

# Don't Look Back

## PRESCHOOL LESSON PLAN

**Theme:** Set new goals for the New Year

**Scripture:** Philippians 3:12-14

**Memory Verse:** I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. - Philippians 3:14

## The Children's Sermon

How many of you have ever been involved in a foot race? What is the one thing that can slow you down? (Let the kids answer.) Yes, all of those are correct. But, one thing I remember hearing from a PE teacher about what could slow you down in a race was this, 'Never look back.' Our PE teacher told us that looking back in a race slows you down. (If time & space permits, you could have two children run a short race.) He told us it slows you down for two (2) reasons; 1) You are spending energy & time at looking where you have been & not where you are going, 2) You loose sight of the mark or finish line. Both of these things make you loose focus which in turn causes you valuable time in a race.

Paul speaks of this very thing in the Bible. It can be found in Philippians 3:12-14, "Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Paul is talking about Pressing toward a goal, or winning a race. He knows that he has not won the race but, he counts himself still in the race trying to obtain the prize. He states in verse 13; in running the race one thing he does is forgetting those things that are in the past and reaches for the future. In other words, he doesn't look back! He knows that if there was some goal he did not achieve last year, he is not going to dwell on it just reach for those things he can do in the coming year.

Sometimes, we all do things we wish we had done differently. Maybe last year, you didn't listen to Mom and Dad as much as you should have, or perhaps you forgot to invite someone to church. You might have wanted to read your Bible more, tell someone about how much Jesus loves them, or be a better friend. But guess what? It's okay! It's a new year, and that means you have a new chance to set goals and try again.

Think about one thing you want to do better this year. It could be anything! Maybe you want to help out more at home, or learn a new Bible verse every week. The important thing is to pick something that matters to you.

Remember, pressing on isn't just for this year. It's something we can do all our lives. There will always be new goals to reach and new races to run. And the best prize of all is knowing that Jesus is with us every step of the way, cheering us on. With God's help and a bit of determination, you can reach any goal you set. So, keep your eyes on the prize, and let's press on together!

So, let's pray together now: "Dear God, thank you for giving us new chances every day. Help us to pick a goal and press on toward it, without looking back. We know that with Your help, we can do it. Thank you for loving us and being with us in our race. Amen."

## Bible Memory Verse

**I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. - Philippians 3:14**

You Will Need:

- Construction paper
- Markers or crayons
- Stickers or glitter

Get Ready:

- Cut the construction paper into large, easy-to-hold shapes, like stars or hearts.
- Write the memory verse on each shape in large, clear letters.

Do This:

1. Give each child a pre-written memory verse shape and a set of markers or crayons.
2. Encourage the children to decorate their verse shape with markers, crayons, stickers, or glitter, making it colorful and personalized.
3. Once everyone is done decorating, gather the children in a circle. Ask them to hold up their verse shapes and say the memory verse together. Explain in simple terms that just like they are pressing down on their markers and crayons to make beautiful art, we can 'press on' or keep going towards loving others and doing good, because Jesus loves us and helps us.

## Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- Construction paper in various colors

- Child-safe scissors
- Markers or crayons
- Glue sticks
- Stickers (optional for decoration)
- A simple, child-friendly version of Philippians 3:12-14 printed out

#### Get Ready:

- Pre-cut construction paper into shapes of stars or hearts, one for each child.
- Write or print a simple, child-friendly summary of Philippians 3:12-14 on a large piece of paper or board where all the children can see.

#### Do this:

1. Begin by reading the simplified version of Philippians 3:12-14 aloud to the children, explaining that the New Year is a time to set new goals, just like Paul talks about reaching forward to what lies ahead.
2. Ask the children to think of one goal they have for the New Year. It could be anything from being kinder to siblings, trying a new food, or learning to tie their shoes.
3. Give each child a pre-cut star or heart and ask them to draw or write their goal on it with markers or crayons. Assist the younger children in writing their goal if needed.
4. Once they have their goal on their star or heart, allow them to decorate it with stickers or more drawings.
5. Create a "New Year Goals" display area where all the stars or hearts can be glued onto a larger piece of construction paper or a poster board. Hang this in a visible area as a reminder of their goals for the New Year.
6. Conclude by encouraging the children to work towards their goals, reminding them that just like Paul, they can always keep trying to do their best in the New Year.

## Snack Activity: Pressing Onward Fruit Rockets

You'll Need:

- Fresh strawberries, grapes, bananas, and apples
- Skewers or thick straws
- Small cookie cutters (star or heart shapes)

Get Ready: First, parents or teachers should pre-cut the fruits into slices thick enough to be placed on skewers or straws safely. For younger children, use straws as a safer alternative to skewers. Cut some of the apples or bananas with the cookie cutters to create star or heart shapes.

Do this:

1. Explain to the children that just like Paul talks about 'pressing on' towards the goal in Philippians 3:12-14, we can set new goals for the New Year to grow and learn more about Jesus.
2. Let the children pick their fruits and thread them onto their skewer or straw, creating their own 'rocket' to symbolize shooting towards their New Year's goals. Use the star or heart-shaped fruits as the top of the rocket.
3. As they enjoy their fruit rockets, encourage them to talk about one goal they have for the new year, whether it's being kinder, learning a new prayer, or helping more at home.

## Game Activity: Race to the New Year

You'll Need:

- A long piece of string or yarn
- Pictures of goals (e.g., sharing, praying, being kind) printed on paper
- Clothespins

Get Ready: Tie the string between two points in your classroom to make a 'finish line.'  
Attach the pictures of goals along the string with clothespins, spaced out evenly.

Do this:

1. Explain to the children that just like in a race, we have goals to reach in the New Year. Read or summarize Philippians 3:12-14, emphasizing 'pressing on' towards our goals.
2. Have the children line up at a starting point a few feet away from the string.
3. Call out a goal (e.g., 'Let's share more!') and have the children race towards the string to touch the picture that matches the goal.
4. After each round, discuss the goal briefly (e.g., 'Why is sharing important?') before moving on to the next race.

## Craft Activity: Pressing On Toward the Goal

You'll Need:

- Construction paper (various colors)
- Safety scissors
- Glue sticks
- Markers or crayons
- Stickers (optional)

Get Ready: Cut out large footprints from the construction paper beforehand. Each child will need one footprint.

Do this:

1. Give each child a footprint cutout and ask them to think about one goal they want to set for the New Year. For younger children, this could be as simple as learning a new prayer, being kind to a sibling, or helping more at home.
2. Help the children write or draw their goal on the footprint with markers or crayons. For those who cannot write yet, you can write it for them as they dictate or choose to draw a picture that represents their goal.
3. Decorate the footprint with stickers and crayons to make it bright and personal. Explain that the footprint represents their steps toward reaching their new goal, just like Paul talks about 'pressing on toward the goal' in Philippians 3:12-14.
4. Once everyone is done, create a path on a wall or bulletin board with all the footprints showing that together, we are all moving toward our goals in the New Year.

## Prayer Activity: Pressing Onward: My New Year

### Prayer

You'll Need:

- Colorful construction paper
- Crayons or markers
- Stickers with stars or hearts

Get Ready: Cut the construction paper into large, easy-to-hold shapes, like hearts or stars, one for each child.

Do this:

1. Read a simplified version of Philippians 3:12-14 to the children, explaining that just like runners in a race, we can keep moving forward to do good things in the new year.

2. Ask each child to think of one good thing they want to do or get better at this year (e.g., sharing toys, helping parents, learning to tie shoes).
3. Let them draw or write their goal on the construction paper shape with crayons or markers, and decorate with stickers. Help the younger children by writing their goal for them if they tell you what it is.
4. Gather the children in a circle and let them share their goal if they want to. Lead them in a simple prayer, asking God to help them achieve their goals and to keep moving forward, just like Paul in the Bible.