

Historical Narrative: Eric Liddell

- Theme:** Race for the heavenly crown.
- Synopsis:** After winning an Olympic gold medal, Eric Liddell gave his life to village preaching in China, which ultimately forced him into a prison camp where he died.
- Scripture:** Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. (1 Corinthians 9:24-25)
- Characters:**
- Eric Liddell
 - Narrator
- Profile:** Appearance: 5'9" tall, blonde, blue eyes, receding hairline, broad shouldered. Personality: Scottish accent, shy, soft-spoken, very humble. Costume: white t-shirt, white baggy shorts, running shoes.
- Props:**
- Small table (for props)
 - High stool (for occasional sitting)
 - Mounted world map
 - Footstool
 - Worn Bible
 - Gold medal, strung with ribbon
 - Small photo frame
 - Sheet of white paper
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Script:

Eric: *(From offstage)* In the dust of defeat, as well as in the laurels of victory, there is a glory to be found, if one has done his best. *(Enter stage, jogging.)*

(Looking around him) Aye, what a grand day for a run. Indeed every day is befitting for a run. *(Panting slightly)* I'm Eric Liddell (**lih**d-uhl) and glad I am to be here. Running has been a part of my life since I was a lad. It was God who gave me the gift of speed, and it was for his glory that I used the gift.

(Lean in to audience.) Do ye know my secret for going fast? Throw back your head and swing your arms like windmills *(demonstrate with head and arms)*. Truly, it pumps the legs *(sheepish grin)*—at least it does for me. *(Modestly)* Enough to win me an Olympic gold medal. *(Musing)* Aye, that was in 1924—the Olympic Games in Paris, France. How could I ever have imagined such a day for a missionary lad like me?

(Sit.) I was born in a village called Siao Chang (**shahw chung**) in Northern China in 1902. There my brother, sister, and I had free run of the missionary camp. Plenty of room for races and games. *(Dash about.)* Hey, Robert, catch! *(Mime throwing a ball to imaginary brother.)* My father, James, was a pastor; my mother, Mary, a nurse.

When I was five, we all visited our native Scotland, on the other side of the world. *(Indicate on map.)* There I met my grandparents and had a grand holiday. But when the family packed for China again, Robert and I were not with them. *(Soberly)* We were to stay and attend school in London. *(Shake and hang head.)* Aye, it was hard.

How I did cling to my brother then, and let him do the talking for both of us. I was so shy a lad they called me “The Mouse.” *(Brightening)* But there, at school, I discovered my feet, and how fast they could move! I wrote to my parents once: “I don’t think much of book lessons, but I can run!” By 1918, when I was 16 years old, Robert and I were the school’s top athletes.

In my first year at university, I raced against the best runner in Britain. And lost—by one inch. *(Shake head.)* I don’t like to be beaten. *(Head up, big grin, then intently)* I ran as fast as I could for the first half of the race, then asked God to help me run even faster for the second half! *(Demonstrating Liddell’s unusual style again)* A-wobbling all the while!

(More serious) Something far greater happened at school—inside *(pointing to heart)*. All my life, I didn’t talk much about my faith in God. Oh, I went to church and read my Bible every day, but I wasn’t comfortable talking about Jesus. Then when I was 20 I agreed to speak at a gospel meeting.

(Reluctantly stand on footstool, holding a Bible.) Ye see now, I was no preacher. Not clever. Not stylish. I just told how I’d come to see God—and trust God—in everyday things. Well, other groups asked me to speak. And more and more. *(Dismount stool, amused.)* Lost my