

HEROES OF FAITH: ERIC LIDDELL

THEMED PROGRAMME

AIM

Eric Liddell was one of the UK's greatest sportspersons, both on and off the track. His Christian values and example helped to ensure his legacy lives on today. 100 years after his famous gold medal, spend time finding out more about his story and how his values still inspire. In partnership with The Eric Liddell Community (<https://ericliddell.org>).

ACTIVITIES

-  Who was Eric Liddell?
-  Eric Liddell Facts
-  The 47.6 Second Challenge
-  The Eric Liddell Timeline
-  Passion, Compassion & Integrity
-  1924 Olympic News Report

HEROES OF FAITH: ERIC LIDDELL

» INTRODUCTION

Eric Liddell is one of the UK's most inspirational athletes and a shining example of someone who puts their Christian faith and values first.

Eric's story of sacrifice, determination and his strong faith leaves much for us to be inspired by.

A partnership card with The Eric Liddell Community.
For more information and resources, head to <https://ericliddell.org/the-eric-liddell-100>

? DID YOU KNOW?

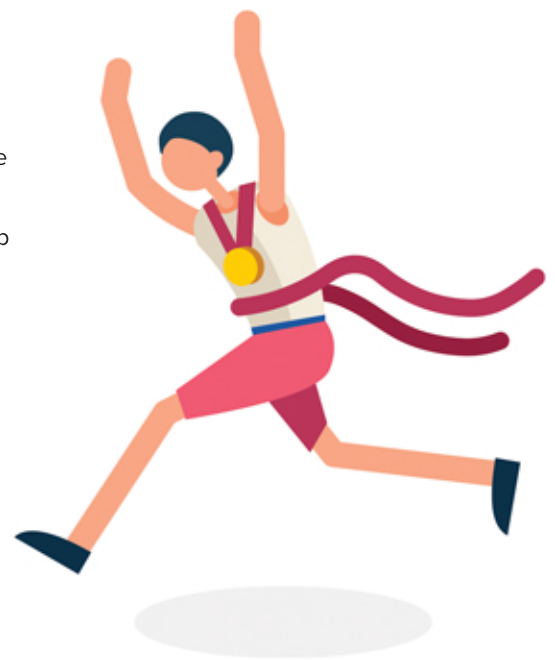
- Eric was born in China, to Scottish parents who were missionaries.
- Eric not only competed at the Olympics, he also spent a short while playing international rugby for Scotland.
- 2024 is the 100th anniversary of Eric winning that historic gold medal at the 1924 Paris Olympics.
- A film has been created based on Eric Liddell's story. This is called 'Chariots of Fire'.



GET LEARNING: ME & MY WORLD WHO WAS ERIC LIDDELL?

Let's find out who Eric Liddell was and why his life, both on and off the sports track, was an inspiration for so many.

- 1 Split into two groups, with each group having a pen and paper. Teams should be given two minutes to write down the names of as many sporting stars, present or historical, that they can. After two minutes, which group has managed to come up with the bigger list? Of the people on the list, who would they say is the most 'inspirational' and why?
- 2 Many of these sporting stars will be known to millions of people around the world. These lists of sporting heroes might be long and impressive, but the sportsperson we will be focussing on in this programme may be one of the most impressive and inspiring sporting stars the UK has produced. So, who is Eric Liddell?
- 3 Our sporting hero of the faith, Eric Liddell, is a unique example of a sporting star who not only made a significant contribution in the world of sport, but also was a man of passion, compassion and integrity away from the sporting arena too.
- 4 Watch 'The Eric Liddell 100' video (<https://ericliddell.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/EL100-Educational-Film-2023.mp4>) to find out more about who Eric Liddell was and why his life was, and still is, an inspiration for so many.






GET LEARNING: ME & MY WORLD

ERIC LIDDELL FACTS

Learn some more facts about Eric Liddell and his remarkable life.

- 1  Download a copy of the 'Eric Liddell Facts' sheet, for a leader to use for this activity. This contains 10 statements about Eric's life, some true and others false.
- 2 Nominate one end of the room as 'True' and the other end of the room as 'False'.
- 3 A leader should read out one of the statements about Eric Liddell. Everyone should decide if they believe the statement is true or false, before then moving to the end of the room that they believe is correct.
- 4 Once everyone has settled on their answer, reveal the answer and share the accompanying fact.
- 5 Continue the activity, making your way through all 10 facts.
- 6 At the end of the activity, you could test the group on some of the facts they have learnt.



GET ACTIVE: PLAYING GAMES

THE 47.6 SECOND CHALLENGE

Eric Liddell not only won a gold medal in his 400m race, he also set a world record for his time. What record can you set in a game, using the same amount of time?


This activity is all about celebrating Eric's incredible time, with a competitive challenge. For this challenge you'll need to create a competitive activity that everyone can have a go at, trying to set the best score for. We've provided a couple of suggested games, or you could create your own.

- **Cone Flip:** Scatter 40-50 cones around your room. On **GO**, one person should run around the room trying to turn as many of the cones over as possible in the 47.6 seconds. Allow everyone to have a try. The person with the highest score at the end wins.
- **Penalty Shootout:** Set up a goal and agree for one person to act as goalkeeper for the whole challenge. One by one, have goes at trying to score as many goals as possible in the 47.6 seconds. When it is not your go, the rest of the group should be helping to return the balls, so the person attempting the challenge has a continuous supply of footballs. (ideally you'll need multiple footballs).



GET LEARNING: ME & MY WORLD

THE ERIC LIDDELL TIMELINE

- 1  Print copies of the 'Eric Liddell Timeline' and cut these into their individual slips. If looking to split into smaller groups, then you'll need a complete set for each group.
- 2 Eric Liddell had an incredible life, achieving many things from winning an Olympic gold medal to playing for the Scottish rugby team, becoming a minister to serving as a missionary in China.
- 3 Each group has 12 slips of paper, each detailing a different moment in Eric's life. The challenge is to try and order these into the correct order. This could be done from information learnt from previous activities in this programme, or groups can use the internet to help them.
- 4 When a group believes they have everything in the correct order, a leader should review and say how many of the slips are in the correct place. If any are not correct, move some around and try again.
- 5 How quickly can the group(s) get all 12 parts of Eric's timeline in the correct order?



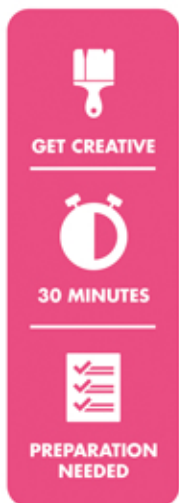
GET INTO THE BIBLE: UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIAN VALUES PASSION, COMPASSION & INTEGRITY

Consider how Eric's Christian values were an important part of who he was and how he lived his life. What can we learn from Eric's values and how can we use his life as an inspiration?

- 1 As a group call out or write down as many different values or personality traits that you believe Eric Liddell possessed. This might include commitment, determination, good sportsmanship, kindness, compassion and so on.
- 2 The three values that we're going to focus on in this activity are Eric's passion, compassion and integrity. Three values that underpin the legacy that Eric Liddell has left behind.
- 3 As a group, come up with what you believe the definition for each of these words are. Then search each word to find out the dictionary definition. How well do they match?
- 4 Eric was a committed Christian and his values, heavily influenced by his faith, were strong. Eric lived out his Christian values at all times, even when that meant significant sacrifice to himself (such as having to forfeit running in his 100m Olympic race, or putting other people's lives ahead of his own in China). As such, Eric's life is an incredible example to us all on how we too can be inspired to keep our Christian values at the core of everything we do, and to use them to provide direction and purpose.
- 5 In small groups, or as one large group, spend a few minutes thinking about how Eric showed each of these values in his life. Then think about how we too can show these three values in everyday actions in our own lives, living out our Christian values and showing the love of God through what we say and do. We've created a sheet which you can use to help you to do this.
- 6 Once completed, finish with a prayer, thanking God for Eric's example and the inspiration that he can provide to each one of us in our own lives.



"Those who honour me, I will honour." 1 Samuel 2:30



GET CREATIVE: DIGITAL MEDIA 1924 OLYMPIC NEWS REPORT

Transport yourself to the 1924 Olympic Games and that incredible moment that Eric Liddell crossed the finish line and won his gold medal.

- 1 For this activity you'll need to become news reporters, providing an update from the 1924 Olympics, sharing the news of Eric's victory with the nation.
- 2 Firstly, you'll need to write a script for the reporter. Consider what you'll want to say, including providing factual context to Eric's story, why he didn't compete in the 100m and how he managed to turn things around. Use the information from this themed programme to do this, or do some research of your own.
- 3 As part of your news report, could you also include an 'interview' with Eric. If so, make sure to plan out your questions and answers as part of the script.
- 4 Once ready, film your news report using a mobile phone. This could be in the form of a 'live' news report or a prerecorded and edited VT.
- 5 You could edit actual clips of Eric's race into your report. You can find a clip on the Olympics' YouTube channel (<https://youtu.be/IYNUxdolacA>).
- 6 After editing your video, you could share it with the rest of your group, or with us at BBHQ.

ERIC LIDDELL FACTS

As well as being an Olympic gold medallist, Eric also played for the Scottish National Football team.

- **False** - Whilst he didn't play for the football team, Eric did however play for the Scottish Rugby team, gaining seven caps for his country. He gave up rugby in 1923/24, to focus on his running.

Eric Liddell was born in Scotland.

- **False** - Eric was actually born in China, where his Scottish parents were doing missionary work. Eric moved to Scotland when he was 5, and remained in the UK for the rest of his childhood and early 20s.

Eric once offered to change lanes with a less experienced athlete, to help give that athlete a better inside lane, with Eric offering to have a disadvantaged outside lane instead.

- **True** - In those days there were no staggered starts at the beginning of the race, so an outside lane was a significant disadvantage for an athlete.

In the 1924 Olympics when Eric had to change races to the 400m, which he hadn't been training for, he not only won a gold medal, but he also set a world record for the best time for that distance.

- **True** - Eric's race was normally the 100m, however because the qualification for that race was on a Sunday, Eric chose not to compete and instead changed to the 400m. He ended up winning the gold and he did it in a record breaking 47.6 seconds.

In Eric's 1924 Olympics 400m race, Eric secured the inside lane, which was the best lane to run in.

- **False** - Eric actually had the outside lane in the gold medal winning race, which is often considered as the worst lane, as you aren't able to see the other runners.

Eric's Olympic gold medal was sent to him in the post.

- **True** - Unlike today's Olympics, there were no medal presentations to the victorious athletes, no podiums, and no national anthems. Eric's gold medal was sent to him in the post after the games.

Eric Liddell also competed in the 1928 Olympics, to defend his gold medal.

- **False** - Eric's deep faith and passion to help people overtook his sporting career. He turned down taking part in the 1928 Olympics, instead wanting to focus on returning to China, teaching and helping others. He was just 23 and at the peak of his athletic career, when he decided to focus on this work instead.

When things in China became difficult and dangerous politically, Eric sent his family to Canada, but he remained in China against British Government advice to keep up his important missionary work, helping others.

- **True** - The family escaped to Canada, but Eric wanted to stay behind to continue his work, as his passion for helping others was so strong.

A few years later Eric was reunited with his family and finally met his third daughter, who he hadn't met since the separation.

- **False** - Eric never saw his family again, including meeting his third daughter. Eric was captured by Japanese troops and he was imprisoned in an internment camp.

Eric died aged 43, whilst still imprisoned in the internment camp.

- **True** - Eric developed a brain tumour. The lack of food and medication accelerated his deteriorating health and he died aged just 43. This was just five months before the prison camp was freed from Japanese control.

ERIC LIDDELL & HIS VALUES



PASSION

ERIC'S EXAMPLES

HOW WE CAN SHOW PASSION



COMPASSION

ERIC'S EXAMPLES

HOW WE CAN SHOW COMPASSION



INTEGRITY

ERIC'S EXAMPLES

HOW WE CAN SHOW INTEGRITY



ERIC LIDDELL IS BORN

Born on 16th January 1902 in North China, to Scottish parents who were working as missionaries. Eric spent the first 5 years of his life in China alongside his parents and siblings.



ERIC LIDDELL MOVED BACK TO THE UK

Aged 5, Eric and his family moved back to Scotland, with his parents who were on a break from their missionary work. A year later Eric and his brother moved to boarding school in London, as his parents returned to China. Eric wouldn't see his parents for another 4 1/2 years.



STARTED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

Aged 18, Eric started studying at the University of Edinburgh and competed in university sport. He ran in the 100 and 220 yard races, coming first in the 100 yards and second in the 220 yards. This was the last time he lost a race in Scotland.



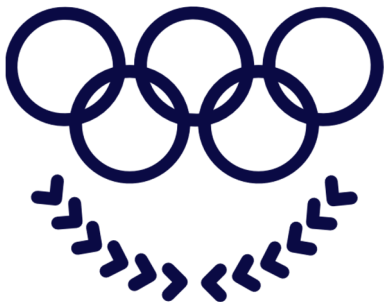
REPRESENTED SCOTLAND AT INTERNATIONAL RUGBY

Eric played international rugby for Scotland 7 times, scoring four tries as part of his career, thanks to his incredible speed. Eric retired from rugby a year later, in order to focus on his athletics.



ERIC SET A BRITISH RECORD FOR THE 100 YARDS

Eric set a record for the 100 yards race, of 9.7 seconds. This was a British record that stood for 35 years. His performance meant he was favourite to win the 100m at the upcoming Olympic games in Paris.



ERIC COMPETED AT THE 1924 OLYMPICS, WINNING GOLD

Originally due to run in the 100m as the favourite to win, Eric withdrew due to the heats being on a Sunday. Instead he competed in the 400m, despite not having trained for this race. Eric won the race and a gold medal, setting a world record breaking time of 47.6 seconds.



RETIRED FROM ATHLETICS AND MOVED TO CHINA

Just a year after the Olympics, Eric chose to leave fame and athletics behind and moved to China to work as a science teacher and sports coach at a mission school.



ERIC WAS ORDAINED AS A MINISTER

In a short break from his mission work in China, Eric returns home to Scotland. Whilst home he is ordained as a minister.



ERIC MARRIES HIS WIFE FLORENCE MACKENZIE

Eric returns to China and shortly after marries his wife, Florence Mackenzie. They later had three children, Patricia, Heather & Nancy.



ERIC AND HIS FAMILY ARE SEPARATED

China was becoming more dangerous, with the Japanese invading the country. Eric decided to send his family to safety in Canada, but he stayed behind to continue working in a missionary that was short staffed and in great need.



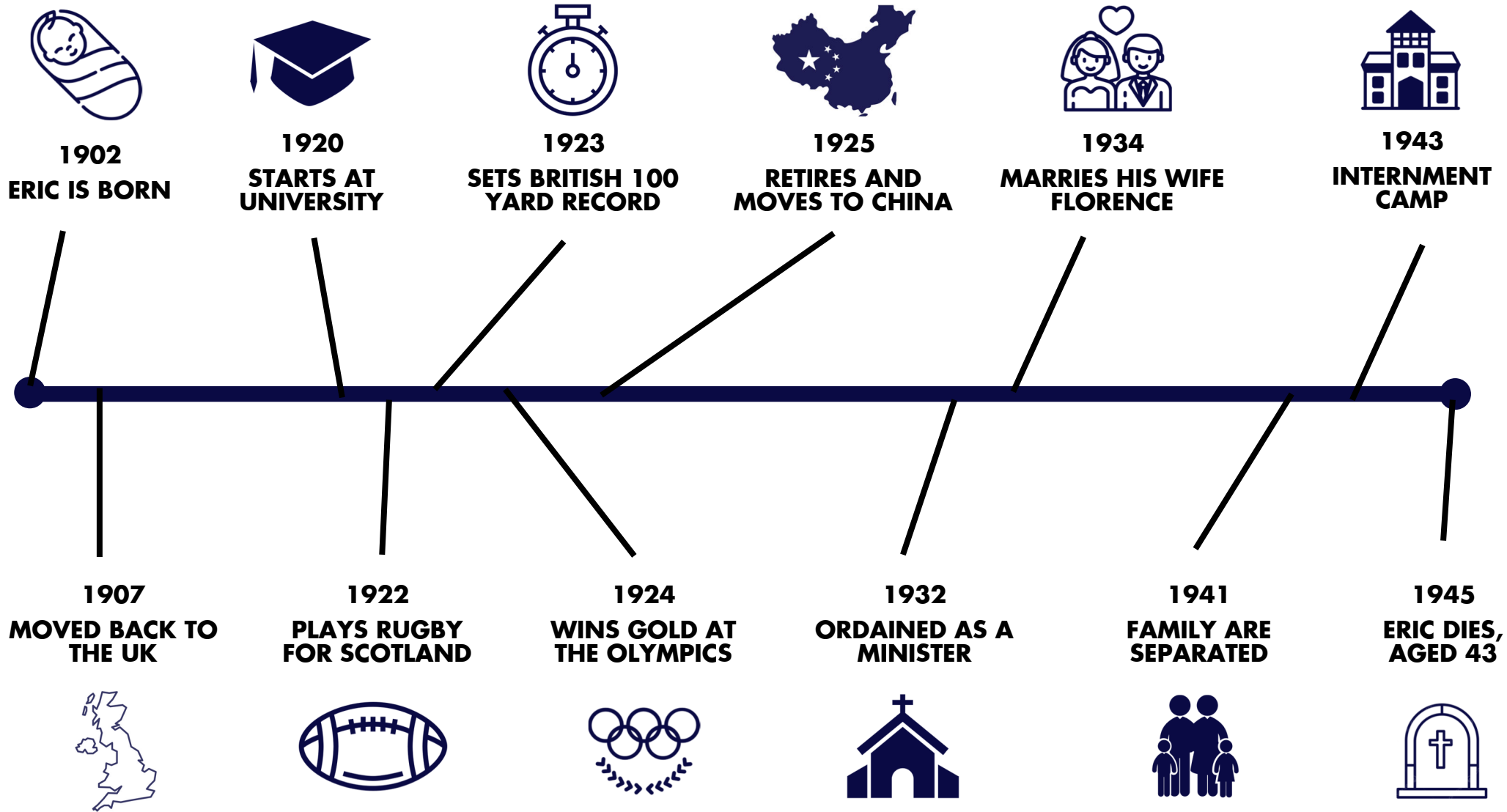
ERIC WAS CAPTURED AND PUT IN AN INTERNMENT CAMP

Eric along with thousands of others were interned in a prison camp. Within the camp Eric played many roles, helping to keep moral up and supporting young people with education, sporting activities and counselling.



ERIC DIES, AGED 43

Aged just 43, Eric died of a brain tumour, whilst still in the internment camp. This was just 5 months before it was liberated by the Americans. Eric never got to see his family again and never got to meet his third daughter, who his wife was pregnant with when they escaped to Canada.



THE ERIC LIDDELL TIMELINE