



# CENTRAL SPORTS

## **Basketball**

*Central Sports exists to promote the  
discovery of Jesus through sports.*

Team Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Practice Day/Time: \_\_\_\_\_



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## CENTRAL SPORTS

Central Sports focuses on these three things: fun, growth, and respect.

- **Fun**- We want the kids, parents and you, the coach, to have fun. We want learning about Jesus to be fun. He is the creator of fun, so why wouldn't we have fun learning about Him?
- **Growth** - We want kids to be better players at the end of the season than they were at the beginning of the year. We want the players', coaches' and parents' relationship with Jesus to be deeper that it was when the season started. If they don't know Jesus, we want them to get to know Him.
- **Respect**- We want players and coaches to play to win, but at the same time not win at all costs. We want players and coaches to respect the opponent. We want you to have the same reaction in winning and in losing. Jesus taught us to love others, so we need to love the other team.

### **Sports Offered**

January-February : Basketball, Cheerleading

March-May : Soccer

August- November : Flag Football, Volleyball

### **Practice/Game Cancellation Policy**

Basketball does not normally have weather related cancellations. However, if for some reason a cancellation does occur, emails will be sent out to the league and cancellation notices will be posted to the Central Basketball Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/140225189330223/>

### **IMPORTANT DATES**

Meet the Team: \_\_\_\_\_

First Week of practice: \_\_\_\_\_

First Game: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Game: \_\_\_\_\_

Deadline to request award medals: \_\_\_\_\_

## **COACHES: REQUIREMENTS**

### **Application & Background Check**

All coaches must complete an application and background check. This includes assistant coaches and fill-in coaches. If you know you will miss a game and need a fill-in coach for a game, please make sure they have completed and turned in the appropriate paperwork.

### **Ministry Safe**

As a coach, you MUST complete the Ministry Safe Sexual Assault Awareness Training. This is to protect the players, you as the coach, and Central Sports. There are videos and a test at the conclusion of the training. The entire training should take no longer than 45 minutes. This training certification lasts 2 years. If you have taken the Ministry Safe Training at another church, please send your certification to [familyactivities@centralbcs.org](mailto:familyactivities@centralbcs.org). If your training expires during the middle of the season, you will be asked to complete a new training prior to the start of the season. We thank you for taking every step possible to protect the kids that we love.

## **COACHES: EXPECTATIONS**

We want you to grow in the knowledge, skills and passion for stewarding players to Christ through the sport of basketball. When you coach, we want you to instill character in the players. This only comes from a relationship with Jesus and a constant renewing of your mind with the things of Him. (Rom. 12:2)

Coaching can have more purpose than teaching players how to serve or pass. As a coach, you can teach your players about the truths of God: that He loves us and wants to know us, along with the sport. We want to come alongside and equip you to share Jesus with your players.

As a coach, we want you to be a positive role model – encourage and respect your players and the game by communicating clearly and consistently, listening to your players, and knowing the sport.

### **Keys to Coaching**

- Teach the game through drills – The ability to execute proper drills enhances skill level and improves athletic foundations. Your practices should utilize drills that enhance skill development.
- Teach the rules of the sport – For the players to grow in the sport, they must understand and apply the rules of the game. Take time to explain rules and why they are important.
- Instill sportsmanship with a competitive spirit – In sports, winning and losing are part of the game, just as it is for life. Knowing how to handle both in a positive way builds character in young athletes. Teach your players to play hard and play to win, but also teach them to put others before themselves with a positive attitude and sportsmanship.
- Communicate effectively – In order to teach the rules, explain drills, and teach sportsmanship, you have to be an effective communicator. Likewise, good communication and organization are crucial in keeping parents informed throughout the season. This includes keeping them up to date on practice and game times and having a plan in place each and every practice.

## Central Sports Coaches' Dress Code

- Central Sports Coach shirt or sleeved t-shirt
  - NO tank tops, muscle shirts, crop tops or spaghetti straps
- Athletic or walking shorts
  - NO yoga pants, compression pants, compression shorts, leggings, jeggings, etc., unless covered by shorts.
- Tennis/athletic shoes
  - Come dressed for practice the way you want the kids dressed for practice; set the standard and example.

## COACHES: RESPONSIBILITIES

### Attend Coaches' Training

- Attend training
- Pick-up shirt, roster, and handbook

### Contact Your Team

- Introduce yourself (and your assistant coaches if applicable)
- Inform parents of:
  - Team name & age division (for the parents with multiple children playing)
  - Practice nights (day of week, time)
  - Meet the Team details
  - First Practice date
  - First Game date
  - Dress code for practice & games
  - Practice atmosphere
  - Game day atmosphere

We encourage you to request a confirmation so you know your parents receive the information.

### Attend 'Meet the Team'

**Location:** Family Life Center Gym (FLC Gym)

**Cheerleaders – 6:00 pm**

**1-2<sup>nd</sup> grade Basketball – 6:00 pm**

**3-4<sup>th</sup> grade Basketball – 6:30 pm**

**5-6<sup>th</sup> grade Basketball – 7:00 pm**

- Introduce yourself
- Tell them when the first practice is (day of week, time)
- Tell them where the first practice is (all practices will be the same)
- Tell them what to bring to practice; learning attitude, water bottle
- Ask for a team parent to handle snack sign-up (if wanted/needed)
- Ask for help coaching if wanted/needed (must fill out paperwork/Ministry Safe training)
- Let them know when/if you will be out
- Hand out team rosters

IF YOU AND YOUR ASSISTANT COACH WILL NOT BE AT 'MEET THE TEAM', PLEASE LET YOUR TEAM KNOW THAT THEY DON'T NEED TO ATTEND. PLEASE LET US KNOW AS WELL!

## Conduct Practices

- Be prepared for your practices! Conduct drills that teach skills.
- Be prepared for devotions! The players will get out of it what you put into it.
- Use positive reinforcement only; no punishment! Please no burpees, push-ups, etc.

## Coach Games

- Be involved! Engage with players from the bench.
- Be an encourager! Always have uplifting words for your players. Praise them in the post-game locker room.
- **Do not argue with the refs/scorekeepers. Remember that they are volunteers! Please set a good example for your players.**

## Award End-of-Year Medals

End-of-the-Year Medals are given after the last game of the season. This highlights your player's strength; it is not a "most improved, MVP, or best player" award. Multiple players can receive the same award. You will email Central Sports with a list of the awards you need. There are 10 award categories:

- Offense, Defense, Passing, Shooting, Hustle, Sportsmanship, Leadership, Character, Effort, Encourager

You will receive a reminder from Central Sports to provide your medal count & categories.

**Please be aware: if you miss the deadline, your team will receive blank medals.**

# **BASKETBALL AT CENTRAL**

## **RULES FOR CENTRAL SPORTS BASKETBALL**

- Before each game a devotional and prayer will be led over the sound system. Teams and coaches are expected to be at mid-court for this time.
- A coin toss or other impartial method determines which team receives possession first. In jump-ball situations, possessions will alternate
- During each segment the clock runs continuously stopping only at the end of each segment for predetermined substitutions; this time should not be treated as a timeout.
- At the start of each 6-minute period, coaches will line players up from best to worst on the court, starting with the best player closest to the table. This allows coaches to line up and match substitutions based on height and ability without wasting valuable game time.
- At the end of each segment, the team that receives the ball next is based upon the direction of the possession arrow. This avoids stalling by the offensive team at the end of a segment.
- Teams switch goals at halftime.
- Any games ending in a tie should remain a tie. There is no overtime period.
- No league standings are maintained

## **Defense Rules**

- Man-to-man defense will be played at all times. Zone defenses are not allowed. Only the 5-6th grade division may play zone defense inside the 3-point line. In most cases, players are guarding the opponent that closely matches ability and height, creating a more competitive system for all on the court
- Defensive players must stay within arm's reach of the player they're guarding.
- Isolation plays will not be allowed because they take away the opportunity for improvement for all players and contradict the spirit of the rules. This prevents defenders from sagging or crowding an area of the court to gain a defensive advantage.
- Double teaming is not allowed. However, help defense is strongly encouraged in the following instances:
  - **Offensive Picks and Screens** – Defensive switching is allowed on offensive picks and screens. The non-screened defender can help his or her teammate by temporarily switching until the teammate recovers to defend his or her offensive player. This is commonly referred to as “help and recover”.



## Defense Rules (cont'd)

- **Fast Breaks** – During any fast break (when the team that gains possession pushes quickly into the opponent's end of the court), another defensive player not assigned to the ball handler may help in order to slow or stop the fast break. Upon stopping the fast break, defenders should return to guarding their assigned players.
- **Lane Area** – If a defender is in the lane and the player he or she is guarding is within arm's reach, the defender is allowed to provide help defense.
- At the beginning of each segment, both coaches should line up the players at mid-court in the order the table tells you to. This act is performed to promote equal player match-ups.
  - 1-2 grade – each player will wear a colored wristband (red, white, blue black, green). Players guard the corresponding color. (If both coaches agree to a match-up problem the may switch wristbands).
  - 3-6 grade – once given the “ok” by the ref, coaches may move them around to show who they are guarding
- Full-court presses are not allowed. Defensive players may not guard their opponents in the backcourt. This creates an equal opportunity for each athlete to participate both on offense and defense
- Due to the shortness of the court in cross court play, backcourt violation will not be called. However, backcourt violation will be called when playing 5th – 6th grade. The offense must purposefully attack the defense in every situation – no stalling. After a warning from the referee, a violation will be called resulting in a turnover.
- Steals:
  - In 1-2 grade a defender may only steal the ball from the player they are guarding.
  - In 3-6 grades if a defender remains within arm's length of the player they are guarding they may steal the ball from another offensive player
- A player committing two fouls in one six-minute segment must sit out the remainder of that segment. The next player in the rotation closest in ability comes in as the substitute. This does not change the normal rotation, because the fouled-out player does not come back into the game until scheduled to do so. The player who comes in as a substitute gains extra playing time. This extra time does not affect the predetermined substitution system.

*Note:* In a second foul situation, when a team only has five players at a game, replace the substitution rule with a two-point penalty by awarding the fouled team two additional points. The opposing team then takes possession.

## Offense Rules

- The offense must purposefully attack the defense in every situation – no stalling. After a warning from the referee, a violation will be called resulting in a turnover. This will prevent a team with the lead from running the clock out by staying in the backcourt.
- Non-shooting fouls result in the ball being taken out on the side by the offended team (no bonus rule). All shooting fouls result in free throws in grades 5-6 division only. (5-6 grade – if a foul occurs on a made basket, the player will shoot one free throw.) (All free-throws is 5-6 grade will be one shot for corresponding 1,2,3 points).
- No score will be given for a basket in the wrong goal (except 5-6 grade). It will be treated as a turnover. This will prevent further embarrassing a player for making this mistake.
- Last 2 minutes of the game:
  - Any non-shooting foul in the last 2 minutes of the game will result in 1 point for the offense and will retain possession of ball.
  - Any shooting foul in the last 2 minutes of the game will result in 2 points for the offense and the defense will take possession of the ball. If the foul is on a 3-point shot in 5-6 grade it will result in 3 points.
  - This will not waste precious game time and will prevent intentional fouling at the end of the game.

## SUBSTITUTIONS

- This substitution system is designed to provide every player an equal opportunity for improvement. The substitution system ensures that:
  - The starting lineup shifts down one player every game, allowing every child the opportunity to be in the starting lineup
  - No child will sit out back-to-back six minute segments
  - Every child will play at least half of the game
  - In most cases, each child will play against someone of similar ability
  - Playing time for all players is virtually even over the course of the season
  - The starting five will change by one player each week
  - The best players on your team will always be playing with teammates who are not as good as them
  - The weaker players will be given the opportunity to play with a teammate who can make them better
  - We will need your player ranking order by **January 1**.

## Practice

- Practice nights: Monday, Tuesday, or Thursday
- Practice times: 5:30-6:30 pm, 6:30-7:30 pm or 7:30-8:30 pm.
- Basketball courts are shared for practices.
- Please wait outside the gym until your practice time begins.
- Devotions are at the midway point of your practice. An intern will announce balls down.
- Positive reinforcement only; no punishments such as burpees, push-ups, etc.

### PRACTICE BREAKDOWN

- *Pre-Practice Huddle (3-5 minutes)* – Cover specific rules and the basics of the game. Teach and review proper techniques for each skill needed for practice drills.
- *Warm-up Activity (3-5 minutes)* – Provide players the opportunity to practice individually and slowly warm up their muscles.
- *Practice skills through drills (20 minutes)* – Use drills that reinforce skill development. Focus on only one to two skills per practice.
- *Mid-practice huddle (5-7 minutes)* – Share the practice-specific devotion for each week. An intern will come in and announce devotion time at the mid-point of practice.
- *Scrimmage or games that teach (20 minutes)* – Guide players in using the skills they are learning through scrimmaging.
- *Post-practice huddle (5 minutes)* – Communicate game times, picture times, etc. After practice is a great time to engage in conversation with parents.

## **Game Day: 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>rd</sup> Grade Division**

### Prior to Game

- Set your lineup (The scoretable will also have this if you forget)
  - Equal start time/play time for every player
- Find out which bench is yours (scoretable will know)
- Warm-up until ref signals 'balls in'

### During Game

- Six 6 minute quarters (no clock stoppages) with a break for substitutions
  - Do not leave the court.
- Teams will switch sides at half time

### After the Game

- Line up and shake hands (high-fives)
- Dismiss to the locker room (classroom) on your side of the gym
  - Classrooms will have signs on them for your designated locker room
- Pass out team snack
- Positively congratulation/critique your team

## **Game Day: 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Division**

### Prior to Game

- Set your lineup (The scoretable will also have this if you forget)
  - Equal start time/play time for every player
- Find out which bench is yours (scoretable will know)
- Warm-up until ref signals 'balls in'

### During Game

- Six 6 minute quarters (no clock stoppages) with a break for substitutions
  - Do not leave the court.
- Teams will switch sides at half time

### After the Game

- Line up and shake hands (high-fives)
- Dismiss to the locker room (classroom) on your side of the gym
  - Classrooms will have signs on them for your designated locker room
- Pass out team snack
- Positively congratulation/critique your team

## **Game Day: 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Division**

### Prior to Game

- Set your lineup (The scoretable will also have this if you forget)
  - Equal start time/play time for every player
- Find out which bench is yours (scoretable will know)
- Warm-up until ref signals 'balls in'

### During Game

- Six 6 minute quarters (no clock stoppages) with a break for substitutions
  - Do not leave the court.
- Teams will switch sides at half time

### After the Game

- Line up and shake hands (high-fives)
- Dismiss to the locker room (classroom) on your side of the gym
  - Classrooms will have signs on them for your designated locker room
- Pass out team snack
- Positively congratulation/critique your team

## EXAMPLES

### Example Intro/Meet the Team Email:

Howdy parents!

We are so excited to have your child on the {TEAM NAME} basketball team at Central Sports! Our heart is to teach these kids fundamental basketball skills, guide them in practicing good sportsmanship, and deepen their understanding of God's perfect love for them. We are joyfully praying over your children and this season together!

**\*Meet the team is {DAY OF WEEK} from {TIME} at the Central Church Family Life Center. This is a come-and-go event. We look forward to meeting you and your precious kids that night!**

**\*Our practice time will be on {DAY OF WEEK} from {TIME} on {Court} at the Central Church Family Life Center. Our first practice is on {DAY OF WEEK}, {DATE}.**

\*It is IMPERATIVE that your kids be ON TIME to all practices and games. We only have 1 hour a week to practice so every minute counts!

\*Your children will need a good pair of athletic shoes for the season. Athletic shorts must be worn over any tights/legging. Shirts should cover the midriff.

\*Games will begin Saturday, {Date}. We will send you the game schedule as soon as it released.

{Indicate how you will communicate throughout the season, whether that is groupme, group texts, emails, etc.

\*Please let us know if you have any questions. Go **{Team Name}!**

## Example Weekly Team Email:

Central Sports Basketball – Rockets, Week of 12/1

### PRACTICE

Thursday, January 9, 5:30 pm

Please have players ready to go at 5:30 pm.

Make sure they have a water bottle, have used the restroom, and are wearing tennis shoes.

### GAME

Saturday January 11, 9:00 am

Arrive by 8:45 – **If you will not make the game please let me know ASAP**

Visit the restroom prior to the game. Bring a water bottle!

**\*\*SNACKS\*\* - (Parent Name)**

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

\*\*\*\*\*UPCOMING\*\*\*\*\*

### PRACTICE

Thursday, January 16, 5:30 pm

### PICTURES

Saturday, January 18, 12:40 pm

This is an example of a weekly communication sent out on Sunday or Monday.

The UPCOMING events listed out the whole season (practice, games, pictures, snacks, etc).

These examples are provided to assist you with wording. You do not need to copy them word for word.

Make sure to adjust dates, time, and team names!

Make sure that you include the team name & age division in the Subject Line!

## WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

- Be prepared each week for devotional. Know the scripture; don't just read it off the paper. Bring your Bible.
- Make the devotional your own; personalize it. Talk about situations your players will understand. Relate it to the game, school, home life, etc.
- Ask for questions! If you don't know the answer, tell them you will get back to them with an answer and do it!
- Remember: YOU may be the only 'Jesus' they see!



Week 1: Getting to Know You

At the halftime of practice – play **The Name Game**.

- 1) Have each player give their name and tell you the animal they would most like to be and why.
- 2) You, the coach, now try to go around and name each of the players and the animal they want to be like – this may be challenging.
- 3) Have each player go around and try to name all the players with the animal.

***During a water break, find out from your players:***

- Where they go to school
- Whether they have brothers and sisters
- What they like to do in their free time

*Tell them a snippet of your story – you will do more of this throughout the season. This would include:*

- Where you grew up
- Where you went to school
- Whether you have brothers and sisters
- What you liked to do in your free time when you were their age

Try to memorize Psalm 46:1 by end of the season

Week 2 – Gospel

Genesis 3

John 3:16

1 Corinthians 15: 55-57

John 11: 25-26

How many of you have never ever messed up in your life? You've gotten a 100 on every test/homework, you always clean your room right when your parents ask you too, you've never lied about anything? Yeah, we've all messed up at some point or another.

Today we are going to talk about the first people to EVER mess up, Adam and Eve. Their story can be found in Genesis 3. Does anyone know anything about Adam and Eve? (Wait for responses). They were created by God and put in the garden of Eden and got to walk and talk with God on a regular basis. Everything was perfect for them, all they had to do was not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. That was it. They could eat from any other tree/bush in the garden, but one day the devil spoke to Eve and told her that she would not surely die if she ate from the tree. He told her that she would be like God and convinced her to eat the fruit. So, Eve ate it and then gave some to Adam to eat and they disobeyed God. This was when sin entered the world. Sin is anything that we do that disobeys God and because of sin, God had to cast Adam and Eve out of the garden because he could not be with them anymore. God cannot be in the presence of sin.

Many years went by, and God still looked after his people, but the world was evil because of sin. However, at just the right time, God sent His son, Jesus, to come and live a perfect life that we never could, die on a cross, and rise 3 days later. Does anyone know the verse John 3:16? (wait for response; if no one knows it, please read it to them). When Jesus died and rose again, he took on all of the sins of every person in the world that had ever lived and will ever live. He took on each of our sin and buried it in the grave and then rose again to show that he had conquered our sin and to show that death had no hold on us anymore. Read 1 Corinthians 15:55-57

That's not the end of the story though. Jesus will come back and judge the world based on if we are followers of him or not. Those who are Christians will get to spend forever in Heaven with God. Those who are not will be eternally separated from God, and that is a tragic thing to happen. We want everyone to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior because Jesus wants what's best for you. Read John 11:25-26

If you have never asked Jesus to be the Lord of your life, I'd love to talk to you more about it, and if you have THAT IS AWESOME!

Let's pray.

Week 3 – Psalm 46:1

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”

“God”

When you think of God what comes to mind?

Genesis 1:1 – In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth

Genesis 1:26 – Let us make man in our image.”

God not only created the heavens and the earth but he created each of us as well. He created each of us in his image. Not only that he desires a relationship with each of us.

Do you have a best friend? (Wait for answers)

What do you do together? (Wait for answers)

Do you like doing things with that person? (Wait for answers)

Do you like talking with them? (Wait for answers)

God wants the same from us. He wants us to talk with him and him with us – Prayer

He wants us to know more about him – read his word

He wants us to trust him – understanding that he is all powerful and we are not

He knows our wants and desires, but he knows what is best for us. He created us, he knows us better than anyone else. He knows us better than we know ourselves.

The creator this universe and the creator of every person that has ever existed wants a relationship with YOU!

How cool is that?!

Ask for prayer requests

Pray

## Week 4 – Psalm 46:1

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”

“Our refuge”

Does anyone know what “refuge” means? (Wait for answers) Refuge is defined as “something providing shelter.” How many of you have ever had to run under something in order to avoid getting rained on? You ran for cover/shelter, right? God’s the exact same way in our lives. He is always someone we can run to no matter if things are going good or bad?

Do any of you have someplace you feel really safe? God’s like that for us, and we can feel that anywhere because God is with us!

1 Kings 19 tells a story of a man about Elijah. He just watched God perform an AMAZING miracle by bringing down fire from the heavens in order to sacrifice a bull. Elijah was up against a bunch of other people who were serving a different god, and their god didn’t do anything while the true God, Elijah’s showed up and showed everyone who the real God is. You would think Elijah would trust God with everything at this point, right? Well, the queen at the time didn’t like that Elijah had embarrassed her god, so she tried to kill him. Elijah ran for a long time, and finally got to the point where he thought he couldn’t go on anymore and even wanted to die. Just then, God sent an angel to encourage Elijah to eat to gain strength and rest.

Elijah was able to feel safe and encouraged even while people were out to kill him because God was His safety. He trusted in God’s plan to keep Him safe. Bad things may happen, but we can put our trust in God that He will sustain us through it. Let’s say our memory verse one more time. “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.” Psalm 46:1

Asks for prayer requests

Pray

Week 5 – Psalm 46:1

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”

“Our strength”

Who is the strongest person you know? (Wait for answers)

What makes that person so strong? (Wait for answers)

Take how strong that person is, and think of that person as an ant in comparison to God. God is SO much stronger than we are.

There’s a story in Judges 7 about Gideon and the 300 soldiers. Gideon had gathered a massive army to fight against the Midianites, but God kept telling Gideon that he had too many men. To most of us that sounds crazy. The more people you have, the more likely you are to win right? But God told Gideon that the people would think that it was their power that saved them if he had that many, so God told Gideon to take 300 men with him.

When the Israelites show up to fight the Midianites, they completely surround the camp with trumpets and jars and begin blaring the trumpets as loud as they can and making as much noise with jars as possible. Verse 22 says, “When the 300 trumpets sounded, the Lord caused the men throughout the camp to turn on each other with their swords.” The Israelites didn’t even have to fight and the Israelites won because of God’s awesome power.

Bad things will happen in this world, but we get to trust in the fact that God is all-powerful! He is in control of all things, and we get to have hope in a God who will fight for us!

Asks for prayer requests

Pray

Week 6 – Psalm 46:1

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”

“an ever-present”

How many of you have ever wished you could be in a whole bunch of places at one time? That you could have the superpower to run really fast to be in a whole bunch of places at once, or to duplicate yourself? How cool would that be?!

Guess what? God IS everywhere ALL THE TIME! God was with the Israelites in the Old Testament, and He is still with us today. There is nowhere that you can go that God isn't there. There's a story in the Old Testament in Jonah. Some of you might've heard it before.

God told Jonah to go and tell the city of Nineveh to repent of what they were doing and to turn to God. Jonah did NOT want to do that, and so he ran away from God and tried to sail the complete opposite way of Nineveh. However, God sent a storm and caused the boat to be tossed by the waves until the crew threw Jonah overboard. Can you imagine how scary that must've been?! But God sent a giant fish to swallow Noah for 3 days and God was with Jonah even there! The fish spit Jonah out on the shore, and Jonah went to Nineveh to do as God had asked him.

Have you ever felt like there was a time in your life that God wasn't with you? When? Why? (Feel free to share times in your own life that you might've felt this way as well)

We get to rest in the fact that God is ALWAYS with us no matter our circumstances.

Ask for prayer requests

Pray

Week 7– Psalm 46:1

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”

“Help in trouble”

How many of you have ever had bad things happen to you before? Like what? (Wait for responses)

Those things can be pretty hard, but we get to be encouraged by a story we can find in 1 Samuel 23 and 24 of Saul and David. After David killed Goliath, Saul became very jealous of David because David was becoming more popular than he was! He was the king! People were supposed to be singing his praises, not David’s! He got so jealous that he began to hunt down David and tried to kill him!

David had to run for his life for a long time, and God protected him through everything David had to go through. He couldn’t go home to sleep, or see his wife and kids. He slept in caves and on the hard ground, yet David still found his comfort and joy in God!

We may not always feel like God is there when we are in trouble. We get frustrated because we feel like God is letting bad things happen to us, and we don’t deserve it, but we know that the Bible tells us in Deuteronomy 31:8 that “The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.” We have the almighty God of the universe! We have no reason to be scared or feel like we’re alone because God will fight for us even when we’re going through trouble.

Ask for prayer requests

Pray

Week 8 – Psalm 46:1

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”

“Rejoicing in the trials”

Who remembers what we talked about last week? Right! We talked about David, and how he went through tough times with King Saul, and how God was always with him even in all of the troubles.

This week we’re going to talk about what we’re supposed to do when we run into hard times.

James 1:2-3 says, “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.” Who can tell me what joy is? Joy is defined as a feeling of great pleasure and happiness, and we as Christians have joy because of who God is! Having joy in the hard times is not an easy thing to do. It’s tough, and we want to be upset at God for what He’s letting happen to us. However, James encourages us to have great joy when faced with tough times because it makes us more like God! We get to draw closer to God in those times!

The disciples in Acts 5 were beaten because they were sharing about Jesus, and it says in verse 41 that “Then (the apostles) left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name (of Jesus).”

Tough times will happen, but we get to rejoice because we know that God is still all-powerful and in control of all things no matter what.

Ask for prayer requests

Pray



Week 9 – Psalm 46:1

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”

“Our hope on earth”

Who can tell me what we talked about last week?

Right! We talked about rejoicing in the trials even when it’s tough! Who remembers why we can have joy even when bad things happen? Because God is all-powerful, and Jesus is our savior! This week we’re gonna talk about Jesus being our Savior here on earth, and why He is our hope while we’re here!

We have lots of things that we hope and trust in every single day and don’t even know it. We hope that the ground is going to hold us, and that we won’t fall through it. We hope that the chairs that we sit in at school won’t fall down when we sit in them. We hope that our lungs let us take in air when we need to breathe! There are so many things that we hope in every single day, and none of them are as faithful as God is! God is never-changing and we can put all of our hopes in Him, and we will never be disappointed!

Psalm 43:5 talks about a man who is going through some trouble, and He feels like God isn’t there, but then the writer of the psalm remembers that God is always faithful! He writes, “Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.” He asks the question of himself, “Who are you hoping in?! Yourself or God?!”

Another place in the Bible talks about people with lots of money. A lot of people nowadays put all of their hope in money, and that it will give them all that they could ever need. 1 Timothy 6:17 says, “Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.” God provides us with everything that we need, and He is what we need to have hope in, rather than things of this world because they will let us down. We can’t make enough money or have enough stuff in order for us to be content, but God will give us everything that we need, and he is a shelter that we can run to at all times!

Ask for prayer requests

Pray

Week 10 – Psalm 46:1

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”

“Living for the next life”

Who can tell me what we talked about last week?

We talked about how our hope should be in God and not of things of this earth! Today we’re going to talk about living for the next life.

How many of you have ever thought about what heaven is going to be like? What do you think?

Heaven is described with streets of gold and gates with pearls. Jesus tells the disciples that He will go and prepare a mansion for them, and there will be people praising God forever! Forever is a hard thing to wrap our minds around, but that is what we’re supposed to be living for! Sharing Jesus to as many people as possible, so that we do things that will matter in heaven!

Paul says in Philippians 1:21, “To live is Christ, but to die is gain.” Paul understood that being with Jesus was better than anything that we will ever experience on this earth, but he also understood that every single breath God gave him was to be used to spread the good news about Jesus to other people! We’ve talked a lot about how God is with us no matter what, and that He is always there for us even in the hard times when it doesn’t seem like he’s there. Let’s say our memory verse one more time “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.” Psalm 46:1.

Ask for prayer requests

pray

## Week 11: The Gospel

### Key Verses:

John 3:16

John 16:33

Romans 5:8

Romans 3:23

Romans 6:23

Ephesians 2:8

I want you to think all the way back to the first week of basketball. Some of you had never played, some had played. Now think about how much you have learned about basketball and how much better you have gotten at playing. (Make sure to point out an accomplishment of one of your struggling players). Even with all the practice, do you think there will ever be a time that you will become a PERFECT basketball player? Do you ever think there will come a time when you don't mess up in a game or practice EVER? No. Probably not.

This is how Christian life works too. When you first become a Christian, you're not suddenly able to quote the entire Bible with no problem. You have to make an effort to memorize scripture, to read your Bible and to pray. And even after you have been a Christian for a while, you are still going to mess up and sin. But the coolest thing about that is, just like we've been talking about all season long, God is still with us even in those times. Being a Christian is not something that is easy. Jesus even told us that, "In this life, you will have trouble." (John 16:33)

The good news is, is that for those who have become a Christian, Jesus died on the cross for EVERYTHING we have done wrong. That means that everything we have done wrong, and everything we will do wrong in our lives. He paid for it all with his blood and then raised to life three days later, conquering sin and death's power over us. Romans 5:8 tells us that, "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." For those who have never made the decision to ask Jesus to be the Lord of your life, that means that Christ died for you too! He loves each and every one of us that much! And He is right there, waiting for you to turn to Him whenever you are ready.

Read Romans 3:23, 6:23, and Ephesians 2:8. All you have to do is admit that you have sinned against God and that there is nothing you can do to fix this on your own, believe that Jesus is God's son and that He came to die on a cross and rise three days later to conquer everyone's sin and death, and then was raised three days later, and finally we must confess that we are followers of Jesus and tell others about Him and what He has done in our life! If any of you have never asked Jesus to be the Lord of your life, please come talk to me and I'd love to talk more about it with you. If you have, THAT'S AWESOME! Continue to tell your friends about what Jesus has done.

Let's pray.