

# Harlingen church trains champs during spring break

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More than  
400  
children  
attended  
First  
Baptist  
Church in  
Harlingen's  
Champs  
Camp,  
which uses  
sports to  
share  
Christ's  
love.  
(Photos by  
John  
Hall/BGCT)

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**By John Hall**

*Texas Baptist Communications*

HARLINGEN—To become an athletic champion, a person must train hard every day in preparation for the day he or she can win a gold medal. To win an eternal gold medal, Craig Blakeslee of First Baptist Church in Harlingen believes people simply need to follow Jesus.



That's what the church has taught children the past 10 years during its annual spring break Champs Camp. This year, more than 430 children

participated in the camp, which includes football, golf, softball, karate, soccer, basketball and gymnastics.

The church uses sports as avenues to connect with children and show them the love of Christ. People throughout the community and other churches pitch in to help First Baptist Church pull off the camp. This year, 51 college students from Baptist Student Ministries across the state also volunteered to help.

“They do a wonderful job giving of themselves for Jesus Christ,” said Blakeslee, minister of children and discipleship at First Baptist Church. “Without them, we couldn’t do this.”

God honors the volunteers’ efforts, Blakeslee said. He works through them so children may discover a God who loves them. Some of the children decide to become Christians during the week.

“We have a lot of what I call ‘God sightings’ where God is clearly at work,” he said.



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