

CONNECT Sports
BASKETBALL
& Cheer



DEVOTIONAL
2022

**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 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 Jesus' 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 our youth.

		Scripture Connection
1	Getting to Know You!	My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. <i>John 15:12.</i>
2	Stay Positive!	I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. <i>Philippians 4:13.</i>
3	Buzzer Beater	None of you should look out just for your own good. Each of you should also look out for the
4	Saying "I'm Sorry"	Be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving on another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you. <i>Ephesians 4:32.</i>
5	Blocked Shot	Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again; Rejoice! <i>Philippians 4:4</i>
6	Overtime	But those who trust in the Lord will become strong again. They will be like eagles that grow new feathers. They will run and not get weak. They will walk and not get tired. <i>Isaiah 40:31</i>
7	I Made The Team	Treat others just as you want to be treated. <i>Luke 6:31</i>
8	Words Matter	But now here are the kinds of things you must also get rid of. You must get rid of anger, rage, hate and lies. Let no dirty words come out of your mouths.
9	Tripped!	But I tell you, love your enemies. Pray for those who treat you badly. <i>Matthew 5:44</i>

Week #1 Huddle Up Getting to Know Your Team!

Memory Scripture - My command is this: Love each as I have loved you. *John 15:12.* (Hand out card for John 15:12.. Please ENCOURAGE them to memorize this verse at home)

Objects Needed for Lesson

A basketball and a place for your players to sit in a large circle.

Presentation

Greetings! What an exciting season we have ahead of us! I am so excited you all are here and would like to get to know all of you better. Since you are a team, it is important that you each get to know each other too.

To get started, I would like all of us to sit in a circle. I am going to pass this basketball to someone in this circle. If you are the person who receives it, you need to share your name and also share who your favorite superhero is!

After you have shared your name and superhero, you will then pass the basketball to a player who has not shared their name and they will share the same.

When we are done, we will then start at the beginning and see if you can remember the name of the person who you passed the ball to! Better yet, if you can remember their superhero!

Coaches Corner—Life Lesson

When others are weak or in need, we should uplift them and help them to get back on their feet. When they are feeling sad because of a misfortune, we must lift them up with kind words of encouragement. God's Word teaches us more than just how to build "things", His word teaches us how to build character and self-esteem. He teaches us how to build up others!

To Talk About

In what ways do we build up others?

How can you build up someone on this team that you just met today?

Pray with your team that they may learn and understand how they can show God's love and encourage each other. Remind them of their Bible verse and close by reciting it together.



Week 2 Huddle Up Stay Positive

Memory Scripture

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. *Philippians 4:13*. (Hand out card for Philippians 4:13. Please ENCOURAGE them to memorize this verse at home)

Presentation (Read the below out loud)

Could it be? Were they finally going to win a game? Was their losing streak about to end?

Grace's heart was racing. Only ten seconds were left in their basketball game. Their best player, Ellison, had come down with mono at the beginning of the season and had missed all their games. Grace and her teammates still didn't expect to lose nine straight games. They'd been beaten badly in some of the games, but other games were close. Now their best shooter, Angie, was on the free throw line. They were losing by only one point. If Angie could make both baskets, the team would almost for sure get their first win.

"Come on, Angie, you can do it," Grace said over and over in her mind.

Angie eyed the basket. She bent her knees slightly. She lofted up a shot with perfect form.

It's going in, Grace thought, ready to shout for joy. But the orange ball circled around the rim once, hung on the edge for what seemed like an eternity, and rolled outside the goal. The referee handed the ball back to Angie. *This one is going in for sure*, Grace thought. She

Presentation Continued

still put her hands up and tensed up her body to try for a rebound just in case it didn't. Angie looked calm and confident. Her eyes narrowed as she focused on the basket. Once again, she bent her knees and sent the ball upward with a flick of her wrist.

Go in, go in, go in! Grace thought.

The ball arced toward the basket...it was straight on...but it clunked off the front of the rim. Grace went for the rebound as hard as she could, but even before she heard the whistle, she knew she was going to be called for a foul. She had crashed into another girl's back.

She walked dejectedly down the court, knowing the game was probably lost. And sure enough, the girl she fouled sank both free throws for a three-point lead. Grace took the ball out of bounds, threw it as hard as she could to a teammate at half court, but it bounced off her hands and went out of bounds.

A few agonizing seconds later, the buzzer sounded and the game was over. Ten straight losses. After shaking hands to congratulate the other team, Grace and her team huddled up around the coach. All Grace could do was look at the floor. How can you lose ten straight games? They had worked hard but just couldn't grab a victory. She glanced to her left and right. Everyone else was looking down, too. Angie looked like she wanted to cry.



Week 2 Huddle Up Stay Positive Continued

“Okay, girls, I want all eyes up,” the coach said. “Let’s go! Everyone look at me.”

Grace looked up.

“I know this year isn’t going very well for us as a team,” the coach said. “But here’s what I want you to know. I appreciate how hard you work. I know each and every one of you are hustling. We’re going to win a game before this season is over. Right?”

No one said anything.

“Right?”

They weren’t very loud, but the whole team answered back to the coach, “Yes!”

“I’ll tell you how we are going to win,” the coach continued.

Now Grace looked at her more intently.

“We are going to stay positive. Every one of us. We are going to stay positive because your attitude makes a difference.”

Grace still felt bad about the loss but decided her coach was right. Staying positive gave her team a much better chance of notching a victory.

Coaches Corner—Life Lesson

It's easy to be positive when you are winning all your games. It's much tougher to stay positive when things just don't go right. That's true in sports and it's true in all life. But just as a positive attitude gives you a better chance to win a basketball game, it makes you a winner in every area of your life!

To Talk About

Have you ever gotten discouraged and negative because of the way things are going on your team or in another area of life?

What is the best way to turn a bad attitude into a positive attitude?

Pray with your team that they may lean on Christ for strength and that He will show them how to strengthen others. Remind them of their Bible verse and close by reciting it together.



Week 3 - Huddle Up! Buzzer Beater

Memory Scripture

None of you should look out just for your own good. Each of you should also look out for the good of others. *Philippians 2:4*

(Hand out card for Philippians 2:4. Please ENCOURAGE them to memorize this verse at home)

Presentation (Read the below out loud)

He was supposed to be filling out a math worksheet, but all Brandon could think about was his basketball game after school. He could picture it in his mind and started imagining what might happen.

There's only five seconds to go. The Bobcats are losing by one point. It doesn't look good for the home team. Wait! What just happened? Brandon has stolen the ball. Now he's dribbling it down the court. All five guys for the other team are surrounding him. No way he can score in time. Wait just a minute, folks. Brandon is spinning with the ball. There is only one second left on the clock. He is jumping. The shot is out of his hands. I can't believe it, Brandon has just hit a twenty-foot jump shot to win the game for the Bobcats. Brandon has won the game!

"Brandon!"

Brandon looked up with a start. He had been imagining the perfect ending to a basketball game. His teacher was standing over his desk and looking at him closely.

Presentation continued

"Is there a reason everyone else in class has finished the math assignment but you?"

"Uh, I'm just slow today," Brandon said sheepishly.

"Either that or someone named Brandon is daydreaming again. Do you want to tell us what you were thinking about?" she asked.

"Uh, no," Brandon stammered. "I need to hurry up and finish this worksheet."

"If you want to play in your basketball game, you indeed better have this assignment finished.," she said to him.

With a gulp, Brandon realized he better get a move on. He chased his daydreams away and got busy.

The game was played after school in the gym. A lot of students and parents crowded onto the wooden benches to watch the Bobcats play. The game didn't go exactly how Brandon imagined it would, but sure enough, with very few seconds on the clock, the Bobcats were losing by one point and their team had possession of the ball for one last chance to win the game.

This is my chance, Brandon thought. My dreams can come true. I can shoot a buzzer beater to win the game.

A teammate passed him the ball and Brandon started dribbling toward the goal as fast as he could. But as he looked up, he realized there were two players from the other team guarding him. That meant two things. First, it was going to be hard to get a shot off. Second, someone else was open. Out of the corner of his eye he spied Michael, who was wide open under the basket.

Week 3 Buzzer Beater Continued

Brandon wanted to shoot the winning shot so bad but knew the smart thing to do was to pass the ball. That's exactly what he did. He bounced a pass to Michael, who scored an easy layup right before the buzzer's sound.

For just a second, Brandon was disappointed it wasn't him who had made the basket. But as the crowd went crazy he realized that he had done exactly what he was supposed to do to help his team win. He made sure the right guy took the shot.



Coaches Corner—Life Lesson

In sports, sometimes we get to be the scorer, but sometimes our job is to pass the ball so someone else scores. Either way, we help our team win. In life, sometimes we are in the spotlight, but many more times we will help others shine. Be happy either way!

To Talk About

Who in your life has helped you to be the best you can be?

What are ways you can assist others in doing their best?

Pray with your team that they may learn how to look out for others and encourage each other. Remind them of their Bible verse and close by reciting it together.

Week 4 Huddle Up! Saying "I'm sorry" Can Be Hard

Memory Scripture

Be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you. *Ephesians 4:32*

(Hand out card for Ephesians 4:32. Please ENCOURAGE them to memorize this verse at home)

Presentation (Read the below out loud)

It was a total accident. No way did Keith mean to hurt Kevin, but he did.

The two were playing a one-on-one basketball game after team practice. Both Keith and Kevin were tired, but they loved to compete hard with each other to see who would win.

They were only playing a short game. The first one to get eleven points was the winner. The rule was "make it, take it," which meant if you made a basket, you got to keep the ball.

Keith started off hot. He hit his first five shots. But then he missed a short fall away jumper. He tried to use the backboard, but his angle was wrong, and the ball rolled around the rim before falling outside.

Kevin got even hotter than Keith. He hit his first six shots. When he finally missed, Keith grabbed the rebound, took the ball back behind the line, and put up a jumper that he was sure was going to go in the basket. It was close again but bounced out.

That meant Kevin had the ball again and he was still hot. First he drained a long range shot. Nothing Keith could do about that. Next, Kevin faked a jump shot. When Keith went up in the air, he zipped past him for an easy layup.

Presentation Continued

As the two boys went up in the air, their bodies slammed into each other. Keith landed on his feet. But Kevin fell in an awkward position. The snap of Kevin's ankle breaking was terrible to hear. Keith felt sick to his stomach. Kevin gave out a cry of pain as he clutched his injured foot.

Keith ran to the coach's office. He was a teacher at the school, so he was grading papers.

"Kevin's hurt!" Keith yelled.

The coach scrambled to his feet and ran out to the gym with Keith. After giving a quick examination, the coach used his cell phone to call Kevin's parents. He told them what had happened.

"I'm positive Kevin's ankle is broken. Do you want me to call an ambulance or do you want to take him to the emergency room?"

Kevin's family lived close to the school, so his parents picked him up and took him to the hospital to get his bone set and put in a cast.

Keith felt terrible that he had caused his friend so much pain. He could barely eat dinner. He just looked down at this plate and moved the food around with his fork.

Keith's dad called Kevin's dad to see how Kevin was doing. Keith heard his dad say, "That's good news. And yes, we want to come over. We'll come by tomorrow."

Week 4 Huddle

Saying "I'm sorry" Can Be Hard - Continued

Presentation

All the next day at school, Keith walked around like he was in a daze. He wanted to go visit his friend to see how he was doing. But he was afraid, too. What if Kevin was mad at him? What if Kevin said that he hurt him on purpose? What if Kevin didn't want him to come visit?

When Keith and his dad stepped through the front door, Kevin was sitting in a big comfortable chair with his foot propped up on a footrest. He had a TV tray full of food on his lap and the TV remote control. There was a huge white cast on the bottom of his leg.

It was hard, but Keith stammered out, "I'm really sorry I hurt you, Kevin."

"No problem, man," Kevin answered with a smile. "I got to miss a day of school. I've been watching TV all day. And I bet I can get some girls to carry my books at school. The doc says I'll be fine in no time. I know you didn't hurt me on purpose."

Wow. That was a lot easier than Keith expected it to be. He knew he didn't purposely hurt Kevin, but he was glad he came over to say he was sorry.

Coaches Corner—Life Lesson

Don't wait! When you've hurt someone, on purpose or not, when you've done something wrong, get it taken care of immediately. Say you're sorry for a mistake. Ask for forgiveness for a sin. And move on with peace.

To Talk About

Is there someone you have hurt physically? Is there someone you have hurt with words? Are you ready to say you are sorry? Practice what you will say to that person.

Pray with your team that they may learn that waiting to apologize only makes the worry worse and sometimes it's not as bad as we imagine. End by reciting this week's Bible verse together.



Week 5 Huddle Up Blocked Shot

Memory Scripture

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again; Rejoice! Philippians 4:4 (Hand out card for Philippians 4:4. Please ENCOURAGE them to memorize this verse at home)

Presentation (Read the below out loud)

Breanna's face was bright red. She was so embarrassed. How could a game go so badly?

She was the tallest girl on her basketball team. She played center. She was the leading scorer and rebounder for her team. And her team was quite good.

But now the Cougars were getting beaten badly and Breanna couldn't seem to do anything right. The problem was that the other team's center was even taller than Breanna. Every time a teammate passed the ball to Breanna, she would turn to score, just like she always did. But the other girl kept blocking her shot.

With only three minutes to go, Breanna finally scored her first points. Jenn lobbed the pass in to her. She turned quickly, dribbled the ball twice, and made an easy layup. She took a deep breath and sighed. Breanna was relieved she had made at least one basket.

The problem was the other team was winning by so many points that the other center was sitting on the bench. *The other coach probably feels sorry for me*, Breanna thought to herself.

Presentation continued

After the game, Breanna got in line and high fived the other team. The last girl she came to was the other center.

“Good game,” the other girl said to Breanna.

“You had a great game,” Breanna responded. “You are way too good for me.”

“I’ve been playing since I was barely able to walk,” the girl said nicely. “My dad played basketball a long time, so he always wanted his kids to play, too. How long have you been playing?”

“This is my second year,” Breanna answered.

“Well, by the time we get to school ball, you’ll probably catch up to me. You’re really doing great. Maybe we’ll be on the same team one day.”

“I hope so,” Breanna exclaimed with a laugh. “It’s too hard playing against you!”

Breanna felt good that the other girl had taken time to talk with her and say some nice things. She was still very disappointed in how badly her team got beat. She was also still very embarrassed at how many times her shot got blocked.

Later, at home, she realized she wasn’t disappointed anymore. That surprised her. She usually felt lousy until the next day if she had a bad game.

What was different? Breanna realized that instead of being discouraged and disappointed, she felt determined to practice harder and get better. She hopped off the couch to head outside

Week 5 Huddle Up Blocked Shot Continued

Presentation Continued

and shoot some hoops on the driveway. *With no one around, at least she wouldn't get any more shots blocked*, she thought with a smile.

Not everything goes our way. Sometimes we face disappointments in life. The important thing is to stay positive and keep moving forward.



Coaches Corner—Life Lessons

Every single one of us will face disappointments, not just in sports but in other areas of life. When life doesn't go our way, that doesn't mean we are defeated. It means we need to turn to God in prayer. He will give us joy and strength to keep trying.

To Talk About

How do you respond when you face a disappointment? Do you get angry? Do you get sad? What can you do next time something doesn't go right to honor God and grow stronger?

Pray with your team that they may learn to rejoice in all that they do. They can rejoice at their many blessings: school, family and friends. Remind them of their Bible verse and close by reciting it together.

Week 6 Huddle Up Overtime

Memory Scripture

But those who trust in the Lord will become strong again. They will be like eagles that grow new feathers. They will run and not get weak. They will walk and not get tired. *Isaiah 40:31*

(Hand out card for Isaiah 40:31. Please ENCOURAGE them to memorize this verse at home)

Presentation (Read the below out loud)

At the end of the first quarter the game was tied 6-6. I had missed two shots but made two free throw shots to help the team.

We were playing against another team that was our archrival. The stands were full. My dad even took off work early to come see our last game of the season.

At the end of the second quarter, the game was tied 13-13. One of my teammates missed a shot but I got the rebound and scored an easy layup. So I was still helping the team.

The game was tough. There was a bunch of bumping. The referees were keeping a close eye on fouls, so their whistles kept blowing as they called fouls. I scored two more free throws in the third quarter. I did a head fake and a girl jumped on me. The problem was we were getting called for a lot of fouls, too.

We started the fourth quarter tied 18-18. Just a minute in, my best friend, Sarah, tried to steal a ball and was whistled for her fifth foul. She was out of the game. A couple minutes later, Darlene tried to block a shot and got her fifth foul. She was out, too. I hadn't come out for even a minute of the game and was getting tired. But with two starters out, I might have to play to the very end.

The other team had two girls foul out, but with one minute left, it got even worse for us. A third starter, Pearl, got her fifth foul and was out. This was a really rough game.

The girl on the other team made both free throws and they took a two-point lead with thirty seconds to go.

The ball came to me and I dribbled down the floor. I looked left and right. Then I saw Teresa break for the basket. I threw a bounce pass that got there at just the right time. She scored to tie the game. The other team rushed the ball down the floor but missed a shot at the buzzer. We were going into overtime. I looked over at Coach to let her know I needed a rest. That was when I saw Teresa was hurt. The trainer took off her shoe. She wasn't going to be playing anymore. I was the last starter eligible to play.

I looked up at the stands. My parents were clapping for me. Dad yelled, "You can do it, Ava! You can do it!"

I didn't think I could. But I did. I scored two baskets in overtime. I made a steal. I got two rebounds. We still lost but I had gone a lot harder and longer than I thought I could. I was too tired to feel upset. I just shook hands, grabbed my bags, and headed for the car with my parents.

"You gotta be wiped out," Dad said.

"I can barely move," I answered.

"How did you do it, Ava?" Mom asked.

"Knowing the team needed me so bad helped me keep pushing," I said. "The crowd gave me some energy. Thanks for coming, Dad."

"I wouldn't have missed it for the world," he said.

"But most of all, I said a prayer. I think God gave me some extra energy, even if we didn't win."

"It sounds like you won to me," Mom said as she turned to smile at me.

Week 6 Huddle Up Overtime Continued

Coaches Corner—Life Lesson

It can be very hard to keep working and pushing sometimes. We get tired. Our brains don't want to think about homework. Our bodies don't want to keep running. But we usually have more energy in the tank than we think we do. And most importantly, in our spiritual life, God gives us all the power and energy we need to keep going.



To Talk About

When was a time you were in a game that you got so tired you wanted to stop?

When was a time at school when you didn't want to do your work?

Do you believe God can help you be stronger with your determination?

Pray with your team that they may learn how to ask God for His strength when they need it. That they too can learn to draw strength from God. Remind them of their Bible verse and close by reciting it together.

Week 7 Huddle Up I Made The Team

Memory Scripture

Treat others just as you want to be treated. Luke 6:31

(Hand out card for Luke 6:31. Please ENCOURAGE them to memorize this verse at home)

Presentation (Read the below out loud)

Eddie dribbled up and down the driveway, first with his left hand and then with his right hand. Each time he got near the garage, he would shoot a jump shot or drive all the way to the basket for a lay up. When his dad pulled up, he hopped out of the car and called out, "Hit me, I'm open!"

Eddie threw his dad a bounce pass and his dad swished a basket from long-distance. "Good shot, dad," Eddie shouted. "I think you live on our basketball court," his dad said with a smile. How's your day been? "Dad, you aren't going to believe it," Eddie said excitedly. "I made the team!" "All right!" His dad said with a huge smile. "I knew you could do it, son." Eddie was in fifth grade and had been dreaming of the day when he could try out for the school basketball team. "So are you going to be the star?" His dad asked with a twinkle in his eyes. "That's why I am practicing," Eddie answered. "Some of the guys shoot better than me and I am still not very good dribbling with my left hand." "That's what practice is for, Eddie," his dad answered. "But you're on the team and that's a good start. This is about a perfect day for you." He was surprise when Eddie frowned. "What's wrong, son?" "Jason didn't make the team. He feels really bad. He wouldn't even come over and shoot baskets with me."

"I really wanted both of us to make the team." "Oh, that's too bad," dad answered. "But that doesn't mean you two won't still be best friends." "I know," Eddie answered. "I just feel bad for him. He doesn't have a dad like you who helps him get better."

Jason lived alone with his mom. She loved him very much and he was a happy kid, but he had told Eddie many times how lucky he was to have a dad who played sports with him. Eddie and his dad went inside to eat dinner. Both were quiet as they thought about Jason. "Is everything OK with you two?" Mom asked them.

"I was just thinking," Eddie's dad said. "I want to go outside and play basketball with Eddie." Eddie looked up with a smile on his face. "Eddie has homework and he's been outside long enough," Mom said sternly. That put a frown on Eddie's face. "But Eddie made the team," his dad said. "And plus, I know he wants to call Jason and see if he will come over and play with us. After all, we have to get Jason ready to make the team next year, don't we, Eddie?" "We do!" Eddie yelled. "I just have to call Jason first," Eddie said, beaming. "You will really help him too, Dad?" "That's what friends are for, son."

Week 7 Huddle Up I Made The Team Continued

Coaches Corner—Life Lesson

It's great to make the team, but being a great friend means we help others do their very best too. Christians also have a team. We go to church to learn how to be the best we can be. We learn to be the people God wants us to be. We also have a heavenly father who helps us. Being on God's team doesn't require tryouts. It simply requires us to admit that we are people who make mistakes. We have to ask Him into our hearts to help us. We also have to believe in Him and grow in Him by going to church and reading the Bible.

To Talk About

Do you know what it means to be on God's team?

Do you know someone in your family or a friend who is on God's team?

Would you like it if you had a friend that helped you to make decisions and teach you how to be a better person?

Would you like to be on Jesus' team?

If you do, it is as easy as A B C. I am going to say a prayer and if you want to be on Jesus' team, bow your heads, close your eyes and pray this prayer with me.

Pray with your team the following prayer:

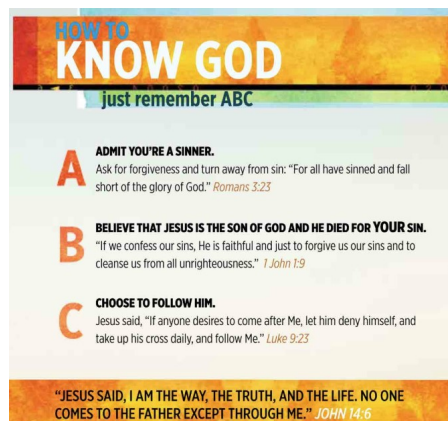
Dear God,

I **ADMIT** that I am a sinner, please forgive me of my sins and any wrong things I may have done.

I **BELIEVE** that Jesus is the Son of God and He gave His life so that I could be with Him one day.

I **COMMIT** to living a life for you and will learn more about the kind of person you want me to be by reading the Bible, praying for understanding and going to church to learn more about You.

In Jesus Name, Amen....



Week 8 Huddle Up Words Matter!

Memory Scripture

But now here are the kinds of things you must also get rid of. You must get rid of anger, rage, hate and lies. Let no dirty words come out of your mouths. Colossians 3:8 (Hand out card for Colossians 3:8. Please ENCOURAGE them to memorize this verse at home)

Presentation (Read the below out loud)

Kenny couldn't believe what he was hearing. Sure, he had heard other kids use curse words plenty of times at school, but never like this. It was his first year playing basketball and he wasn't expecting this. Part of the problem was there were so many guys on the team that the court was so big, coaches couldn't keep up with everything being done or said. The head coach was a friend of his parents and he didn't believe the coach would allow that kind of language. He was in line for a layup drill, but his mind was on what was being said behind him. He wondered to himself, should I say something to the coach? If he did and the other kids found out, what would they think of him? Would they lose respect for him because he was a tattler? Then he wondered If he could say something to the guy behind him in line. He had only known Mark for a couple of days. But Kenny definitely knew that Mark used the worst language of anyone on the team. Before he could decide whether to say something to Mark and what he might say, he was in the front of the line. It was his turn to take a layup. Two orange cones were set up. He looked over. The kid defending him was pretty big. He would have to concentrate.

“Okay Kenny, knees bent, shoulders square, eyes on the hoop!” His coach yelled before blowing the whistle to tell them to keep moving. Kenny was a little angry at what he was hearing from Mark, but Kenny kept his eyes up and made a shot. The loud swishing noise brought cheers from his teammates. “Good, clean shot, Kenny!” “Nicely done,” his coach called out. Kenny continued to think about the bad language he was hearing, particularly from Mark. When you do things the right way, it has a positive influence on others, he thought to himself. In the same way, Mark was being a bad influence on others. When Mark got to the back of the line, he was muttering some very bad names to describe the coach. That settled it for Kenny. He had to say something. His heart was pounding as he said, “Mark, I like you as a teammate, but I really don’t like the way you are swearing all the time. I really appreciate it if you would watch your language.” Mark looked at him in astonishment. “Everyone curses,” he said to Kenny. “I don’t,” Kenny answered, “and there’s a lot of other Guys who don’t. This is basketball,” Mark said. “You can’t be afraid of hearing bad words.” “I’m not afraid,” Kenny said. “I just don’t think it’s right and I don’t like it. I’m not the only one. Bad words are NOT what make you tough. Good offense and defense is what makes you a good player.” Mark left. Kenny thought he was going to make fun of him. Then to his surprise, Mark said, “you are a good player, Kenny. I need to watch what I say around you.” Kenny wasn’t sure if Mark was giving him a hard time or meant what he said, but by the time practice was over, he noticed that Mark had not cursed again. At least not around him.

Week 8 Huddle Up **Words Matter Continued**

Coaches Corner—Life Lesson

Our words matter. We should be positive with what we say. When we start swearing and cussing. It has a negative influence on others—and on ourselves. Your words need to honor God, others, and yourself.

To Talk About

Are you ever tempted to use bad language?

Have you or friends you know gotten in the bad habit of swearing and cussing?

What is the best way to break a bad habit?

Pray with your team! Ask for courage to be able to stand up against others who would speak badly or use bad words that hurt others. Pray for protection from influence that would cause us to stumble by using bad language as well. Remind them of their Bible verse and close by reciting it together.



Week 9 Huddle Up Tripped

Memory Scripture

But I tell you, love your enemies. Pray for those who treat you badly.

Matthew 5:44 (Hand out card for Matthew 5:44. Please

ENCOURAGE them to memorize this verse at home)

Presentation (Read the below out loud)

Megan was skating toward the goal. She kept her hockey stick low to the ice to control the slippery puck. As she pushed herself to go even faster, she looked ahead and saw the goalie crouched, ready to block her shot. One more skate forward and she raised her stick to slap the shot at the goal. Just as Megan was ready to unleash the shot, her right ankle was turned backward. The next thing she knew she was airborne. Megan landed on the ice with a thud. Her elbows and knees were on fire with pain. A cry went up from the crowd of parents and friends. The referee blew his whistle and pointed at the girl who tripped Megan and then to the penalty box. He lifted two fingers and called out, two minutes. Megan's coach motioned for her to skate to the bench. "But it's not the end of my shift, I'm OK." Megan protested. "I'm not hurt that bad. I can keep playing." "Take a breather and let's have someone take a look at your elbows." The coach said firmly. "Then we'll see if you can go back and play some more." Even though the trainer at the game checked on Megan and said she could go back in with the next shift, the coach kept Megan out of the rest of the game to be safe. "You took a good fall and I want you to be completely healthy for the next game," he said to her.

On the drive home with her mom, Megan didn't say anything. She stared straight ahead. She was very upset. In her mind, she wanted to get revenge on the girl who tripped her. It wasn't an accident. She deliberately stuck her stick in front of Megan's ankle to trip her.

"What are you thinking, Megan?" Her mom asked. "I don't want to say," Megan answered. "Can I guess what you don't want to say?" Mom asked her. After a short pause, Megan finally admitted, "I just want to play against that girl again, so I can trip her back!" "Do you think what that girl did to you was good?" Mom asked. "No," Megan answered. "Did you admire her?" Mom asked. "No." "So would it be good to do the same thing she did?" "No." Megan said softly. "So what can you do?" her mom asked. "Nothing I guess," Megan said. "Are you sure?" Mom asked. Megan thought for a moment. She wasn't nearly as angry as she was when she got in the car with her mom.

She remembered a lesson her mom had told her many times. The best way to deal with a difficult person is to pray for them. "I can pray for her," Megan said. "But I'm still mad at her." Megan's mom laughed and said, "once you start praying for her, you won't be mad at her much longer."

Week 9 Huddle Up Tripped Continued

Coaches Corner—Life Lesson

We show others that we have Jesus in our heart when we forgive and love even those that hurt us.

To Talk About

Have you ever been really mad at someone who hurt you?

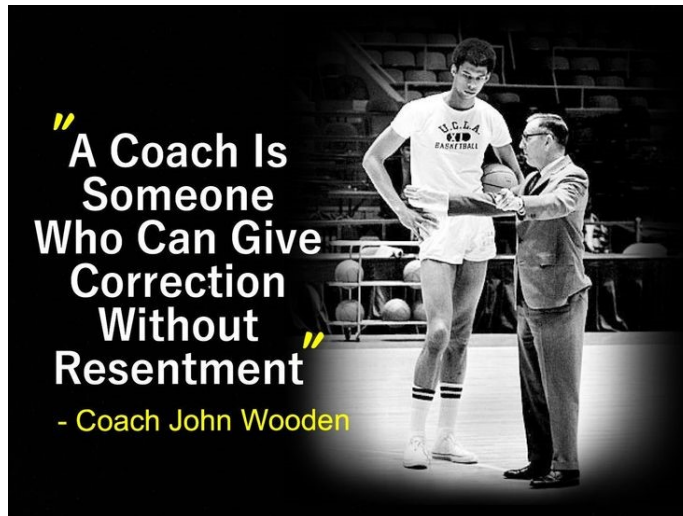
Did you want to get back at them?

Have you prayed for that person?

Pray with your team that they may find someone this week that they can pray for and share the good news of Jesus with. Have them for those who may have hurt us. Remind them of their Bible verse and close by reciting it together.









Connecting Families and Community in Christ Through Sports

MINISTRY PARTNERS

(In Alphabetical Order)

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Mason Community Church
1000 E. Columbia Street
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Phone: (517) 676-5322
Website: masoncommunitychurch.net

Mason First Church of the Nazarene
415 East Maple Street
Mason, Michigan 48854
Phone: (517) 676-5680
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Recreational Outreach Center
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