



4. Going for gold

Age range: Primary

Theme: We gather as a community for collective worship that is **inspiring, invitational and inclusive**, reflecting the fact that we are a part of a diverse school family and the wider church community. This term, we are warming up for the Summer Olympics by going back in time and revisiting some Olympic and Paralympic Games from the past. We will share inspirational stories which reflect the six Olympic values of Determination, Excellence, Inspiration, Courage, Friendship and Equality and use them to help us to think about what we can learn from them.



How does this link to your school’s Christian vision & values?

Many of the Olympic values are shared with those that are familiar to us in school, so throughout this term, we encourage you to link each week’s collective worship to your school vision – and the way that you live this out through your values. Today we are especially thinking about Baron de Coubertin’s words about participation, rather than winning, and finding out about an athlete who demonstrated **excellence** across many sporting disciplines.

Resources:

- The PowerPoint slides are numbered with a point in the script so you can find your way, and the parts in **bold** show you where to click on to activate the next slide or animation. There are slides to go with today’s script, but you could quite easily use this collective worship without the PowerPoint if you preferred.
- **There is also an Olympic ‘passport’ that you can create using the reflection cards for each week, and to gather some thoughts from your children as you go along. This is in a separate file and could be easily constructed from an A4 or A5 folder with plastic pockets, but will also be included in each week’s resources. You could ‘stamp’ your reflection card each week, just like you would a passport. There is space for this at the top of each card. Use as many as you have time for.**
- **This week, we are using an Olympic version of Jesus’ parable of the talents as our story, which you won’t find in the Bible! There are links to photos of specific athletes you could mention if you wanted to, along with the story itself and some background information on p.5: some athletes also featured in other weeks’ scripts. If you want to ensure that children are familiar with the original parable, then you can find it in Matthew 25: [Parable of the talents](#)**
- **There is also an introductory game ‘Hands up!’ to get children thinking about what they are good at, taken from the song that is suggested for use during this CW. Feel free to add / amend!**
- **Reflective prayer activity:** Make ‘pledge’ (promise) cards, for children to use to write or draw what they commit time and effort to, to improve their ‘talent’. This could be anything, from a sporting endeavour to playing an instrument, or simply being helpful.


Gathering:

Slide 1: Use the new gathering words, which will be the same each week.



- **Leader: We are here together**
- **ALL: May we ‘GO FOR GOLD!’ in our words and actions today!**

Engaging:

- **Slide 2:** Last week we heard about the very first modern Olympics and thought about the story of Edwin Flack (the ‘Hare’) and Spiridon Louis (the ‘Tortoise’) – and how he showed the Olympic value of **determination** in the marathon that he ran. We’ll be hearing about some more athletes’ stories during today – and we’ll be sharing a very special Olympic version of a very famous story that Jesus told....but first... 
- **Slide 3:** ...we’re going to start today’s assembly with a ‘hands up!’ game. I’m going to tell you to put your hand up....or on your head.....or touch your nose (or something else, so listen out!) if you’re good at one of my list of talents, something you’re good at. Are you ready? [do this as fast as you dare!]
 - Put your hand up if you’re good at.....**dancing**
 - Put your finger on your nose if you’re good at.....**singing**
 - Put your elbow in the air if you can play a **musical instrument**
 - Put your hand on your head if you’re good at.....**football**
 - Put your finger on your nose if you’re good at.....**painting & drawing**
 - Put your hand up if you’re good at.....**riding your bike**
 - Put your elbow in the air if you’re good at.....**computer things**
 - Put your finger on your nose if you’re good at.....**helping others**
 - Put your hand up if you’re good at.....**swimming**



Put your hand on your head if you're good at.....**something else**

- We could go on all day celebrating the talents that you each have – and I'm sorry if I didn't mention something that you're particularly good at – perhaps you could tell me later.... In our assembly today, we're going to be thinking today about one of those Olympic values – excellence – and how it's important to use our talents, the things that we're good at, properly, to encourage them to grow.
- **Slide 4:** Over the past few weeks, we've been thinking about the Olympics, and the important values that are a part of sports of all sorts.
- **Slide 5:** We're going to jump into our Olympic time machine again now, and go back through time and space to..... the **1912 Olympic Games**,
- **Slide 6:** which took place in Stockholm, in Sweden.....Each athlete who takes part in the Olympics usually has one particular talent – perhaps running....or swimming.....or jumping....or throwing, but for one special event, an athlete has to be good at not one thing, but ten!
- **Slide 7:** This event is the decathlon, and consists of a **100m run, long jump, shot put** (that's throwing a very, very heavy ball!), **high jump**, a **400m run**,
- **Slide 8:** jumping **hurdles**, throwing the **discus**, a **pole vault** (that's using a pole to help you get over a very high bar), a **javelin throw** and finally, the **1500m run**. PHEW!!!
- **Slide 9:** In 1912, in the Stockholm Olympics, one very talented sportsman, a man called Jim Thorpe, won a gold medal in the decathlon event. Jim Thorpe was good at many different types of sport, and before being entered in the Olympics, he had played both American football and baseball to a very high standard.
- **Slide 10:** King Gustav V of Sweden, as he awarded Jim Thorpe his gold medal after the decathlon said 'You, sir, are the greatest athlete in the world!' – and indeed, over 100 years later, he is still listed as one of the greatest athletes of all time.
- **Slide 11:** Earlier in our time together, we thought about some of the things we're good at – our talents. Some people believe that the talents we have – the things we're good at – are special gifts from God that we're supposed to look after. All Olympic athletes aim to be the very best that they can be – at the peak of their fitness. Their hopes for Olympic gold rest not just on their talent, but also on their hard work, training for hours and hours every day, week after week and sometimes year after year.
- Since the start of the Olympics in 1896, people have watched in amazement at the extraordinary displays of talent, whether it be running, or swimming, or cycling....or the decathlon. But we have also heard how the founder of the Olympics, Baron de Coubertin, said that 'The important thing in the Olympic Games is not winning, but taking part', which makes us wonder if there's more to being 'excellent' than just winning?
- **Slide 12:** I've got a story here about some Olympic athletes, and it's a bit like one of Jesus' parables. Jesus' parable was about what three servants did with some money that their master gave them, and this story is a bit like that. It's a story that might help us to see that excellence is not just to do with winning, but to do with how we handle our talents.....
- As you listen, think about who in this story wastes their talent.....*[use script on p5]*
- I started with a question – and maybe now you can answer.....which athletes wasted their talent?

Slide 13: Responding and words for worship

We started our assembly by thinking about some of the many different things that we might be good at, our talents. We've heard how Christians believe our talents are special gifts from God that need to be looked after.



Think in the stillness now....

....I wonder what things you're good at – your talents?....

....I wonder how hard you work to look after them.....?

....do you practise as often as you can & try hard to improve?....

....do you persevere when you're learning something new?.....



...Excellence is one of the Olympic values we've been reflecting on....
.....'excellence' means being the very best that you can be.....'going for gold'.....
....I wonder if 'excellence' is all about winning, or whether it's about our attitude as well?....
....maybe it's about working hard day after day and week after week.....
.....listening to those who try to help us.....
....playing by the rules....
....helping our talents to grow strong, not wasting them....

Slide 14: Opportunity for reflection / prayer

I'm going to pray now. If this is something that you feel comfortable doing, then find a way to make the prayer your own.

Dear God

Thank you for the gifts of our talents, those things we are good at. Help us to look after them....to work hard to get even better at them.....to 'go for gold', but to always remember that in life, just as in sport, it's not just winning that counts.

Slide 15: Amen

Sending: Slide 16

Leader: As we leave this place & time and go into the day ahead...

All: Let's go for gold* in all that we do!



*Again, you might need to unpick what we mean by 'going for gold' in the context of today's words.

To listen to / sing:

[All together as a family](#) (AAOS)

Slide 17: Reflective areas



Make 'pledge' (promise) cards, for children to use to write or draw what they commit time and effort to, to improve their 'talent'. This could be anything, from a sporting endeavour to playing an instrument, or simply being helpful.



An Olympic Parable [links will take you to photos to put on your screen if you wish]

Olympic history reveals many talented sportsmen and women.....

**Some athletes come from rich, powerful countries, where huge amounts of money are invested in sport [show pictures of Jim Thorpe, [Sir Steve Redgrave](#) & [Michael Phelps](#)]
These athletes work hard to reach the peak of their potential – eating well, doing what their trainers (their teachers) tell them, getting enough sleep, training hard. Others come from poorer countries [show pictures of [Haile Gebrselassie](#) & [Nadia Comaneci](#)] but they work just as hard as those from the rich, powerful countries, because everyone knows you don't need money to be the best that you can be....
And so, these athletes receive their prize.....**

Other athletes who take part will be remembered not for winning gold, but for finishing their race, persevering till the end..... despite agonizing injury [show picture of [Derek Redmond](#)]or doing the best that they can, even when there's no hope of winning.....proud just to be taking part as the whole world watches [show picture of [Saamiya Yusuf Omar](#)].....and they too receive their reward, though it might not be a gold medal.....

But a few decide that their hard work is not enough and win by cheating, using drugs to help them run faster.....or in a moment of madness, breaking the rules [[show rowing pair](#)].....or arguing with the referee [[show Angel Matos](#)].....

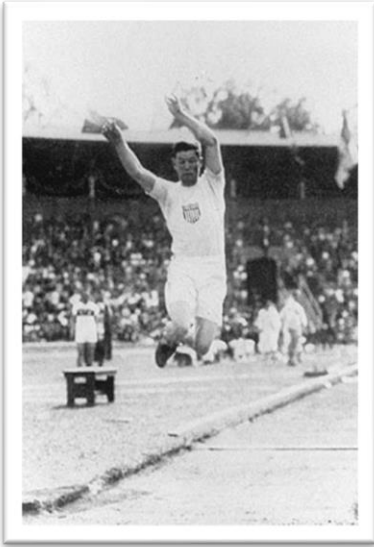
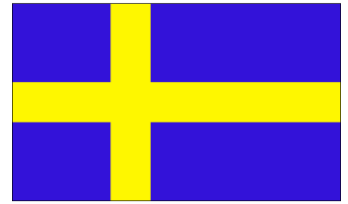
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Here's a bit of background to help you make sense of the athletes chosen for the story:

- Sir Steve Redgrave is known for winning Olympic gold five times in coxless fours / pairs rowing between 1984 & 2000.
- Jim Thorpe excelled in sport generally, played in American football / baseball leagues but won gold for decathlon & pentathlon in the 1912 Olympics
- Haile Gebrselassie from Ethiopia ran in 10K at the 2004 Olympics, and won gold.
- Nadia Comaneci from Romania won 3 gold medals in gymnastics, and scored that elusive 'perfect 10'.
- Somalian runner Saamiya Yusuf Omar was last to finish in the women's 200m race, but finished proud just to have had the chance to compete. Sadly, she died crossing the Channel to Britain in 2012, before she could compete in the 2012 Olympics.
- In 1988 Ben Johnson was disqualified for failing a drugs test and later had his gold medal taken from him.
- Chris Jarvis & David Calder were the 2004 Canadian men's rowing pair, disqualified for crossing into the South African pair's lane.
- Angel Matos, a Cuban taekwondo competitor, disqualified in the 2008 Beijing Olympics for kicking a referee after disagreeing with his decision.



Arrival on:



Excellence

Jim Thorpe practised hard and was excellent at many different sports. He won a gold medal in the *decathlon* in 1912.



**What 'talents' do you have?
How do you help them to improve?**



**Talk together about different things that might help you to 'get better':
can you help each other?
What promise might you make to yourself to show you are not wasting your talent?**



Write your ideas onto one of the little cards and keep it somewhere to remind you of your commitment.



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