

Run The Race Set Before You Gathering Activities: First Steps

This interactive display is one of three activities designed to engage participants as they gather. Children, youth and families will recognize baptism as an entry point for a lifelong journey in faith and discipleship. They will also discover God's mission and provisions for following Jesus as they lead others to do the same.

Participants will recall their baptisms as the beginning of their faith journey as they dip their fingers into a baptismal bowl and re-trace the cross that initially marked them as a child of God. They will receive small clear "water droplets" to remind them that no matter what they do or where their lives take them, God goes with them and invites them to use their many God-given talents, gifts and abilities to serve God and others along the way.

Faith Trek Travel Packs with "Travel Tips" or key learnings from each activity have been designed to integrate the content of this program for future reference. A Faith Trek theme design is provided for you to make a banner, poster or PowerPoint slide. A "Run The Race Set Before You" sign design is also provided for you to identify the location for each activity.

The Leaders Notes for this activity, along with the necessary preparations, equipment and supplies are outlined below. A Program Planning Grid (PDF file) is available to assist you in coordinating some of the details and tasks involved.

Scan through this activity and adapt it to honor your own schedule and intent. You might also consider using it to enrich other intergenerational or age-specific events throughout the year.

Approximate time: 5 minutes

Equipment and Supplies:

- [First Steps reference sheet](#) (PDF file)
- [Travel Tip #1 reference sheet](#) (PDF file)
- [Faith Trek Travel Pack and Travel Tips](#) (PDF file)
- [Faith Trek theme design](#) (PDF file)
- ["Run The Race Set Before You" sign design](#) (PDF file)
- Small clear craft stones (Available at discount stores with craft departments)
- A baptismal candle, a towel and any other items that may be used to celebrate baptism
- Washable black ink pads
- Crayons or markers
- Pre-moistened disposable cloths
- A large bowl partially filled with water
- A display table
- A baby doll wrapped in a blanket
- Program Planning Grid (PDF file)

Leader's Notes:

Scan through the activity outline and adapt it to honor the time you have scheduled for your overall event. You may wish to recruit a few people to assist you in accomplishing the following tasks.

Assemble a Faith Trek Travel Pack for participants to refer to as they move through the learning centers.

1. Reproduce copies of the Faith Trek Travel Pak pattern sheet.
2. Create mini-folders using the following instructions:
 - Cut along solid lines on the pattern sheet.
 - Fold along the vertical dotted line to make a folder.
 - Fold along the dotted-line near the bottom of the sheet to create the folder pockets
 - Optional: Adhere the sides of the "pockets" with a glue stick or tape.

3. Position the Travel Tips in the right pocket of the folder, according to the prescribed sequence or gradation, with the exception of Travel Tip #6, which is designed to be placed in the left pocket.

Set up two activities to help participants interpret Faith Trek as a lifelong journey that begins with baptism.

1. Use one end of a table to create an interactive baptismal display. Position a bowl of water on the table and place the small clear craft stones in it. Surround it with a baptismal candle, a towel and any other items that may be used to celebrate baptism in your congregation. Fold an 11" x 17" piece of construction paper to be a table tent display for the First Step reference sheet.
2. Set up the other end of the table to be a "print" shop. Lay out the ink pads, pre-moistened cloths and Faith Trek Travel Packs. Fold an 11" x 17" piece of construction paper to be a table tent display for the Travel Tip #1 reference sheet.

Make a sample "foot" print on the cross in the box on the front of the Faith Trek Travel Pack. Use the following guidelines to create a footprint.

1. Make a fist with your right hand.
2. Lay the baby finger "bottom" of your fist on the ink pad and imprint it on the cross in the box.
3. Place the tip of your right thumb on the ink pad to imprint a "big toe" on the top left corner of your "foot" print.
4. Place the tips of other fingers on the ink pad to imprint other toes on the top of your "foot" print.

Display your imprinted travel pack for ready reference.

Use the "Run the Race Set Before You" sign design to identify the title of this activity in the space provided, with a directive to "Begin Here." You might also download the Faith Trek theme design to enlarge and display in your program area. Many professional printers have the ability to enlarge B & W designs to 3' x 4'. You might also consider projecting the design. This option however is dependent upon the availability of Microsoft PowerPoint, a projector and a large screen. You will also need to know how to download the design and save it to an appropriate file for presentation.

Activity:

Hold a real baby or doll baby as you greet participants. Recognize the fact that our life journeys begin at birth and our faith treks or faith journeys begin with baptism. Invite them to check out the baptismal display.

Encourage participants to dip their fingers in the baptismal bowl and re-trace the cross that initially marked them as a child of God. Point out that it is in our baptisms that we are

- Called by God to begin our lifelong journeys in faith.
- Equipped with special gifts to serve God and others.

Refer to the First Steps reference sheet as you read the statement from the Rite of Holy Baptism. Invite them to take a small clear craft stone or "water drop" from the bowl to remind them that God goes with them and invites them to use their God-given talents, gifts and abilities to serve God and others along the way.

Direct your participants to the activity at the other end of the table. Distribute Faith Trek Travel Packs to every family/participant and refer to it as one of the many resources they will receive to encourage and support them on their journey in faith.

Display your sample travel pack and describe its contents.

- Point out that 'faith trek' is another way to describe a lifelong journey in faith.
- Identify the Travel Tip sheets as key learnings from the activity centers that might be helpful to them as they journey in faith.

- Point out that the cross represents the “mark” of the cross we received at our baptisms and the path God invites us to take.
- Identify the “foot” print on the cross as an expression of your desire and commitment to journey in faith.

Refer to “Run the race set before you....” on the inside of the brochure, Travel Tip #1 and the Travel Tip #1 reference sheet and as you identify it as the key learning highlighted to retain for inspiration and support as they journey in faith.

Run the race set before you...looking to Jesus the pioneer as the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.
Hebrews 12:1b-2a

Explain that baptism marks the beginning of a lifelong trek in faith. Emphasize the vital need to focus our lives on Jesus as they strive to make every step they take an imprint of their obedience to God’s call to journey in faith.

Demonstrate how to make a “foot” print in the box on the front of the Faith Trek Travel Pack. Invite your participants to imprint a “foot print” on the cross to confirm their desire and commitment to follow Jesus. Display your sample packet as a ready reference.