

CHILDREN'S GROUP GUIDE

TAKE THE FLAG

*Following God's Signals
in the Race of Your Life*

ROB FUQUAY

C H I L D R E N ' S G R O U P G U I D E

TAKE 
THE FLAG

***FOLLOWING GOD'S SIGNALS
IN THE RACE OF YOUR LIFE***

HEATHER HARRISS

 **UPPER
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NASHVILLE

TAKE THE FLAG: FOLLOWING GOD'S SIGNALS IN THE RACE OF YOUR LIFE

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INTRODUCTION

➤ Overview

This is the Children's Group Guide for Rob Fuquay's new churchwide study *Take the Flag: Following God's Signals in the Race of Your Life*. In this guide you will find seven session guides to help you plan a meaningful study for your children's ministry.

Through these sessions children learn how to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. Pastor Rob takes a sport that is familiar to many, auto racing, and uses it as a metaphor for examining and growing in our faith. As children participate they learn that through acts of prayer, worship, compassion, and justice they will grow as disciples. They also learn that growing as a disciple takes practice, devotion, and discipline.

Each week the different flags used in auto racing provide signals for an area of faith development. In each session the children first gather for the Racer's Meeting. At this meeting they receive their instructions for their time and then hit the track to begin their race.

➤ Leader preparations

Find a space in your church large enough for participants to gather. To create the feel of a race track, decorate the space with the *TAKE THE FLAG* logo, traffic cones, racing flags, tool kits, even stacks of tires if you have them. Purchase or make a flag that corresponds to each of the sessions. On the floor create a race track with tape or crepe paper strips; this can even be done down the hall to lead to different rooms.

Around the track set up these stations:

- Grandstand and Leader Board
- Pit Stop
- Concession Stand
- Ticket Booth
- Garage
- Sponsors/Fan Club
- Infield

Make the Grandstand by setting up a few rows of chairs. You will convene the Racer's Meetings and tally the Leader Board in this area. On the side opposite the Grandstand, set up your Sponsors/Fan Club. On the wall, tape a large piece of butcher paper and draw the outline of a race car; also use butcher paper to draw the outline of racers' jackets (one for each child); string clothesline and use clothespins to hang them up. Have tables and chairs at the Sponsors/Fan Club, templates for sponsor patches, markers, scissors, and glue.

At the Pit Stop, the racers will take a break for prayer and sabbath. Make the Pit Stop comfortable with cushions and create a place for prayer. This might include a small altar with a candle, a Bible, and a cross (consider using battery-operated candles).

The Concession Stand is your snack area. Here are a few of my favorite ideas—choose what works best for your group. Be sure to check out Pinterest <https://www.pinterest.com/explore/race-car-snacks/>

Make a car out of apple slices, grapes cut in half, and toothpicks. An apple slice serves as the body of the car. Using two toothpicks, put one through the front of the slice and one through the back (these are your axles), put a grape half on each for your tires. You can also make race cars using celery sticks, cream cheese and raisins. (The raisins can be tires stuck on with the cream cheese). Other options include pretzels as dipsticks, cookies as the wheels on a car, a snack mix that could include cheese squares, cereal, pretzels, chocolate candies. Popcorn and drinks.

Children will go to the Ticket Booth as they enter the space. Here they will receive their Pit Passes (name tags). At the Ticket Booth, items for their acts of justice and compassion get counted and logged. Put auto racing items like nuts, bolts, washers, or some other small object into a container for counting. Four clear jars or containers labeled: Justice, Compassion, Prayer and Worship. Fill a fifth jar so children can see what a full jar will look like. If you are collecting items for a service project, as children bring them have them take a nut, bolt, or washer and place it in the jar for Justice. If they did something kind during the week, they will place a nut, bolt, or washer in the jar for Compassion. If they employed a prayer practice during the week, they will place an item in the Prayer jar. And if they went to worship, they place one in the jar labelled Worship.

At the beginning of the session and during Station time, an adult will be in the Ticket Booth to listen as the child shares his or her acts of Justice, Compassion, Prayer, and Worship. These will be counted by children during Station Time and added to the Leader Board at the closing in the Grandstand.

The Leader Board is a graph with Justice, Compassion, Prayer, and Worship on the vertical and sessions 1–7 with the corresponding flag color on the horizontal. At the end of each session, the children return their Pit Passes to the Ticket Booth.

The Garage is the area where the children will create and invent. Provide a variety of items like bottle caps, corks, empty plastic bottles and containers, pool noodles cut into smaller shapes, pipe cleaners, wooden skewers, Popsicle™ sticks, cardboard boxes of different sizes, paper towel rolls—check your recycling box and your supply closet, or ask for donations. Let the materials spark their imagination to build something new. Each week notice what the children are creating. Add different and additional materials as needed session to session.

Infield is the place to go for activities that relate to the session. It should include cards to send to people in need or who have something to celebrate.

Each session uses a flag from racing to help the children better understand their faith and a prayer practice to help them grow as disciples.

Introduction—Jesus is the key to our faith

1: Green Flag—God loves you from the very start

Prayer Practice—Gratitude Prayer

2: Yellow Flag—Slow down, remember to put your trust in God

Prayer Practice—Breath Prayer

3 Blue Flag—Things do not always go how we want

Prayer Practice—Intercessory Prayer

4: Red Flag—Take time apart to pray and reflect

Prayer Practice—Examen Prayer

5: Black Flag—When we make a mistake, we can confess, repent, and be forgiven

Prayer Practice—Prayer of Confession

6: White Flag—Some things are very hard, but we can keep going with Christ

Prayer Practice—the Lord's Prayer

7: Checkered Flag—Race to share the love of Christ

Prayer Practice—Prayer of Thanksgiving



INTRODUCTORY SESSION

➤ Gear Check

Ticket Booth: Pit Pass/name tag; container for service-project collection, five clear containers for nuts, bolts, different-sized washers; an adult to listen as children share their acts of Justice, Compassion, Prayer, and Worship. Paper and pencil to record the total in each jar.

Grandstand: chairs or bleachers, Bible, books from the library about racing, pictures from magazines showing race cars (it is also fine to talk about other types of racing—swimming, bicycling, sledding—add things that will connect with your children). The flag for this session (green, yellow, blue, red, black, white, checkered). Leader Board and marker.

Sponsorship/Fan Club: table and chairs, markers, glue, scissors, template for sponsor patches, racer jacket for each child, (the Racer Jacket is a simple outline of a shirt, you can cut these out of butcher paper or cardboard and write the child's name on it) clothesline and clothespins, and an outline of a car on butcher paper or cardboard taped to the wall.

Garage: bottle caps, corks, empty plastic bottles and containers, pool noodles cut into smaller shapes, pipe cleaners, wooden skewers, Popsicle™ sticks, paper, springs, cardboard boxes of different sizes, glue, scissors, tape, brads, paper towel rolls, etc.

Infield: table and chairs, key rings, plastic cord, plastic beads (green, blue, red, white, black, yellow), note cards, pencils, pens, envelopes, stamps.

Pit Stop: pillows, altar, Bible.

Concession Stand: table and chairs, snack of your choice.

Ready? Children will learn that Jesus is the key to our faith.

Set? Children will consider the people in their lives who support and love them.

Go! Children will learn practices that encourage them to grow as a disciple

➤ Welcome and Racers' Meeting

Welcome the children as they arrive, and send them to the Ticket Booth to get their Pit Pass/name tag that gives them access to the track and to the Racers' Meetings.

Welcome Racers! We are glad you are here to race. Have you ever seen a car race? (Show pictures from books and magazines.)

This is what a race car looks like. One of the most famous auto races is the Indianapolis 500. The cars go around this track 200 times! Just one person drives the car, so what do you think the driver needs to get ready for the race? (Some answers might be a car, safety equipment, sponsors, coaches, practice time, mechanics, a crew, fans, money.) **During the race the focus is on the driver, but the driver can't race without the help of a crew or team and a lot of equipment!**

During our time together we are going to race, but we are not racing to win a car race, we are racing to learn more about Jesus. Just like the race car drivers practice to race well, we practice to follow Jesus well.

Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-26 aloud.

Before we hit the track, let's say a prayer. We'll pray this prayer each session before we begin our race:

Dear God,
 We want to race to share your kindness.
 We want to race to share your mercy.
 We want to race to share your justice.
 We want to race to share your love.
 With your help we can do it!
 Amen.

➤ Hit the Track

Let's take a practice run around our track, but first let's warm up a little—do a few jumping jacks, run in place, stretch our arms over our heads. OK, let's hop around the track on one foot, now walking backward, now the backward crab walk, now on our tippy toes. (Have four different starting places on the track; this helps the children remember there is always someone ahead and someone behind, and it helps put the focus on moving around the track instead of its becoming a race.) OK, after our warm-up, let's go back to our meeting in the Grandstand.

Take a look at this race car (show a photo of an IndyCar or a NASCAR with lots of sponsors). Look at what the race car drivers wear. Do you know what these are? These are the sponsors (or businesses and people) who support the racer. Sponsors might support through money or by a product that helps the driver race his or her best. The sponsors are a part of the driver's team, helping drivers do their very best. Drivers can look at their car or jacket and see who supports them, who is on their team.

We need to put our sponsors on our race car and jackets. Who are the people that support us? (Our family, Sunday school teachers, pastors, friends, coaches . . .) Jesus loves us and cares about us. Our faith is a huge supporter of our race! (God, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, reading the Bible, prayer, singing hymns)

Each session we'll have a chance to add sponsors to our car and to our racing jacket.

So our faith helps us. Our coaches help us to race well, but we can also do things that help us to grow as Christians. Listen to this from the apostle Paul's letter to the Colossians:

Therefore, as God's choice, holy and loved, put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Be tolerant with each other and, if someone has a complaint against anyone, forgive each other. As the Lord forgave you, so also forgive each other. And over all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. (3:12-14)

Being kind, compassionate, and loving helps us to follow Jesus better. Just like the race car drivers need sponsors and supporters to race well, our sponsors help us to follow Jesus and grow in our faith.

Each session, children will have a chance to make sponsor patches (template) in the Sponsor/Fan Club. After they decorate and color them, they can put them on the outline of the race car or on the cut-out of a racer's jacket. (You can use clothesline and clothespins to hang the jackets around the room) Each session, children will have the opportunity to make a new sponsor patch for their jacket or for the team car. Say to the children,

Later during this session, you'll have a chance to make a sponsor patch for the team car or for your jacket. You'll have time each session to work on your patches, so don't worry about finishing right now.

Let's review: We've talked about the fact that the more we practice the better we race; we've talked about the people who support us (sponsors) by surrounding us with their love, and we've talked about ways we can act that will help us to race our best.

So now we are going to practice. We have the support we need to race well so we need to get started. Let's hit the track. (Again, spread out in the space you have designated as your track.) Let's pretend we are sitting in our race car, our hands on the steering wheel, ready to go, but we are missing something. What do we need to start our cars? A key! We need a key to ignite the car's engine so the car can go! We need a key to start our cars to begin the race.

As Christians, the key that ignites our faith is Jesus. Jesus is our key to remembering that God always loves us, that God is always with us even when the race is hard. The cross reminds us that Jesus is the key to our faith and that he is with us.

To help us remember that Jesus is the key to our faith, later you might choose to make a key chain in the Infield. Once you've done this you can put it on your backpack or keep it in your pocket. When you see it, remember that Jesus is the key to your faith and Jesus loves you. If you don't make one this session, you can do it another time.

The materials to make the key chain: silver rings, plastic cord, beads the color of the racing flags (green, yellow, red, blue, black, and white). You might look for small crosses that the children can add to the key chains while visiting in the Infield.

Walk the children around the track telling them about the different stations. Tell them,

You can pick where you would like to go. If a station is full, take a lap around the track and decide what you would like to do instead. Remind them of their choices: sponsor patch, key chain, make a card to send to someone who sponsors you in your faith, Garage, Pit Stop, Concession Stand.

Depending on what works best for your group, say how many children can be at a station at a time. Let them know they can move to another station if there is room. Some of the stations will be similar from week to week. Gather back in the Grandstand.

We are off to a great start! Let me tell you about the Leader Board. We want to score points for our team each week. Here is how we can score points. (Share about mission project—this could be collecting box tops for Red Bird Mission, canned goods for a local food pantry, a needed clothing item, or a mission project your church is already supporting.)

We earn points for our team through acts of Justice, Compassion, Prayer, and Worship.

When you bring in an item for our service project you'll put it in the container in the Ticket Booth. Then you will take a screw and place it in the jar marked Justice.

If you did something kind during the week you will put a nut or bolt in the jar for Compassion.

If you used a Prayer practice during the week, add one for prayer.

If you went to Worship, add one to the jar.

We'll count all the screws, bolts, nuts, or washers in each jar and at our Closing Meeting we'll add our standings to the Leader Board.

Next week, we'll Take the Flag to learn more about how we can race to follow Jesus. To end our time together, let's pray:

Dear God,
 Ahead, behind, beside,
 Jesus is our guide.
 Overhead, underfoot, inside,
 Jesus is our guide.
 Thank you, God, for Jesus!
 Amen.

See you all next week! Be sure to put your Pit Pass (name tag) back in the Ticket Booth so you can race again next time!



1

THE GREEN FLAG LET THE RACE BEGIN

➤ Gear Check

- Pit Stop—Add guide for Gratitude Prayer.
- Garage—Check to see if you need to replenish or add new items.
- Infield—Add names and addresses of families who have recently had a member baptized at your church.
- Ready? The green flag reminds us God loves us from the very start.
- Set? Children will consider God's grace.
- Go! They will practice a prayer of gratitude.

➤ Welcome and Racers' Meeting

As children arrive, invite them to go to the Ticket Booth to get their Pit Pass and put items they brought for the mission project in containers there. If time allows, they can share with an adult their acts of Justice, Compassion, Prayer, and Worship and add nuts, bolts, screws, or washers to the jars. Invite children to the Racers' Meeting.

Ask about their week.

In the introductory session we got our car ready. Now we're getting sponsors for our racing jackets and are just about ready to

start the race. What color flag starts the race? Green! When they wave the green flag the race begins. (Wave the green flag.) Now let's think for a second: When did your belief in God begin? (Allow time for responses.) Do you know when God first believed in you? From your very start!

Do you remember your baptism? If you were a tiny baby, probably not. Do you ever wonder why we baptize babies? It is to remind all of us that God loves each of us from our very beginning. We all start the race with God's love. Even before we do anything, when we are just at the starting line, God loves us. (This is also called prevenient grace.) Let's hit the track and test this out.

Read Romans 10:8-13.

Before we hit the track, let's say a prayer. We'll pray this prayer each session before we hit the track:

Dear God,
 We want to race to share your kindness.
 We want to race to share your mercy.
 We want to race to share your justice.
 We want to race to share your love.
 With your help we can do it!
 Amen.

➤ Hit the Track

This session we will learn about the green flag. The green flag starts the race, and we all start right where we are. (Invite children to stand at different places on the track.) We have different starting places because we all are different. But we all start our lives being loved by God just as we are and wherever we are. When I wave the green flag, begin moving in a way that makes you happy. You can twirl on your tippy toes, march with your knees high, sway with your arms up in the air, hop on one foot, or do some combination!

Wave the green flag and say, "Go!" After some fun loops around the track, say, "Freeze!"

This week when you see something green, remember that Jesus has loved you from your very start and God delights because you

are you! How does knowing that make you feel? It makes me feel grateful and glad. If you make a stop in the Pit Stop, say three things you are grateful for: This is our Gratitude Prayer.

➤ Stations at the Track

Walk the children around the track telling them about the different stations. Tell them, “You can pick where you would like to go. If a station is full, take a lap around the track and decide what you would like to do instead.” Here are the stations for this week (briefly tell the children what they can do): sponsor patch, key chain, make a card to send to a family of someone who was recently baptized, Garage, Pit Stop, Concession Stand, Ticket Booth). Depending on what works best for your group, state how many children can be at one stop at a time. Let them know they can move to another stop if there is room. Many stops are the same from week to week.

➤ Closing Racers’ Meeting—Leader Board

The race has begun, and the green flag reminds us God loves us from the very start of our life. I see we have some new sponsors for our race car. Our team is looking good. Great work is happening in the Garage! Let’s tally up the Leader Board. (Children will have counted the total in each jar; add these totals to the Leader Board.)

Next week, we’ll *Take the Flag* to learn more about how we can race to follow Jesus. To close our time together, let’s pray:

Dear God,
 You love us from our very start.
 We are so thankful you fill our hearts.
 Because you love us from the beginning,
 we trust and know your love is never ending.
 Amen.

See you all next week! Be sure to put your Pit Pass back in the Ticket Booth so you can race again next time!



2

THE YELLOW FLAG HEEDING THE CAUTIONS

➤ Gear Check

- Pit Stop—Add guide for Breath Prayer.
- Garage—Check to see if you need to replenish or add new items.
- Infield—Leave materials for making key chains; add a mandala and crayons.
- Ready? The yellow flag reminds us to slow down and put our trust in God.
- Set? Children will hear the story of Jesus being tempted by the devil.
- Go! They will practice a breath prayer.

Welcome and Racers' Meeting

As children arrive, invite them to go to the Ticket Booth to get their Pit Pass and put items they brought for the mission project in containers there. If time allows, they can share with an adult their acts of Justice, Compassion, Prayer, and Worship and add nuts, bolts, screws, or washers to the jars. Invite children to the Racers' Meeting.

Ask about their week.

What did you remember when you saw something green? I love remembering that God loves me from the very start. Whatever the day may bring, I know God already loves me. Today we will learn about the yellow flag. (Wave the yellow flag.) Does anyone know why the yellow flag gets waved at a race? The yellow flag means something has happened on the track, and the racers need to proceed with caution. What does being cautious look like? Being careful, going slowly, paying attention, being on the lookout!

Read Matthew 4:1-11.

Today our scripture tells about when Jesus was tempted by the devil. Jesus was hungry, and the devil tempted him to turn stones into bread. Then the devil tempted him to jump off a cliff because surely God would see that he landed safely. Then the devil told Jesus he could give him power to rule the whole world, if he would bow down and worship him. Now each of these things was tempting to Jesus! But instead of giving in to the devil, Jesus slowed down and proceeded with caution. Instead of rushing on, Jesus paused to remember that he put his whole trust in God.

It can be hard to remember to slow down and put our trust in God! This week, when you see something yellow, let it be a reminder to you to slow down, take a deep breath, and remember God loves you.

Before we hit the track, let's say a prayer. We'll pray this prayer each session before we begin our race:

Dear God,
 We want to race to share your kindness.
 We want to race to share your mercy.
 We want to race to share your justice.
 We want to race to share your love.
 With your help we can do it!
 Amen.

➤ Hit the Track

The yellow flag reminds us to slow down and pay attention. Let's hit the track and try this out. When there is a yellow flag during

a race, a pace car will come onto the track and all of the race cars have to follow it. I'm the pace car; racers stay behind me.

Walk at a normal pace, speed up a little, weave from side to side, slow down, slow down even more, walk with knees bent, walk on tippy toes.

Sometimes it helps to slow down to listen for what God is trying to tell us. There is a prayer that helps us to do this. It is called a breath prayer. Let's sit down, with our legs crossed and our hands in our lap. Take in a deep breath through your nose and breathe out through your mouth. Let's do that three more times. This helps me feel calmer and quieter. Now when we breathe in, say to yourself, "God is with me." As you breathe out, say to yourself, "All the time." Do this two more times. At the Pit Stop you can practice this.

➤ Stations at the Track

Walk the children around the track telling them about the different stations. Tell them, "You can pick where you would like to go. If a station is full, take a lap around the track and decide what you would like to do instead." Here are the stations for this week (briefly tell the children what they can do): sponsor patch, key chain, color the mandala; visit the Garage, Pit Stop, Concession Stand, or count items in the Ticket Booth).

➤ Closing Racers' Meeting—Leader Board

Our race continues! The Yellow flag reminds us to slow down and remember to put our trust in God. I see we have some new sponsors for our race car. Our team is looking good. Great work is happening in the Garage! Let's tally up the Leader Board. (Children will have counted the total in each jar; add these totals to the Leader Board.)

Next week, we'll *Take the Flag* to learn more about how we can race to follow Jesus. To close our time together, let's pray:

Dear God, sometimes we go so fast we forget you are as close as our breath. (Take a deep breath in and out.)

Help us to slow down and remember you love us. Amen.

See you all next week! Be sure to put your Pit Pass back in the Ticket Booth so you can race again next time!



3

THE BLUE FLAG

MOVING TO THE OUTSIDE LANE

➤ Gear Check

- Pit Stop—Add guide for Intercessory Prayer.
- Garage—Check to see if you need to replenish or add new items.
- Infield—Cards for church members who are homebound; make a patch to put on someone else's jacket.
- Ready? The blue flag reminds us that things don't always go the way we want.
- Set? Sometimes we choose to move aside to help someone in need.
- Go! Children will practice intercessory prayer.

➤ Welcome and Racers' Meeting

As children arrive, invite them to go to the Ticket Booth to get their Pit Pass and put items they brought for the mission project in containers there. If time allows, they can share with an adult their acts of Justice, Compassion, Prayer, and Worship and add nuts, bolts, screws, or washers to the jars. Invite children to the Racers' Meeting.

Ask about their week.

What did you remember when you saw something yellow? (Slow down, remember to put your trust in God.) What about the Breath Prayer? Did you have a chance to take some deep breaths and remember that God is as close as your breath? What was the best part of your week? The worst? Is there something that you are going to do differently this week? Today we are talking about the blue flag. (Wave the blue flag) Do you know why the blue flag is waved? When the front cars are going so fast that they are going to lap the slower cars, a blue flag is waved. The blue flag is the sign to the slower cars to let the faster cars pass. A race car driver doesn't like to see the blue flag. It means he or she is going to be lapped and it is almost certain they are not going to win. How do you feel when you know you are not going to win? (sad, mad, alone) What if when you were feeling this way someone slowed down to help you, to finish with you? How would you feel? (happy, relieved, glad, thankful) Let's read our scripture for today.

Read Matthew 20:29-34.

Jesus had somewhere to go, but instead he pulled over to spend time with two people who needed him. As we grow as disciples, there may be times we slow down or stop what we are doing to help someone who needs us. Can you think of people who slow down to help others like Jesus slowed down to help the two blind men? (Parents, teachers, coaches, friends) Let's hit the track.

Before we hit the track, let's say a prayer. We'll pray this prayer each session before we begin our race:

Dear God,
 We want to race to share your kindness.
 We want to race to share your mercy.
 We want to race to share your justice.
 We want to race to share your love.
 With your help we can do it!
 Amen.

➤ Hit the Track

Invite everyone to stand on the track and count off by twos. "Ok, if you are a One, start walking; now Twos, start walking." After a moment, wave the blue

flag. “Ones walk super slowly, Twos speed up.” Do this for a few laps around the track, then switch. Which way did you like better? Now get in groups of three. Pick one person to have a hurt foot, and the other two will help that person around the track. How was that? Did you help someone? Do you know that we can help people by praying for them? Do you know what it is called when we pray for someone else? Intercessory Prayer. At the Pit Stop you’ll have a chance to practice intercessory prayer.

➤ Stations at the Track

Walk the children around the track telling them about the different stations. Tell them, “You can pick where you would like to go. If a station is full, take a lap around the track and decide what you would like to do instead.” Here are the stations for this week (briefly tell the children what they can do): sponsor patch, key chain, make a card to send to someone who is homebound, Garage, Pit Stop, Concession Stand, Ticket Booth). Depending on what works best for your group, state how many children can be at one stop at a time. Let them know they can move to another stop if there is room. Many stops are the same from week to week.

➤ Closing Racers’ Meeting—Leader Board

Our race continues! The blue flag reminds us that things do not always turn out as we want and that sometimes we can choose to stop and help someone in need. I see some great sponsors on your racing jackets! Our team is looking good. Great work is happening in the garage! Let’s tally up the Leader Board. (Children will have counted the total in each jar; add these totals to the Leader Board.)

Next week, we’ll *Take the Flag* to learn more about how we can race to follow Jesus. To close our time together, let’s pray:

Dear God,
 Today I pray for people who won and for people who lost.
 I pray for people who need help and for people who help
 I pray for my team and I pray for the other team.
 May people feel God’s love in bad times and good.
 Amen.

See you all next week! Be sure to put your Pit Pass back in the Ticket Booth so you can race again next time!



4

THE RED FLAG

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DELAY

➤ Gear Check

- Pit Stop—Add guide for a prayer of Examen.
- Garage—Check to see if you need to replenish or add new items.
- Infield—Cards to write to church members in the hospital.
- Ready? The Red Flag reminds us to stop everything and pray.
- Set? Children will consider people they count on in a difficult situation.
- Go! Children will practice a prayer of Examen

➤ Welcome and Racers' Meeting

As children arrive, invite them to go to the Ticket Booth to get their Pit Pass and put items they brought for the mission project in containers there. If time allows, they can share with an adult their acts of Justice, Compassion, Prayer, and Worship and add nuts, bolts, screws, or washers to the jars. Invite children to the Racers' Meeting.

Ask about their week. What were the highs? Lows? Anything they would do differently?

What did you remember when you saw something blue? Did you get a chance to help somebody else? Did someone help you?

Today we will learn about the red flag. (Wave the red flag.) Do you know why the red flag gets waved during a race? It means something dangerous has happened, and every car has to leave the track immediately! Have you ever been doing something really fun outside and a storm came up and you had to stop what you were doing and go inside and wait? This is what happens with the red flag. You might be having a great day of racing, but because something has come up, you have to leave the track and wait. It's hard to wait when you would rather be doing something else.

Before we hit the track, let's say a prayer. We'll pray this prayer each session before we begin our race:

Dear God,
 We want to race to share your kindness.
 We want to race to share your mercy.
 We want to race to share your justice.
 We want to race to share your love.
 With your help we can do it!
 Amen.

➤ Hit the Track

This time, let's pretend our track is a swimming pool! Let's all swim around, we can do freestyle, breast stroke, back stroke, blow bubbles . . . (Clap your hands loudly.) Oh my! A thunderstorm is coming! We have to get out of the pool immediately! We'll have to wait out the storm in the Grandstand. (Everyone returns to Grandstand.) While we're waiting for the storm to pass, let's listen to this story about Jesus.

Read Luke 5:12-16.

There's a lot of stuff going on here, but you know what I noticed? The part at the end. Listen again, "News of [Jesus] spread even more and huge crowds gathered to listen and to be healed from their illnesses. But Jesus would withdraw to deserted places for prayer" (vv. 15-16, CEB) It's kind of like Jesus sees a red flag and knows it's time for him to take a break with God. I wonder how Jesus prayed. We've been learning different ways to pray: Gratitude Prayer, Breath Prayer, Intercessory Prayer. This session we're learning a prayer of Examen. It's not an exam like a test at school,

but it is an exam where you ask yourself questions. A prayer of examen can be asking yourself, “What was the best part of my day?” “What was the hardest?” “What do I want to do differently tomorrow?” Sometimes we can remember this by saying, “Glads, Sads, and Sorries.” A prayer of Examen is a great way to reflect on your day. I like to think about Jesus talking with God and reflecting about his day. At the Pit Stop you can give this a try.

➤ Stations at the Track

Walk the children around the track telling them about the different stations. Tell them, “You can pick where you would like to go. If a station is full, take a lap around the track and decide what you would like to do instead.” Here are the stations for this week (briefly tell the children what they can do): sponsor patch, key chain, make a card to send to someone who is in the hospital, Garage, Pit Stop, Concession Stand, Ticket Booth). Depending on what works best for your group, state how many children can be at one stop at a time. Let them know they can move to another stop if there is room. Many stops are the same from week to week.

➤ Closing Racers’ Meeting—Leader Board

The red flag reminds us how important it is to take time apart to reflect and to pray. I see we have some new sponsors for our race car. Our team is looking good. Great work is happening in the Garage! Let’s tally up the Leader Board. (Children will have counted the total in each jar; now add these totals to the Leader Board.)

Next week, we’ll *Take the Flag* to learn more about how we can race to follow Jesus. To close our time together, let’s pray:

Dear God,
 When someone needs help
 Let me choose to stop and see.
 Let your light shine through me.
 Amen.

See you all next week! Be sure to put your Pit Pass back in the Ticket Booth so you can race again next time!



5

THE BLACK FLAG

WHEN IT'S TIME TO LEAVE THE RACE

➤ Gear Check

- Pit Stop—Add the guide for a prayer of Confession.
- Garage—Check to see if you need to replenish or add new items.
- Infield—Have the “Dear God” letter guides available for the children to write. They can write whatever they want to God; these are not prayers of confession.
- Ready? The black flag reminds us that when we make a mistake we can confess, repent, and be forgiven.
- Set? Children will consider how we keep peace with one another.
- Go! Children will practice a prayer of Confession.

➤ Welcome and Racers' Meeting

As children arrive, invite them to go to the Ticket Booth to get their Pit Pass and put items they brought for the mission project in containers there. If time allows, they can share with an adult their acts of Justice, Compassion, Prayer, and Worship and add nuts, bolts, screws, or washers to the jars. Invite children to the Racers' Meeting.

Ask about their week. Highs? lows? What would they do differently?

What did you remember when you saw something red? Did you have to stop doing something fun? Did it remind you it's OK to take a break? Today we are talking about the black flag. (Wave the black flag.) Do you know what the black flag signals? It signals that the racer has to pull over for consultation with an official. The driver has broken a rule and has to leave the race. If the driver doesn't leave the race he or she can be disqualified! Can you think of a time when someone broke a rule? What happened? (Let them share—time out, punishment, had to apologize . . .) We all make mistakes. We all do things we wish we had not done. Whom do you consult with when you've broken a rule? Who helps you get back into your race?

Do you know what we believe as Christians? We believe we can tell Jesus we are sorry for what we did and that Jesus will forgive us and love us. And we know we can make a better choice the next time. As Christians we believe that when we confess our sins, Jesus forgives us and because of his forgiveness, we can forgive one another. No one likes to get the black flag; but when we do, we can say we are sorry, promise to do better, and know that we are forgiven.

Before we hit the track, let's say a prayer. We'll pray this prayer each session before we begin our race:

Dear God,
 We want to race to share your kindness.
 We want to race to share your mercy.
 We want to race to share your justice.
 We want to race to share your love.
 With your help we can do it!
 Amen.

➤ Hit the Track

Do you remember in our very first session we talked about Jesus being the key to our faith and that Jesus is always with us? Even when the race is hard, Jesus is with us. When we lose, Jesus is with us. When we make mistakes, Jesus is with us. Jesus is with us in good times and in hard times, Jesus is always with us. Jesus is the key to our faith.

Instruct the children to pick a partner.

As you walk around the track, one person will pretend he or she broke a rule and has to leave the race while the partner makes a lap. This person turns to the other once the lap is finished and says, “I’m sorry, I won’t do it again.” The partner responds, “I forgive you.” Then the other person leaves the race while the partner makes a lap.

After putting this exercise into practice, raise the following questions:

What did it feel like to be the one who got the black flag? How was it to be the one who said, “I forgive you?” Saying, “I’m sorry, I won’t do it again” is a type of prayer. It’s a prayer of confession. Jesus promises that when we confess, he will always forgive us. That is amazing! Now continue walking with your partner around the track and do the same thing, except this time, when the person says “I’m sorry, I won’t do it again,” answer, “I don’t forgive you.”

After putting this exercise into practice, raise the following questions:

How was this? Did it feel different? How? In the Pit Stop you will find a guide for a prayer of confession that we will have a chance to practice.

➤ Stations at the Track

Walk the children around the track telling them about the different stations. Tell them, “You can pick where you would like to go. If a station is full, take a lap around the track and decide what you would like to do instead.” Here are the stations for this week (briefly tell the children what they can do): sponsor patch, key chain, write a “Dear God” letter, Garage, Pit Stop, Concession Stand, Ticket Booth). Depending on what works best for your group, state how many children can be at one stop at a time. Let them know they can move to another stop if there is room. Many stops are the same from week to week.

➤ Closing Racers’ Meeting—Leader Board

The race continues. Sometimes we make mistakes. The black flag reminds us Jesus loves us, even when we make mistakes. We can pray to Jesus, confess our mistake, and he will forgive us. Racing can be hard! I see we have some new sponsors for our race car. Our team is looking good. Great work is happening in

the garage! Let's tally up the Leader Board. (Children will have counted the total in each jar, add these totals to the leader board)

Next week, we'll Take the Flag to learn more about how we can race to follow Jesus. To close our time together, let's pray:

Dear God,
When I'm glad, you are here.
When I'm sad, you are with me.
When I'm sorry, you still love me.
Each day as I recount,
Sads, Glads, and Sorries
I see you are present throughout.
Amen.

See you all next week! Be sure and put your Pit Pass back in the ticket booth so you can race again next time!



6

THE WHITE FLAG

GETTING IN POSITION FOR THE FINAL STRETCH

➤ Gear Check

- Pit Stop—Add guide for the Lord's Prayer.
- Garage—Check to see if you need to replenish or add new items.
- Infield—Create sponsor patches for their church, family, coach/team, friends, and school. (They may draw the patches themselves or use the guides provided).
- Ready? The white flag reminds us to persevere, even when it is hard.
- Set? Children will ponder the mystery of our faith: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.
- Go! Children will practice the Lord's Prayer.

Luke 23:42-43

➤ Welcome and Racers' Meeting

As children arrive, invite them to go to the ticket booth to get their Pit Pass, put items they brought for the mission project in containers, if there is time, they can share with an adult their acts of Justice, Compassion, Prayer and Worship and add nut, bolt, screw or washers into the jars. Come to the Racer's Meeting.

Ask about their week. Highs, lows? What would they do differently?

Today, we are talking about the white flag. (Wave the white flag) When they wave the white flag, it means the racers have one more lap to go. The race is almost finished!

Before we hit the track, let's say a prayer. We'll pray this prayer each session before we begin our race:

Dear God,
We want to race to share your kindness.
We want to race to share your mercy.
We want to race to share your justice.
We want to race to share your love.
With your help we can do it!
Amen.

➤ Hit the Track

Let's pretend we are running a marathon. How long is a marathon? 26.2 miles! That is a long way! How do you think the runners are feeling by mile 25? Let's pretend (run slow, emphasize sore muscles, tiredness, so ready to be done). Now let's go back to the stands. Whew, this race is long and hard, but it is almost over.

In this week's scripture, Jesus is in the final lap of his ministry. Jesus came and lived among us so we would know how much God loves us. Jesus taught his disciples to love one another. But this scared some people. They knew that if they loved their neighbor as themselves, they would need to change. The whole world would change, and this made some of them afraid. Other people got angry when they heard Jesus teaching about loving others. They got so angry they had Jesus killed! But even as Jesus was dying on the cross, he had this conversation with the criminal dying beside him. The criminal said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus replied, "I assure you that today you will be with me in paradise." And that is just what happened. This is the great mystery of our faith: Jesus died on the cross, God raised him from the dead, and Jesus will come again. The white flag reminds us the race may be long and hard, but Jesus persevered so that we would always know that God loves us and will never leave us. With Jesus, we will make it to the finish line. Jesus taught us a prayer that we call the Lord's

Prayer. This prayer helps us learn how to pray. (The Pit Stop has a guide to the Lord's Prayer.)

➤ Stations at the Track

Walk the children around the track telling them about the different stations. Tell them, "You can pick where you would like to go. If a station is full, take a lap around the track and decide what you would like to do instead." Here are the stations for this week (briefly tell the children what they can do): sponsor patch, key chain, make a card to send to someone who is in the hospital, Garage, Pit Stop, Concession Stand, Ticket Booth). Depending on what works best for your group, state how many children can be at one stop at a time. Let them know they can move to another stop if there is room. Many stops are the same from week to week.

➤ Closing Racers' Meeting—Leader Board

The race is almost over, and the white flag reminds us that Jesus perseveres for our salvation. I see we are still getting some great sponsors for our race car. Our team is staying strong. Great work is happening in the Garage! Let's tally up the Leader Board. (Children will have counted the total in each jar; now add these totals to the Leader Board.)

Next week, we'll Take the Flag to learn more about how we can race to follow Jesus. To close our time together, let's pray:

Dear God,
Sometimes we break the rules and you love us still.
Give us courage to say we are sorry.
Give us strength to apologize.
When we tell you our mistakes,
We are forgiven in your eyes.
Amen.

See you all next week! Be sure to put your Pit Pass back in the Ticket Booth so you can race again next time!



7

THE CHECKERED FLAG

EXPERIENCING VICTORY

➤ Gear Check

- Pit Stop—Add guide for prayer of thanksgiving.
- Garage—Check to see if you need to replenish or add new items.
- Infield—Today the children need to complete any unfinished activities from previous sessions and any artwork from their visits to the Garage.
- Ready? The checkered flag reminds us to race to share the love of Christ.
- Set? Children will review the race and what the different flags signal to them.
- Go! Children will practice a prayer of thanksgiving.

➤ Welcome and Racers' Meeting

As children arrive, invite them to go to the ticket booth to get their Pit Pass, put items they brought for the mission project in containers, if there is time, they can share with an adult their acts of Justice, Compassion, Prayer and Worship and add nut, bolt, screw or washers into the jars. Come to the Racer's Meeting.

Ask about their week. Highs? lows? What would they do differently?

What did you think of when you saw the color white? This is our last session, do you know what flag we are talking about? The

checkered flag. (Wave the checkered flag.) **The checkered flag signals that the race is over. With Jesus, the race is won!**

Before we hit the track, let's say a prayer. We'll pray this prayer each session before we begin our race:

Dear God,
 We want to race to share your kindness.
 We want to race to share your mercy.
 We want to race to share your justice.
 We want to race to share your love.
 With your help we can do it!
 Amen.

➤ Hit the Track

As we walk around the track, I'll wave the different flags, and we'll remember what they signal to us.

Introductory session—Jesus is the key to our faith

Green Flag—God loves you from the very start.

Prayer Practice—Gratitude Prayer

Yellow Flag—Slow down, remember to put your trust in God.

Prayer Practice—Breath Prayer

Blue Flag—Things do not always go how we want.

Prayer Practice—Intercessory Prayer

Red Flag—Take time apart to pray and reflect.

Prayer Practice—Prayer of Examen

Black Flag—When we make a mistake, we can confess, repent, and be forgiven.

Prayer Practice—Prayer of Confession

White Flag—Some things are very hard, but we can persevere with Christ.

Prayer Practice—the Lord's Prayer

Checkered Flag—Race to share the love of Jesus

Prayer Practice—Prayer of Thanksgiving

I'm so thankful I get to race with you to share the love of Jesus! When we share our thanks with God, it is a prayer of thanksgiving. Now let's take a look at our race car and your jackets! (Spend time with the sponsor patches, let children share.) You are all covered with God's love and the support of your community

of faith. We have created so many amazing things in the Garage.
(Let children share.)

➤ Closing Racers' Meeting—Leader Board

And here we are at the Grandstand for our final meeting. Let's tally up the Leader Board. (Children will have counted the total in each jar; now add these totals to the Leader Board.) Can you believe all the acts of justice, compassion, prayer, and worship we have done!

Even though our sessions are over, we'll keep on racing to follow Jesus! To end our time together, let's pray:

Dear God,
Every time we say the prayer that Jesus taught us,
we remember that God is with us!
Amen.

It's been great racing with you!

GRANDSTAND



LEADER BOARD



PIT STOP



CONCESSIONS



TICKETS



GARAGE



SPONSORS

& FANS



INFIELD



TAKE 
THE FLAG

TAKE 
THE FLAG

TAKE 
THE FLAG



ALL ACCESS

ALL ACCESS

ALL ACCESS

PIT PASS

PIT PASS

PIT PASS

NAME

NAME

NAME

TAKE
THE FLAG



ALL ACCESS

PIT PASS

TAKE
THE FLAG



ALL ACCESS

PIT PASS

TAKE
THE FLAG



ALL ACCESS

PIT PASS

NAME

NAME

NAME

PRAYER



WORSHIP



COMPASSION



JUSTICE



CHURCH

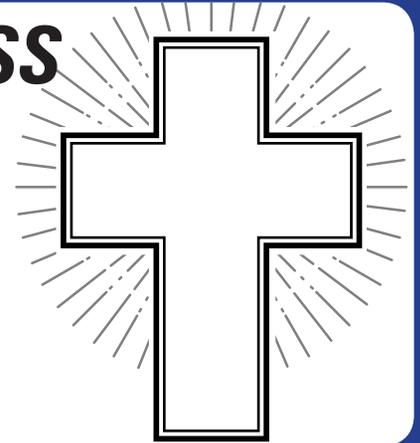


Draw and color a picture of your church.

KEY



CROSS



FAMILY

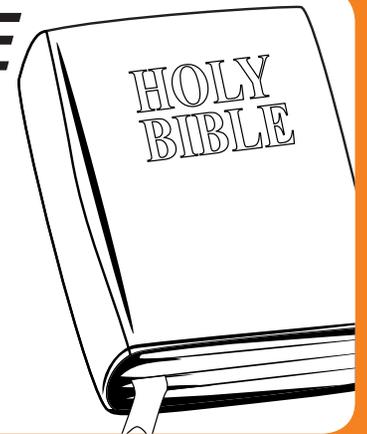


Draw and color a picture of your family.

COACH/TEAM



BIBLE

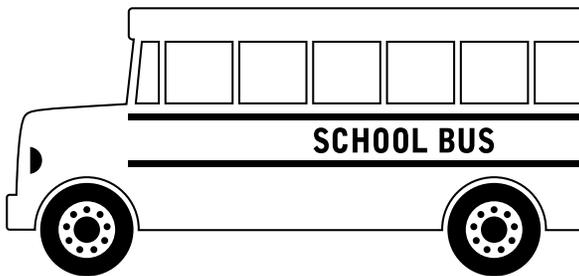


FRIENDS



Draw and color a picture of your friends.

SCHOOL



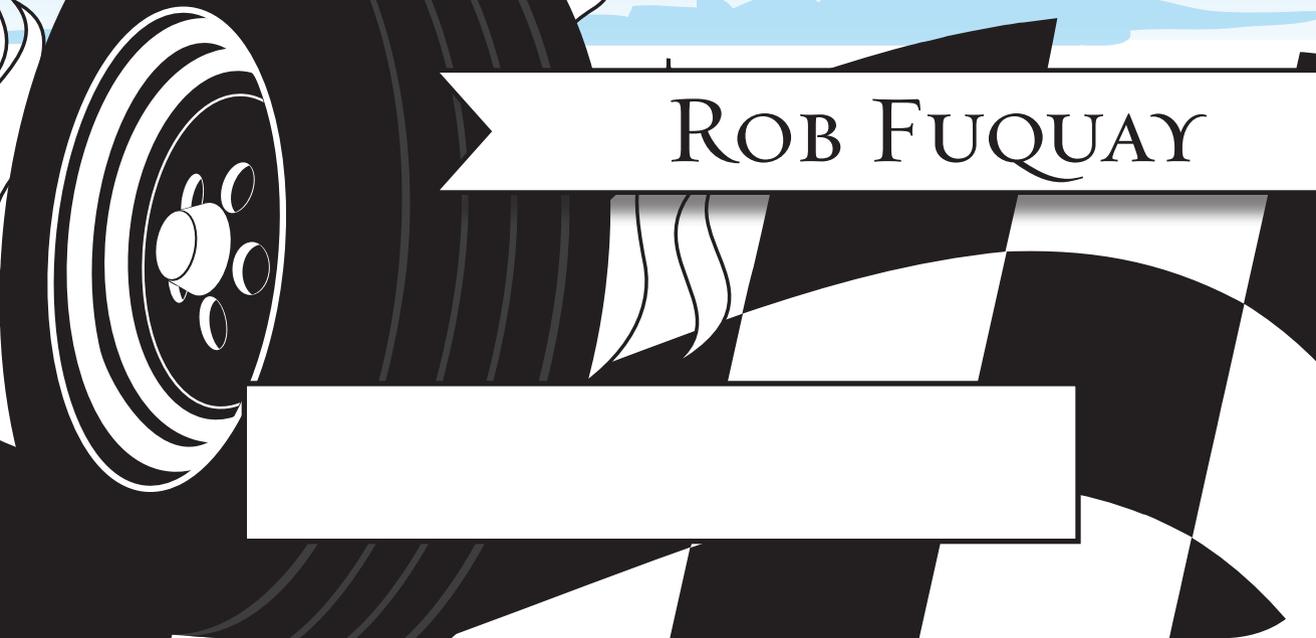
A large, empty rectangular box with rounded corners, intended for drawing a picture of friends.

RACER PRAYER JOURNAL

TAKE THE FLAG



*Following God's Signals
in the Race of Your Life*



ROB FUQUAY



Gratitude Prayer

(Write or draw a picture of your three things.)

Dear God, I'm grateful for these three things:

1.

2.

3.

Thank you for filling my life with blessings.

Amen.



Breath Prayer

Take a few deep breaths.

As you breathe in, say,

“God is with me.”

As you breathe out, say,

“All the time.”

(Repeat as many times as you want.)



Intercessory Prayer

Dear God,

Today I pray for people who won and people who lost.

I pray for people who need help and people who help.

I pray for my team and I pray for the other team.

*May people feel your love in bad times
and good times.*

Amen.

(Write or draw pictures of what you want to pray for.)



Prayer of Examen

As I think over my day,

_____ *made me sad.*

_____ *made me glad.*

_____ *made me sorry.*

Tomorrow, I pray I will _____

_____.

Amen.

(Write or draw pictures of what you are sad, glad, or sorry for.)



Prayer of Confession

*Dear Jesus,
I'm so sorry I did _____.
Help me to not do it again.
Amen*

*Remember: In the name of Jesus Christ,
you are forgiven!*

(Write or draw a picture of what you are sorry you did.)



The Lord's Prayer

*Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.*

*(Find this prayer in your Bible in the book of Matthew,
chapter 6, verses 9-13.)*



Prayer of Thanksgiving

Loving God, I'm so thankful for:

1.

2.

3.

Thank you.

*With Jesus I will continue to race to share your
kindness, your mercy, your justice,
and your love.
Amen.*

(Write or draw a picture of your three things.)



Dear God,

(Write or draw your own prayer here.)



Dear God >>>

We want to race to share your kindness.

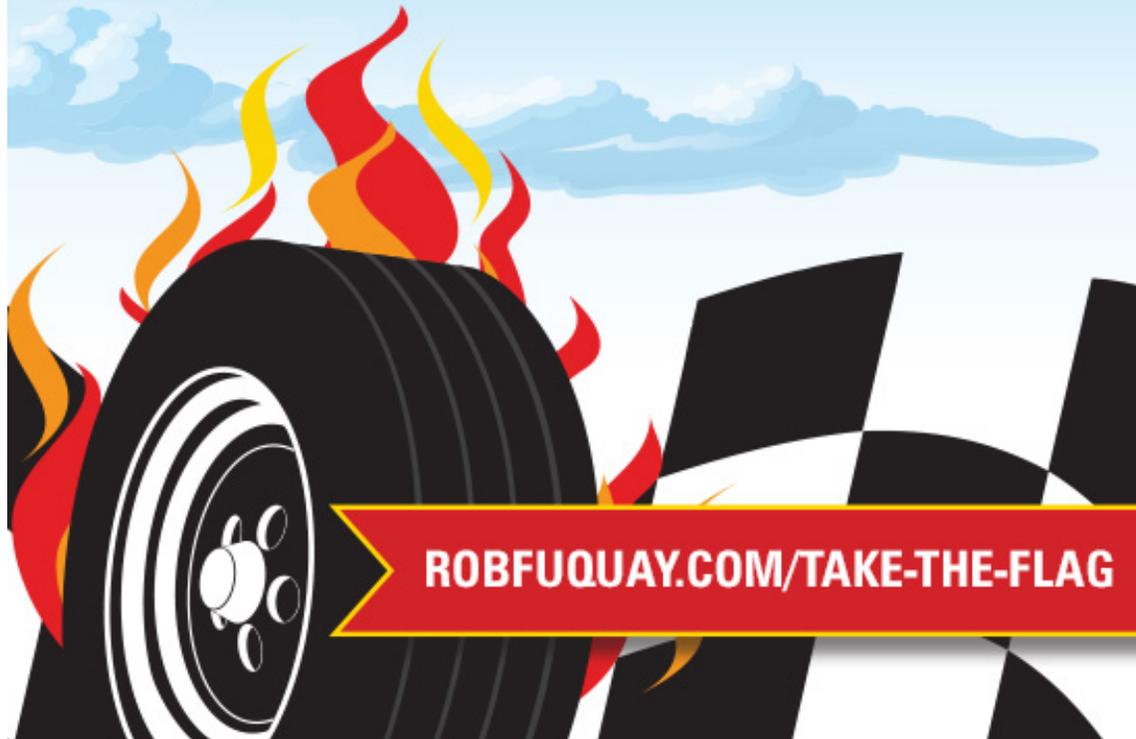
We want to race to share your mercy.

We want to race to share your justice.

We want to race to share your love.

With your help we can do it!

Amen.



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