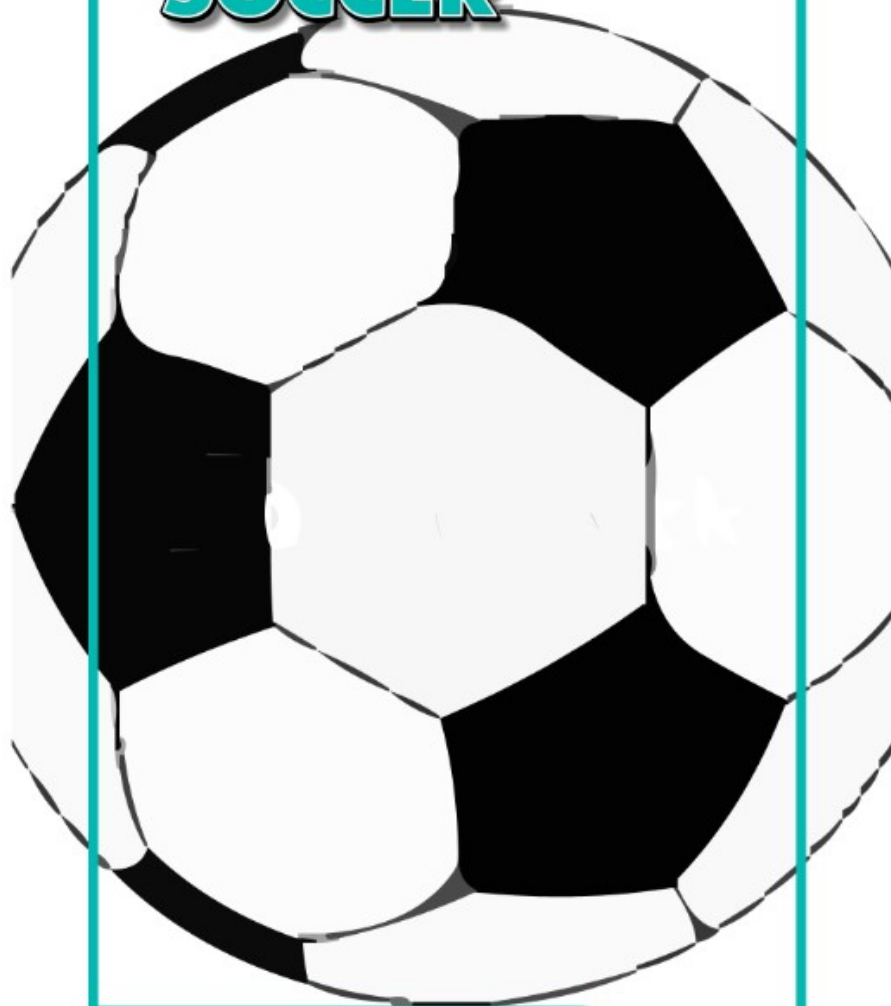


CONNECT *Sports*
SOCCER



DEVOTIONAL

2018

**Connecting
To Christ**

Welcome to Connect Sports! Through Connect Sports, families and community come together to rejoice in the fellowship of Jesus Christ. This devotional book is designed to encourage and help parents develop the spiritual growth of our youth. Excellence in sports starts within each of us. If we know who we are and whose we are, we can build and develop with the excellence that God has created within each of us.

Each lesson contains a fun object lesson to help them relate scripture to their every day lives as well as a biblical story to share the importance, benefits and consequences of the Jesus's teachings. God is the same today as He was yesterday. Helping our students see how God works within their daily lives is key to helping them understand scripture.

We hope you enjoy the lessons yourself while you develop new gifts within the hearts and lives of your youth.

	Christ Connection	Scripture Connection
1	Black—Sin <i>Spinning In The Beginning!</i>	The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. Psalm 18:2a.
2	Red—Jesus’s Gift of the Cross <i>A Clean Slate!</i>	I will forgive them for the wicked things they did. I will not remember their sins anymore. Hebrews 8:12.
3	Blue—Faith <i>God is Here</i>	Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. Hebrews 11:1.
4	White—Forgiveness <i>What’s in Your Backpack?</i>	If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1John 1:9.
5	Green-Growing in Christ <i>Growing Christians</i>	But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 3:18.
6	Gold—Heaven <i>Be a Sample For Jesus</i>	But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8.

Devotion #1 - Spinning in God's Grace

Memory Scripture

The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, In whom I take refuge. Psalm 18.2a.

Bible Story Connection

Psalm 18.2a

Objects Needed for Lesson

A Bible and an open area for children to spin.

Presentation

Have kids form pairs (be sure partners are similar in size). Say: **One person in each pair needs to stand very still. The other partner in each pair will need to put his or her arms straight out to the sides, spin around five times as fast as possible, and then quickly hold on to his or her partner's shoulders. Ready? Go!**

After kids have tried this, let them switch roles and do it again. Then ask:

- How did you feel after you spun around?
- Why do you think you got dizzy?
- What did it feel like to have someone to hold on to?

Say: **You have liquid in your inner ear that helps your body know if you are balanced or not. When you spin around so quickly, the liquid in your ear begins to move as well in order to keep you balanced. When your body suddenly stops spinning around, the liquid continues to move slightly. This movement is what**

makes you feel dizzy. When you feel dizzy, sometimes you need something or someone to hold on to so you won't fall down. Just as spinning around made you dizzy, sometimes things in your life can spin you around and make you feel off-balance and dizzy. Ask:

- What are some things what can happen in your life to make you feel dizzy?
- Who can you hold on to when your life makes you dizzy?

Say: God is someone solid you can hold onto when things in your life throw you off-balance. God will lead you on the straight path and keep you balanced. When the world makes you dizzy, it's very important to meet with God and ask him to blance your life with His guidance.

Read out loud Psalm 18:2a.

Ask: Has God ever been a rock, a fortress, or a deliverer in your life? How?

If it is possible, arrange for someone to share a testimony of how God has worked in his or her life.

Say: The next time your life makes you feel dizzy, remember that you can lean on God, and He'll help you keep your balance.



Devotion #2 - A Clean Slate

Memory Scripture

I will forgive them for the wicked things they did. I will not remember their sins anymore. Hebrews 8:12.

Bible Story Connection

Matthew 18: 21-35 The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant

Objects Needed for Lesson

Three hand held small chalkboards.

An eraser with a label on the flat side that reads "Jesus."

A red dry erase marker.

Presentation

Say: **Our Bible verse today talks about the way that Jesus forgives our sins. The Bible also tells us that every one of us is a sinner who needs Jesus' forgiveness. There is not one of us here on this soccer field who is perfect or who has never sinned. That's just part of being human. We make mistakes and we need to be forgiven. The wonderful news is that Jesus has made a way for our sins to not only be forgiven, but to be forgotten as well.**

Have three volunteers come up and each take a chalkboard paddle. Stand with the first volunteer and ask the group to give you the name of one sin. Write the name of the sin on the dry erase board. (Example: cheating). Then move to the second volunteer. Ask: **What are some more sins you can think of?** Write two or three names of sins on the second volunteer's dry erase board.

Then move to the third volunteer. Ask: **What are some more things that we do that are sins?** Write several on the third dry erase board. Say: **Almost every day we do something that we shouldn't do. Maybe we tell a lie or get angry with a brother or sister or friend. Maybe we talk back to our mom or our dad. All of these things are wrong and Jesus calls them sins. They mess up our life just like this marker messed up the nice clean white board. But we don't have to go around with a messy life. No! The good news is that Jesus wants us to tell Him about the wrong things we do and He has promised that if we just ask Him, He will forgive our sins and give us a chance to be free from that old sin that makes us feel so bad.** Ask: **Do you think this eraser can erase this "one" sin? Yes!** Erase the first board. Ask: **"Do you think the eraser can erase "two" sins? Yes!** Erase the second board. Ask: **"Do you think the eraser can erase "ALL" of THESE sins? Yes!** And just like this eraser, Jesus will erase all of our sins, but we have to ask Him. Now I want to tell you a Bible story about a King and his servant.

**Tell (in your own words) the story
of Matthew 18:21-35**

Say: **The next time you sin, confess and tell Jesus what you did and ask Him to forgive you. Just like the eraser, Jesus can make your heart as clean as the white board. Always remember that God wants you to forgive your brothers, sisters and friends just like He forgives you.**



Devotion #3 - God is Here

Memory Scripture

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. Hebrews 11:1.

Bible Story Connection

Luke 5:18-20. Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralyzed Man.

Objects Needed for Lesson

A portable radio.

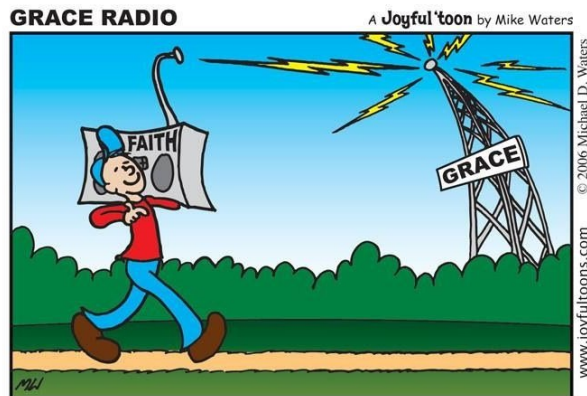
Presentation

Ask: Do you see anything floating around in the air? Except for a few specks of dust, I don't. It looks to me like there is really nothing much at all in the air around us, but that's not true! This portable radio will prove that there's more in the air than we can see. When I turn it on like this and turn the tuning dial what happens? You hear a radio program. Where did it come from? The radio's antenna pulled in the radio waves that are found right around it, right around us.! Isn't that AMAZING! Around us right now are the radio waves this radio is picking up. We don't see them, hear them, taste them, or feel them, but they are there. The Bible says that God is Spirit. One of the things about something that is spirit is that you can't see it! Like radio waves, God is all around us right this moment even though we can't see Him.

Just as we need a radio to pick up radio waves so that we might hear them, so we need to use something that can help us feel that God is right here with us. It's not any kind of instrument. It's called faith. The way you and I can feel God's presence in our lives is by faith, believing that He is here with us even though we don't see him. God does not make himself magically appear so that people have to believe in Him. He wants people like you and me to believe in Him because we want to. I'm going to share a story from the Bible about a man who's friends also had great faith to help Him see Jesus.

Tell the story (In your own words) of Luke 5:18-20

If we want to feel God close by we must always believe He is there. God is right here with us now even though we can't see him. When we pray we can talk with God. Let's pretend we are radios and place our hands together as if they were an antenna (place the palms of your hands together in front of you in prayer mode). **With our antenna's in place, let us pray to God for our friends and family.**



For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — EPHESIANS 2:8 NIV

Devotion #4 - What's In Your Backpack?

Memory Scripture

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1John 1:9.

Bible Story Connection

John 3:16

Objects Needed for Lesson

A child's backpack and sandwich bags full of sand.

Labels in or on the outside of the bag with the word "sin" written on them..

Presentation

Ask for a volunteer, or choose a child who will stand and wear the backpack during the message. Have them stand before the group wearing the empty backpack. Ask him or her how it feels on their back. Then explain that the bags represent sin in our lives. Begin to place them in the back of the backpack. Once you are finished filling the backpack, ask the volunteer to stand until you are finished.

Did you know that sin in our lives is much like carrying these heavy rocks? When you have done something wrong and haven't told anyone about it, how does it make you feel inside? That's right. We feel very unhappy. We might feel sad or worried, or sometimes it might even make us feel sick.

What do we need to do to get rid of those yucky feelings we have inside when we've done something wrong? Let's go to our Bible to see if we can find the answer.

Read John 3:16.

Since Jesus died for our sins, He took our sins away. Therefore we need to confess our sins to Him. The Bible says in our memory verse today, 1John 1:9, that we need to confess our sins. Confess is a word that simply means that we need to tell God about what we have done wrong. Now, when we tell God, it won't be any big news to Him, will it? God knows and sees everything we do, so he already knows what we've done even before we tell Him. God still wants us to tell Him. When we do, we are going to feel a huge load lifted from us. Remove the back pack from the child's back.

Isn't it a relief to get that heavy load off of your back? God can take the load of sin off from us. God has promised to forgive us and to make us clean inside, just as though we had never done that wrong thing. All we have to do is ask! Isn't that good news?



Devotion #5 - Growing Christians

Memory Scripture

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 3:18.

Bible Story Connection

John 3:1-14—Jesus Teaches Nicodemus

Objects Needed for Lesson

A child's growth chart, yard stick (we have yellow growth tape purchased from Oriental Trading Company in our ministry box).

Presentation

You may recognize what I have with me today. It's called a (growth chart, yardstick or tape): I want to tell you about a very interesting use for this measuring tool.). Parents use it to measure how much their children are growing. Do any of you have a growth chart at home? It's fun to put your initials at the place which shows your height. Then when you come back to it in a few months and mark it again you can see how fast you are growing.

All of you are growing. You will soon be taller than you are now. You will need new clothes and bigger shoes. It's exciting to see yourself grow. I hope you all keep growing for a few more years.

Actually, children are not the only ones here today who are to keep growing. All of the adults need to keep growing too! I don't mean in physical size, for then we would be giants! We should all keep growing toward the perfect image of Jesus Christ. I want to share a Bible story with you about a wise man named Nicodemus who learned there was so much more to being a Christian!

**Tell the Story of Nicodemus
(John 3:1-14) in your own words.**

This kind of growth—becoming more Christ like is not just for adults, but for you as well. Just like Nicodemus we need to continue to learn how to be more like Christ.

The ways to keep growing spiritually are:

- 1) Love Jesus, think about Him often and try to do what He wants you to do. Ask for His help.
- 2) Read your Bible and pray every day, and
- 3) Come to Sunday school and church.

So be a healthy Christian and keep growing!



Go to church
Read your Bible
Obey what you read
Witness

Devotion #6 - Be a Sample for Jesus

Memory Scripture

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8.

Bible Story Connection

1Timothy 4:12

Objects Needed for Lesson

A sample-size package of some product (toothpaste etc).
A regular-size package of the same product.

Presentation

You can buy most objects in the store in different size containers; some are big and some are small.

See how tiny this bottle of toothpaste is (or whatever product it is)? It is called a sample size. It cost very little. Sometimes companies actually give samples like this away.

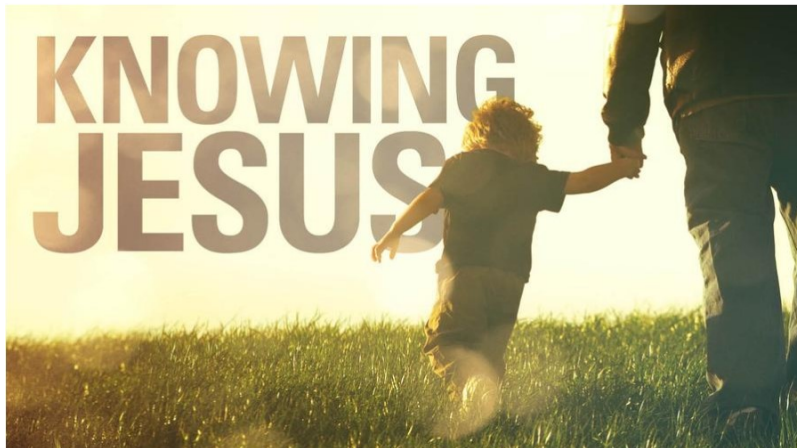
Sample sizes are made by many different companies so that you will try their product. They figure that if you have to pay only a few cents for a sample or are given one free, then maybe you will try their product. If you like the product there is a good chance you will go out and buy a bigger container of it at the regular price. Did you know that you too can be a sample?

Not all people around you are Christians. They may not know what a real Christian is like. They may think that being a Christian is no fun. If they get to know you they will begin to see Jesus living in you. They will see that being a Christian is a great thing to do after all. You are a sample to them!

Share 1 Timothy 4:12:

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.

Even if others around you don't go to church, read the Bible, or pray, if they know you as a friend they will still be learning a lot about Jesus. They may decide to love and follow Jesus like you!





Connecting Families and Community in Christ Through Sports

MINISTRY PARTNERS

(In Alphabetical Order)

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