



## Fit 4 Gold: 4. Being Setback Full Plan



### **Theme: Losing Sight of the Gold**

**Aim:** To identify obstacles and setbacks in our lives and to see how to deal with them.

**Note:** Many of your pre-teens will have already experienced or are experiencing tough times in their lives. This session could be really helpful to them. Be honest about tough times you have been through yourself as far as is appropriate.

**Theme verse:** 1 Peter 1:6-7

Your troubles have come in order to prove that your faith is real. It is worth more than gold.  
Or Psalm 18:28 My God brightens the darkness around me. NCV

**Bible links references**– detailed selection in Bible verses document

#### **Joseph**

Genesis 37, 39-50 for the whole story but focus on 39:21-23... the Lord was with Joseph and 50:19-21 ...but God intended it all for good

Psalm 105:19 Until the time came to fulfil his dreams, the Lord tested Joseph's character  
NLT

#### **Other references**

Isaiah 43:2 When you go through deep waters, I will be with you...

2 Corinthians 4:8-9 We have troubles all around us, but we are not defeated. God does not leave us.

Romans 5:3-4 problems and trials... help us develop endurance... strength of character...and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. NLT

#### **Video clip suggestions**

Show part of a 'Total Wipeout' programme

Show a clip from one of the Ice Age films where the squirrel is trying to catch an acorn

Ormie the Pig – cartoon sketch similar to above

**Food links:** sour, bitter, sharp perhaps leading on to sweet. 'Sour worm' sweets

#### **Song suggestions:**

Any kind of weather: Doug Horley - Lovely Jubbly

Even though I walk through the valley: Matt Redman

Find a way: Great Big God 3

Kiss it better Father: Great Big God 3

Angels (what a long hard day it's been): Ishmael

Song of the last generation: Ishmael

Blessed be your name: Matt Redman

**Games theme: Obstacles, challenges** select from

Design a home-made obstacle course with things to climb, tunnel under, water, nets logs etc. & use items such as Space hoppers, pedal pusher etc. Remember to do a risk assessment.

Sack race (could use some cool sacks with fun faces available from eBay – search 'sack race set' or 'jumping sacks'. Old pillowcases can tear quite easily but are another option.)

Tiddly-wink obstacle course (I once had a small sensible group and we did this on some stairs which is great fun as it's like 3D snakes and ladders)

Twister or Globetrotter

Giant snakes and ladders

There are various versions of giant snakes and ladders but it is important that it includes silly pictures such as the Peppa pig version and not just plain boring squares.

**Sports links:** more details available in Sports Links document

What different types of setbacks and obstacles do athletes suffer from in trying to reach their goal? Yet some succeed in overcoming these. How?

**Qualification issues**

- **Debbie Flood** was disappointed when she did not qualify for the Sydney Olympics. She later saw the positive side of this –see profile.
- **Christine Ohuruogu** has never used drugs but she was banned because she was not in the right place for the 'whereabouts' drugs tests and she had to fight to be reinstated. It was all worthwhile when she won a gold Olympic medal in 2008.
- **Christine Ohuruogu** and **Usain Bolt** were both disqualified in the 2011 World championships for leaving the blocks before the starter gun had fired. A false start is not unusual in the 100m race but it is almost unheard of in the 400m.

**Injuries at a critical time**

All athletes suffer from injuries at times but some seem to suffer more than others especially at critical times.

- **Jessica Ennis** qualified for Heptathlon for the 2008 Beijing Olympics but a stress fracture in her ankle shortly beforehand meant that she was not fit enough to compete.
- **Chinaman Liu Xiang** was unable to defend his Olympic title in 2008 due to a foot injury during the first heat of the 110m hurdles
- **Kelly Holmes:** a stress fracture at the Olympic Games in 1996; rupturing her achilles tendon at the world championships in 1997; a virus just before the Olympics in 2000; it seemed that Kelly would never quite fulfil her potential as an athlete.
- **Derek Redmond** is famous for his determination to complete his Olympic semi-final race with his Dad's help after he tore his hamstring. The crowd gave him a standing ovation.

**Health issues**

- **Steve Redgrave** had diabetes for the last few years of his rowing career
- **Usain Bolt** suffers from scoliosis and one of his legs is half an inch shorter than the other.
- **Paula Radcliffe** – Marathon champion, suffers from asthma
- **Dai Greene** the 400m hurdler suffers from epilepsy

**Disability**

- **George Eyser** in 1904 was the first Paralympic athlete. He lost most of his left leg after a train accident and was given a wooden prosthetic leg. He won 6 medals for gymnastics.
- **Natalie du Toit** was hit by a car when she was 17 and had to have her left leg amputated. She has won gold medals when competing against able bodied swimmers in the 10 km open water race.

**Bible links:** select from

**Suggestion 1- The toughest time of all was had by...**

Divide them into groups of about 4-5 with a pre-prepared leader. Give each group the name of a Bible character who had a tough time with the appropriate Bible references. (See Bible Links Profiles) Give them about 30 minutes to find out what their character had to go through and prepare some kind of presentation such as a storyboard, drama or song etc on the theme of 'Our person had the toughest time because...'

Good options might be

- **David** who lost his job, his house and his wife all in one day and had to flee for his life
- **Joseph** who was sold as a slave by his brothers and was wrongfully imprisoned
- **Paul** who was shipwrecked, imprisoned, whipped, stoned etc
- **Mary** who found that being the mother of Jesus brought trouble as well as joy.
- You may also want to consider someone whose setback was their own fault such as
- **Peter** whose main setback was his own weakness when he denied Jesus.
- **Moses** when anger got the better of him and he killed an Egyptian slave master

**Suggestion 2: Gutter to Gold**

Or choose to do just one character in detail. We have focused here on Joseph and given a selection of ideas on how to cover it.

**Joseph** Genesis 37, 39-50 for the whole story but focus on 39:21-23 and Psalm 105:19 Until the time came to fulfil his dreams, the Lord tested Joseph's character NLT

Betrayed by his brothers; sold as a slave; unjustly imprisoned; Joseph had a really hard time for many years. He said "but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people." Genesis 50:20

**VeggieTales DVD:** The Ballard of Little Joe. Length: 35 minutes.

Some groups love VeggieTales DVD's, other groups hate them.

**Music clips** from 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat'. (Depending on which clips you use, you may have to point out that Joseph did in fact refuse to become Potiphar's wife's lover/boyfriend as some of them probably think that the musical is completely accurate)

**Using games and discussion**

Most have an idea of the story as many primary schools do the musical.

Give a bit of family background on Joe – not a normal nuclear family! Lots of tension. Why did Joseph's brothers hate him?

**Coats games:**

**Coat 1:** In small teams get them to make Joseph's famous 'coat' out of scrap materials, crepe paper etc. Then let them rip it to shreds and scribble red pen on it, ready to show Jacob that his son had probably been killed. Need sellotape, red felt tips, bright coloured crepe paper or newspaper or old clothes that could be cut up etc

**Coat 2:** Slave's Tunic

**Chat:** Joseph's whole world has been turned upside down.

- What kind of thoughts do you think were going through his head? How would he have felt?
- He has to make a choice over how to respond. What are his choices?
- He makes a positive choice to make the best of the situation. How does this help him? What does he get out of that?

We don't know how quickly he did that, but a few years on he has made a life for himself. It wasn't what he originally expected but it wasn't too bad. He has carved out a niche for himself. He has status within a top household, a valued role and a good standard of living.

But then... She just had to spoil everything! When Joe arrived, he was only 17, still on the small side, not yet shaving, but a few years later Potiphar's wife suddenly noticed that he had grown up!

**Game 2** –get 2 volunteers to mime the scene and play tug of war with coat 2. The group can make suggestions about how to act it out. Make it funny. Could do it pantomime style. Have a 3<sup>rd</sup> volunteer come in as Potiphar and give out coat 3 - prison gear.

**Discuss:** Once again, Joe is facing tough times. What choices did he make? How did he cope? Read Genesis 39:21-23

**Game 3:** serving wine to Pharaoh See Genesis 40:11

3 volunteers; 3 unbreakable cups; 3 clusters of grapes

Each person has to squeeze the grapes, trying to get as much juice into their cup as possible.

Joseph's new friend has royal connections so his hopes are built up – maybe... finally... but no... 2 years pass, then out of the blue comes a royal summons. Just time for the 3 s's – shower, shave and ... and it's off to see Pharaoh.

**YouTube clip:** search 'cows & cows & cows.'

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FavUpD\\_ljVY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FavUpD_ljVY)

A contrast to the dream that Pharaoh had about cows! It's very funny.

**Coat 4:** posh with gold chain/medal and signet ring

Discuss Joseph's change of fortune. Does it sound too good to be real?

Now that Joe has 'made it'. What can he see about all his setbacks?

**Application:** What are our setbacks & struggles? How can we turn them around? How can hearing about these other people past & present encourage us? How can we ensure that setbacks strengthen rather than weaken us?

✚ **Prayer space / small group themes:** see *Prayer Space* document for full selection

Allow plenty of time for small group work here. Perhaps give them a choice between prayer space and extra discussion time. As they come out of prayer space give them the option of having someone pray for them but don't be pushy.

✚ **Snakes and Ladders**

Display a Snakes and Ladders board

Print off some sheets of clip art (see prayer space document) with snakes and ladders of different sizes and cut them out.

- Ⓢ Write on back of the snakes what you see as the things in your lives that are holding you back.
- Ⓢ Use the ladders to write down words that will remind you how to deal with those problems.

**Discuss:** Snakes & ladders visual aid sheets

You could use the pictures as a focus for discussion if you wanted. Some of the snakes look scary, some don't.

What do we see as our obstacles and setbacks?

Similar with the ladders: some ladders look safe; some more risky; some are being used in teams etc

✚ **Dark and Light**

This idea is based on the old poem 'The Weaver', see below. The poem itself may be a little adult for some in this age group but if you are working in an all age context or with bright kids, you may wish to use it.

Black paper and fluorescent pens

- Draw a picture that would good against a dark background.

Silhouettes

- Using a really bright background, draw a dark silhouette.

Display both types of picture.

- In these pictures are the dark colours as important as the bright colours? Why?

✚ **Hurdles**

- Ⓢ Use or make a hurdle. Hang prayers from it about obstacles in our lives that we would like God to help us overcome. A real hurdle is 41 in/104 cm wide and between 30 and 42 inches high (76 and 106 cm). Something smaller could be used here however.

## Background notes for leaders

### *Gutter to Gold*

#### *Joseph gets his long awaited medal*

It seemed like everyone forgot about Joseph.

His brothers wanted to forget about him and get on with their lives. Except they got a guilty conscience every time they saw their grief stricken father who believed him to be dead. They couldn't exactly confess as to what they had done to him, selling him to some traffickers. It was true that he had been a right pain but perhaps they had allowed themselves to get too wound up about it and had over reacted, not foreseeing the consequences to those they cared about. Judah couldn't stand it. He moved out. Right out of the area in fact, about 80 miles south, married, had 3 sons. By the time he comes back into the story he has discovered what it's like to lose a son because two of his own had died.

His master, Captain Potiphar whose extensive household he had run so effectively for several years, had chosen to forget about him. He had lost his temper, raged a bit and thrown him in prison before realising that his wayward wife was probably lying. He officially still owned Joseph, but it was rather awkward really. He couldn't be seen to take the side of a slave in preference to his wife so he couldn't reinstate him. He wasn't ruthless enough to have him executed for something he hadn't done. Selling him would be the best option, but it was easier just to put him out of his mind and forget he was there.

Potiphar's wife gloated for only a short while over the way she had got her own back on this young slave who had dared to refuse her. 'Hell has no fury like a woman scorned.' She was soon chasing a new crush.

Even that guy he had so encouraged, the one with royal connections, Pharaoh's head butler he was. Joseph had helped him build his hopes when he dreamed that Pharaoh would pardon him and give him his job back. Joseph just had that God given gift for knowing whether a dream was really from God or not. He'd been right about the baker too, poor guy. Bad job that. They'd all become so friendly, stuck in prison together for so long.

"Put in a good word for me" said Joe.

"Sure thing" replied his friend. But no! Out of sight, out of mind!

How much longer was he going to be stuck in prison doing the warden's job for him, caring for other people but getting nothing in return? No weekends off, evenings out with the lads, anyone to remember his birthday. He couldn't even chat over the internet, he was so cut off. All he had was some basic work. It was pretty mundane but it stopped him climbing the walls with boredom.

He'd had such high hopes when he was young. Dreams of glory and power! He was older and wiser now. The one thing that had kept him going was that he knew that his God had been with him, blessing him, helping him, giving him the strength to go on.

Then suddenly out of the blue it all changed. He received a royal summons. Pharaoh was desperately worried over some strange dreams and Joseph's royal contact had suddenly realised that he might be going himself a favour by mentioning Joseph to Pharaoh.

There was just enough time for the 3 s's – shave, shower and...! A quick lesson in protocol and if in doubt keep bowing.

Joseph walked into that palace a slave. He walked out a free man, a gold medal winner – chain around his neck, the most powerful man in the world second only to Pharaoh. Surely that only happens in stories.

The dreams sounded simple enough and the explanation seemed to be just common sense so why all the fuss? Seven fat cows eating up seven skinny cows! Though I had always thought that cows were vegetarian! The one about healthy heads/ears of grain eating shrivelled ears of grain sounded more odd but still kind of obvious in its' meaning. Wouldn't it have made more sense to have given Joseph a junior post first to see how he got on? That's how it happens in real life.

The problem was that part of a pharaoh's job description was that he was supposed to be a god and one of his responsibilities was to control the River Nile. If the harvest failed too often, he was not doing his job properly and the ruling classes might decide they could find a better god. Having nightmares about the harvest failing was not unusual for Pharaoh, especially if he'd eaten too much just before bedtime. He needed to know if these dreams were a revelation from one of the gods (he believed in many) or whether it was just him getting evermore paranoid. That was something his existing advisers couldn't tell him and they didn't dare just guess. If they got it wrong it could mean execution.

Pharaoh needed someone with insight and a cool head. Here finally, in front of him was someone who not only had the courage to tell him that his worst fears were about to become real, but to offer a solution to the problem. Not only that, the plan had the kind of business potential that would have impressed Lord Alan Sugar. And he had a certain presence about him, this 30 year old. Who could have imagined that he was straight out of prison?

And so Joseph was given a gold reward. Along with the job went a company chariot, plenty of travel, good salary; a house, a lovely wife and eventually 2 sons.

Looking back Joseph could see that every problem he had faced had helped him on his way. What can feel like a setback can in fact be a step up the ladder towards a better life.

And possibly one of his best rewards was yet to come?

### Quotes

"Anyone can give up, it's the easiest thing in the world to do. But to hold it together when everyone else would understand if you fell apart, that's true strength."

Kriss Akabusi about being a Christian: "Even with the ups and downs, the good days and bad days, I am secure that someone loves me like no other"

"I don't regret anything bad that has happened to me because it makes you stronger." Adam, age 19

"Success comes in cans... not in cannots."

"Failing is not falling flat on your face, it's not getting up"

"You succeed when you get up one more time than you have fallen"

"A diamond is merely a piece of coal that has done well under pressure."

"hit me and punch me it will make me stronger, try and put me down it will make me wiser, try come and get me it will make me faster, whatever you do it helps me not you , I got you all worked out quit while your ahead this ...This right here won't get you far in life so if you got something to say about me say it to my face coz all it will do is make me better than you and your pathetic little games. I don't get it..." Shannon (age 13) on Facebook, used with permission

### **Footprints poem: Mary Stevenson, 1936** (There are 3 versions of this.)

A poster or some bookmarkers of the famous 'Footprints' poem from your local Christian bookshop might be helpful in a prayer space.

**The Weaver** Author unknown (there are different versions of this)

*My life is but a weaving between my Lord and me,  
I cannot choose the colours He worketh steadily.  
Oft times He weaveth sorrow, and I in foolish pride  
forget He sees the upper but I the under side.*

*Not till the loom is silent  
And the shuttles cease to fly,  
Shall God unroll the canvas  
And explain the reason why  
The dark threads are as needful  
In the weavers skilful hand  
As the threads of gold and silver  
In the pattern he has planned.*

### **God's Promise**

God never promised a life without pain,  
Laughter without tears or sun without rain.  
But He did promise strength for the day,  
Comfort for the tears and the light for the way,  
And for all who believe In His Heaven above  
He rewards their faith In His everlasting love. Anon