to the lion's den. Daniel goes where he's pointed but he's not scared. Daniel knows that God will take care of him; see how he waves at Darius and everyone and goes and sits where the lions are.

Darius is worried about Daniel. See how King Darius paces back and forth. He decides to go check on Daniel. Watch as Darius walks over to Daniel. See Daniel stands up and does 5 jumping jacks to show that he's alright. Everyone is really happy that God saved Daniel. Everyone claps and cheers.

That is the story of Daniel and his friends!

A big thanks to all our actors who helped share this story with us.

Wow! We really can learn a lot from Daniel, can't we? What lessons about living a life dedicated to God can we learn from Daniel?

(Solicit answers from participants)

Prayer

Thank you, God, for giving us role models to look up to, like Daniel, as we continue to grow and become more and more like Jesus. Help us to dedicate time each day to feed our souls so we can live for you alone. Please give us the faith we need to trust in your ability to do the impossible every day. Finally, help us to bring glory to You in everything we do, big and small. In Jesus' name. AMEN.

Songs

- Made for This – Carrollton
- Elevated - Citizen Way
- The Distance - Gary Levox

Food Ideas—Outdoor BBQ or picnic

Welcome Station	Main Course	Side Dishes	Dessert
Popcorn or carrot Sticks <i>(May be served in cones to look like Olympic torches)</i>	Grilled or Fried Chicken Grilled Hamburgers	Fruit salad with colors representing your nations i.e. strawberries, blueberries, bananas, etc... Veggies	Ice Cream cones representing Olympic torches

Table Talk

1. What is your favorite Olympic sport or summer game?
2. Olympic athletes train a lot and typically follow strict nutrition guidelines. Do you think you could do this? What food do you think you would miss the most?
3. Have you ever dreamed of being an Olympic athlete? If so, in what sport would you like to compete?
4. What 'impossible' thing would you like to see?

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