



CENTRAL SPORTS

BASKETBALL

*Fun, Growth, and Respect
Jesus is the reason for all of it and is in all of it.*

Team Name: _____

Coach Name: _____

I. CENTRAL SPORTS BASKETBALL

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' relationships with Jesus to be deeper than they were 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.

II. COACHES: EXPECTATIONS

We want you to grow in the knowledge, skills and passion for stewarding kids to Christ through the sport of basketball. When you are coaching, we want you to instill character in the kids that you are coaching. 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 a kid how to shoot or dribble; as a coach, you can be teaching your players about the truths of God, that he loves us and wants to know us, along with the sport and you are coaching. We want to come alongside and equip you to share Jesus with your players.

As a coach, we want you to encourage and respect your players and the game: be a positive role model, communicate clearly and consistently, know the sport, and listen to your players.

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. Instill sportsmanship with a competitive spirit – Your young athletes need to learn how these two important elements work together:

- Great sportsmanship involves valuing others. Your players should recognize how to value their opponents as well as their teammates.
- A competitive spirit is all about doing your best to win in all situations of the game. We want you to teach your athletes to value others by treating them the right way as they give their best to win each play, half, and game.

COACHES: EXPECTATIONS (CONT'D)

4. 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.

5. Lead the team in a devotional every week at the midpoint of practice and an end of game award presentation; this is why Central Sports exist and sets up apart from the other leagues.

6. Take the Ministry Safe training.

7. Central Sports Dress Code:

- Central Sports Coach shirt or sleeved t-shirt
 - No tank tops, muscle shirts, crop tops or spaghetti straps
- Athletic or walking shorts
 - If wearing yoga pants, compression pants or compression shorts, you must wear shorts over them.
- Tennis shoes or basketball shoes
 - Come dressed for practice the way you want the kids dressed for practice; set the standard and example.

III. WHAT TO SAY AT MEET THE TEAM

When: November 19, 2019 – Family Life Center

- **Cheerleaders – 6:00 pm**
- **1-2nd grade Basketball – 6:00 pm**
- **3-4th grade Basketball – 6:30 pm**
- **5-6th grade Basketball – 7:00 pm**

- ✓ Introduce yourself
- ✓ Tell them day and time of practice and the date of first practice (Week of December 2).
- ✓ Let them know what to bring to practice; shoes, shorts, t-shirt
- ✓ If possible, assign someone to be a team parent to handle snack sign-up
- ✓ Ask for help coaching if wanted / needed
- ✓ Let them know when you will be out
- ✓ Inform them of picture days
January 25, February 1, February 8
- ✓ Hand out team rosters

IF YOU **AND** YOUR ASSISTANT COACH WILL **NOT** BE AT MEET THE TEAM, PLEASE LET YOUR TEAM KNOW THAT THEY DO NOT NEED TO COME. PLEASE LET US KNOW AS WELL!

IV. 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 through another ministry, please send your certification to tdenton@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.

V. PRACTICE FOCUS

We want to strive to make every player and parent feel welcomed and appreciated as part of the team. Teach your team the fundamentals through drills and share biblical life lessons during each practice. Practice should be fun and hard at the same time. Sports can be difficult, so practice.

VI. PRACTICE BREAKDOWN

- 1. 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.
- 2. Warm-up Activity (3-5 minutes)** – Provide players the opportunity to practice individually and slowly warm up their muscles.
- 3. Practice skills through drills (20 minutes)** – Use drills that reinforce skill development. Focus on only one to two skills per practice.
- 4. Mid-practice huddle (5-8 minutes)** – Share the practice-specific devotion for each week. All devotionals for the season are located in the back of this manual.
- 5. Scrimmage or games that teach (20 minutes)** – Guide players in using the skills they are learning through scrimmaging.
- 6. Post-practice huddle (5 minutes)** – Communicate game times, picture times, etc. After practice is a great time to engage in conversation with parents.

VII. 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 matchups.
 - 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 matchup problem they 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 on 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.

VIII. 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**.

IX. END OF SEASON

- At the end of the season each player will receive a medal for their strength, strength, or improvement for the season.
 - This is not an MVP; it is to highlight each player's ability throughout the season. There is not an award or button at the end of each game
- At the end of the year you will have a celebratory party after your final game. It will be located in the locker room, you will have 3 pizzas (2 pepperoni, 1 cheese) per team and players will get awards, coaches will get their gift and it will be FUN for all! Completely FREE.

X. COACH RESOURCES

<http://www.csosports.org/blog>

centralbcs.org/sports

www.online-basketball-drills.com

Week 1 - Getting Acquainted

Purpose: Get to know your players, showing them interest and concern.

Icebreaker: play 'The Name Game'

- Have each player give his/her name and tell you the athlete they would most like to be like and why. You, the coach, try to go around and name each of the players and the athlete he wants to be like – this may be challenging. Have each player go around and try to name all the players with the hero's name.

Water-break time: Get to know each other

- Ask:
 - 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 through 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

Week 2 – “What’s the point?”

Purpose: Basketball, like everything else, is a place to glorify God.

Basketball Skill

Drill you can use

- Split your team up into two groups and choose a game for them to compete against each other in. Perhaps you could do some sort of dribbling relay race or shooting competition. Do NOT declare what a team has to do to win the competition. Communicate that it’s a competition and the rules but don’t declare what it takes to win. As the game is played, pay careful attention to how the players play. After the game is over, see how the players reacted to “winning” or “losing” the competition.

Basketball Lesson - (emphasize the numbered points below after the game)

- Comments during drills – (Make age appropriate)
 - What was the point of that game?
 - Was the point to win?
 - In sports, we often assume the point is to win but what if I told you there’s a different point? Winning and losing is important but I think there’s more to sports/basketball than just those two things.
 - What could be some other things that are important in basketball?

Life Principle: Comments during drills – (Make age appropriate)

- Now let’s think about school for a moment - What is the point of school? Making good grades? What else? How about learning? How about learning to give yourself to something and gaining confidence in life? If you don’t know the point or the wrong point, you are confused or pursue the wrong thing in life and in basketball.

Biblical Truth: We can glorify God everywhere and in everything.

Comments during drills – (Make age appropriate. During practice)

- In the Bible, 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, “Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” (Ask questions about the verse.)
 - I think what God is saying is that there’s nothing too small for God. Everything is to be done for him – for his glory. For his glory means to make him better known or more famous.
 - With that in mind, what 4 are some ways you could glorify God as a student in school? Or how could you glorify God at home? When we do everything the way God would do it, we show Him off, make him more famous for others to see what he is like. Your homework for next week is to think about ways we can show God off in the way you play basketball. What does that look like?
 - Come prepared to answer those questions next week.

Week 3 - "Shoot for the Net!"

Purpose: We need the right target to score.

Basketball Skill

Drill you could use

- Line them up on the free throw line and talk/demonstrate these points. Then, ask them to show you.
- The basic basketball shot is simple and beautiful but by no means simplistic.
- Everyone shoots the basketball differently. Yet, there is a general procedure that all good basketball shooters more or less follow.
 - Half-bend your knees before shooting a basketball for more potential power.
 - Your dominant hand should have its fingers spread out.
 - Only the fingertips should be gripping onto the ball.
 - Your other hand should support the ball on the side.
 - The ball should be brought above the head in one motion.
 - At this point, the angles at your armpit, elbow, and wrist is at 90 degrees.
 - While extending your knees, extend your forearm and snap your wrist. Make sure you follow through with your wrist movement.
 - If it feels natural to jump upon release, do so.
- Ask them – “Where should I aim the shot?” After they answer, ask them, “Where do you want the ball to end up?” (In the basket) If so, then aim for the basket.
- Tell them you want them to aim at the inside diameter of the rim – what you will call “The Nest.” Imagine a bird’s nest on top of the rim. You want them to land a ball in that nest that is resting on or inside the rim. 5 This encourages a soft shot and gives them the best target for the maximum shot making.

Basketball Lesson (emphasize the numbered points below while doing the drills)

- Every time you shoot the ball, you have a target whether you realize it or not.
- You need to pick the right target, something to aim for.
- Since the aim of basketball is to score, then your target needs to be the basket, where your target and the point of the game line up together.
- Not the front of the rim, not the back of the rim, but the diameter of the rim.
- Why? Because where you aim is where the ball will ultimately go.
- If you want the ball in the basket, you need to aim at the basket.

Life Principle

Comments during drills – (Make age appropriate)

- Just like in basketball, you need the right target in life, something to aim for.
- Think again about school.
- What is your target in school?
- What about in your friendships?
- What should your target be in school? In friendships?
- Last week we talked about the point of basketball, school and life.
- From basketball, we learned that when your target and the point of the game line up, you are aimed correctly. So with life, you are aimed correctly when your target is the point or reason for school or your friendships?

Biblical Truth:

Comments during drills – (Make age appropriate. During practice)

- Last week, we said the point of all things is to “glorify God.” Anybody remember what that means? (make him famous)
- So if this is the point, then we are aimed correctly when our target is to make God famous in all we do. - The Nest in school, at home, in all of life is to glorify God. This is what we are to shoot for. We need to make this our target.
- With the right target in basketball, we score. With the right target in all our life, we score.
- So let’s shoot for the nest, let’s make it our target to glorify God in all we do.

Week 4 – “Seize the Moment!”

Basketball Skill: Free Throws

Drill you can use

- Gather everyone at the free throw line and instruct/demonstrate
- LINE UP WITH THE BASKET-when lining up, your lead foot (right - if you are shooting right-handed) should be directly lined up with the center of the rim. On most courts there will be a small dot on the very center of the line. Set your toe on it. This will make it easier to line up for a straighter shot. The biggest mistake I see players make is to straddle the dot instead of put their toe on it, this usually will send the shot a little to the side.
- GO THROUGH THE SAME ROUTINE-every time you step up to the line, go through the same routine. Bounce the ball a few times, spin it in your hands. Be creative; when you find a routine that works for you use it over and over and over, it will help you feel more comfortable for the shot.
- Set up to shoot just as you would to shoot a set shot – went over last week.
- Feet spread about shoulder width.
- Slight knee bend.
- Lead hand on the ball with fingers spread and in fingertips.
- Lead hand’s arm should be perpendicular to the floor – and as in shooting, your armpit, elbow, and wrist is at 90 degrees.
- Aim for the NET.
- Shoot by flexing legs and extending arms, and snapping wrist at the same time (try not to leave your feet if can).

Basketball Lesson (emphasize the numbered points below while doing the drills)

Comments during drills – (Make age appropriate)

- When you watch basketball, watch how the players shoot free throws. What is their routine? What is their form? Are they good at it?
- Shooting free throws in a game is about establishing good form and routine in practice; then, doing it over and over.
- So when it is game time, you are just going through the routine and form from practice.
- Preparation in practice makes for good free throw shooting in games.
- The more important the free throw, the more important it is to focus on your routine.

Life Principle

Comments during drills – (Make age appropriate)

- You will come to important points in your life where you need to deliver, you will need to come through, like making a free throw at a key point in a game.
- This may be a test at school. This may be standing up during class for a special presentation. There will be lots of times like this over your life. What might be some other important times where the pressure will be on you to deliver?
- How will you seize that moment and come through?
- Just like with free throws, preparation is what is important. Finding a form and a routine and then going over that form and routine again and again.

Biblical Truth

Comments during drills – (Make age appropriate. During practice)

- We have been talking about glorifying God in all our lives – school, family, even here in basketball. What does this mean again?
- Just like at school, there will be times, special times where you will be tested to deliver. Tested to see if you will bring glory to God or not. Whether you will show off God or someone else.
- One of those times will be when you do well, when you succeed. Others may come up to you after a time in a game, at school, with your friends, where you have done well and congratulate you. Tell you what a great job you did. Tell you how awesome you are. What will you do? How will you come through in that key moment? Will you show off yourself at that point or will you show off God?
- The key is just like shooting a free throw. Preparation. With a form and a routine. The form we have talked about - taking aim at the right target – glorifying God. The routine is thinking about how you will handle that moment.
- Anybody know who Tim Tebow is? How does he handle it? What is his routine?
- Thank teammates – they are the ones who make possible any individual success.
- Thank God for the ability to perform.
- Thank God for the opportunity to use the ability he has given.

- In other words, focus the attention on others and be grateful. This shows off God as the one who made it all possible rather than focusing the attention on yourself.

Week 5 - A Great God!

Purpose – The players would understand that God is great and his greatness is different than anyone else’s.

Basketball Skill – Shooting Layups

Drills you can use

- Demonstrate how to lift the right leg while lifting the right arm. Show them where to put the ball – in the square. Have them do this individually.
- Then show them how to dribble and take two steps and shoot. Have them do this without the ball.
- Then, have them get in a line and shoot layups. Allow them to do this a couple of times through. During the third time, you would continually block their shot either with your hand or by using a foreign object (broom).

Comments – Make age appropriate.

- Why weren’t you able to make a layup? Why was I able to block the shot? What makes me good at blocking shots?
- I was able to block your shot because I have certain skills and possessions that you don’t have yet. I have something that you don’t which allows me to be better/greater at this drill.

Life Principle – In life, we will always come across people with greater greatness.

Comments - (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- Just like I have certain skills and attributes that you don’t have, you’ll continue to encounter people in life who have different giftings, skills, and abilities than you do.
- Think of LeBron James...most of us won’t ever be 6’8” and be able to dunk like he does (feel free to use other examples—Albert Einstein, Bill Gates, famous people who the kids might look up to today)
- The greatness we have is different than the greatness these other people have.

Biblical Truth – God’s greatness is different from anyone else’s.

Comments - (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- It’s the same way with God. God possesses skills and powers that we don’t have.
- The difference with God though is that we can experience God’s greatness in our own lives (unlike other people’s greatness).
- We don’t develop this greatness that God has but rather we rely upon it. God has abilities and He’s willing and able to share those with us.
- Over the next couple of weeks, we are going to look at this greatness that is different than our greatness, but more importantly, how this greatness can be experienced in our lives.

Psalm 135:5: “I know that the Lord is great, that our Lord is greater than all gods.”

Bottom line: God is great and his greatness is different than anyone else’s.

Week 6 - A Compassionate God!

Purpose - For the players to see that God is full of compassion and wants us to be as well.

Basketball Skill – Shooting a jump shot

Drills you can use

- Demonstrate the right form for shooting and then have the players show you without the ball.
- Have them shoot with balls while you observe them.
- Play a couple of games of 'Knock Out' (aka Lightning). The kids love this game.

Comments

- Those of you who won, how did it feel?
- Those who didn't win, how did it feel to lose?
- Did anyone, at any point, encourage someone in the game who was struggling?
- Did you even notice those who were struggling?
- Does anyone know what the word compassion means? Compassion is a very strong word that means to "co-suffer." In other words, it means to suffer with someone else as if it were you that was feeling the pain. It means to feel a deep sympathy for another person.
- What would it have looked like to have compassion in the game we just played? Would it have meant letting someone else win? (NO! Make sure you emphasize this. Letting others win means you don't perform at your best which dishonors God)
- I think it would mean noticing your teammates' struggles even when you may be having success individually. It means working together, helping each other achieve their best.

Life Principle – We need compassion from others and others need compassion from us.

Comments - (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- Just like we all need compassion on the basketball court, we also need compassion in life.
- Can you think of a time, outside of basketball, where you would have like to receive compassion?
- Can you think of a time where it would have been good to give compassion?
- What would it look like to have compassion at home with your parents/brothers/sisters/family? What about at school? What if you didn't have compassion there?

Biblical Truth – God is full of compassion for us.

Comments - (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- If we are honest, we know that we often fail to show compassion. We can be so content with our own accomplishments that we don't even think about how other people are feeling.
- God though does not have this problem. Psalm 116:5 says that, "The Lord is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion." Psalm 145:9 says, "The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made." We know from these verses that God is full of compassion for all the earth.
- Because he is compassionate, God wants us to be too: full of compassion and have compassion for all. Your homework for this week is to look for ways to show this compassion (in basketball, at home, at school, etc.) but also to see where God is showing compassion to you. We will talk about this more next week.

Psalm 85:15: "But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness." Bottom line: God is full of compassion and wants us to be as well.

Week 7 - A Gracious God!

Purpose – To recognize that God shows us grace through Jesus.

Basketball Skill – Dribbling – with one or both hands

- Drill
 - After demonstrating and practicing, divide the team into two.
 - This is a dribbling relay race – you can have them go in one direction with one hand and come back with the other.
 - Before the competition begins, tell the kids that the losing team will have to do 30 pushups or some other type of “punishment” (running laps, sprints, etc.).
 - However, after the competition, have the coach(es) “pay” the punishment for the losing team. (i.e. the coach(es) will be the one(s) performing the pushups for the kids.)

Comments

- How did it feel if you were on the losing team when the coach did the pushups for you?
- Why do you think the coach(es) did the pushups instead of the losing team?
- Why did he/they have to do the punishment?
- Did the coach(es) deserve to be punished?

Life Principle – Grace is not getting what we deserve.

Comments - (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- Can anyone tell me a time when you deserved to be punished but weren't? Perhaps at school or at home? Pretty unusual, huh?
- Do you know what ‘grace’ means? It means to give something that is undeserved. Before the game began, I said that the losing team would have to do pushups—that was the rule. Not having the losing team do pushups gives them something they do not deserve. That’s grace. Receiving something you do not deserve.
- How can we, as a team, show grace to one another as we practice and play?

Biblical Truth – God gives us grace in Jesus.

Comments - (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- The reason we are to show grace on the basketball court, and in all of life, is because God is a God of grace.
- God created us and asks us to follow his guidelines for life. These guidelines are for our good.
- However, rather than follow them, we often disobey him.
- In our disobedience, we deserve to be punished.
 - But instead of punishing us, God gives us grace. The Bible says in Romans 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” That may be a little hard to understand but what it means is that God would be right to punish us for our disobedience but instead, through Jesus, He showed us grace.
- Instead of death, God in his grace gave us life in Christ Jesus.

Psalm 85:15: “But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.”

Week 8 - A Patient God!

Purpose – For players to learn God is slow to anger because He loves us and wants to redeem us.

Basketball Skill

- Have your team line up at the foul line, or 3-point line, or somewhere on the court where it won't be too easy to make shots.
- Tell your team that they have to make a certain number of shots (it can be shots in a row or within a certain time limit).
- Remember to make the goal almost reachable yet slightly impossible (don't make it too crazy where your team will never be able to reach it, but don't make it too easy).
 - The idea here is that you do not want your team to reach the goal; you want them to get close, but never actually meet it.

Comments during drills – (Make age appropriate.)

- We learned last week what it means to show grace to someone. We also learned what it means to deserve punishment, yet have someone take your place in order to pay that punishment for you. Today we're going to talk about being slow to anger.
- With the shooting competition that we just had, how did you feel when you heard what you had to do?
- How did it make you feel that you weren't able to reach the goal? Did anyone get a little frustrated with anyone else on the team because they kept missing shots? Did anyone think, "Man, I wish he/she wasn't the one shooting this shot"? Did anyone think, "I wish they could shoot like me"?

Life Principle – We need to show patience with others.

Comments during drills – (Make age appropriate)

- Can anyone tell me a time when they remember something happening that made them really angry? What happened? What did you do?
- Have you ever been really angry with someone because they weren't doing something that you thought they should be? Have you ever been really angry with someone because you thought you were better than them, because you do what's right and they don't?

Biblical Truth – God is patient with us.

Comments – (Make age appropriate. During practice)

- Over this last week, has anyone thought of how God shows us grace through Jesus Christ?
- Did anyone show grace to anyone else this past week?
- Did someone show you grace this past week?
- There are many things in your life that will happen that could cause you to get angry.
 - Most of the time, we get angry with other people because they're not doing what we want them to. We don't get what we want, so we become angry.
 - We fail to realize that, though we may be further along in some things than other people, we're not perfect.
 - We are all sinners and fall short of God's glory (Romans 3:23)! We learned that we deserve to be separated from God for all eternity, because of our sin (Romans 6:23).
 - The Bible tells us that God cannot even look upon sin (Habakkuk 1:13). He would be justified in His anger over our sin. Imagine if God was not slow to anger! Imagine if He got so angry that He destroyed anyone who did something wrong, right away. Worse yet, there would be many more people who would not be in heaven.
 - We are part of God's plan to make us holy...to make us just like Him. God wants us to be patient with those who may not be where they're supposed to be. He wants us to love them just as He loves them.

Psalm 86:15: "But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness."

Bottom line: God is slow to anger because He loves us and wants to redeem us.

Week 9 - A Loving God!

Purpose – For the players to understand that God’s love is unconditional.

Basketball Skill – Passing – Bounce and chest

- Have them do a passing drill where they pass back and forth moving from half court to the basket with one person finally shooting a layup. See who decides to shoot. See who doesn’t. Repeat this several times. Watch to see what happens. Look for who is selfish, who gives up the ball.

Comments

- In this drill, only one person got to shoot. How did you decide who would shoot? (Look for examples of selfish reasons – i.e. I am the better shooter, I wanted to shoot – as well as conditional reasons – i.e. he shot once so I got to shoot the next time.)
- Did anybody allow their teammate to shoot every time? Why?
- Tell of a time when you saw passing not done because of selfishness.
 - My story – “Recently I asked one of the players on this team, ‘Why didn’t you pass the ball to the other player who was open?’” He replied, ‘Because he never passes it to me.’”
- What would happen to the team if everybody had this attitude? (Show that no one would pass. Wouldn’t win many games because the first person that got the ball would just dribble and shoot, never pass.)
- To break that tendency, someone has to take the lead. To do something regardless of what someone else does, without depending on how someone else acts. To do something good that is unconditional – not dependent on what others do.

Life Principle – We all want friends who like us unconditionally.

Comments - (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- Now think about your friends for a moment. Why are they your friends? Are they your friends because you were friendly first? (Sometimes, sometimes not)

- Which type of friend would you rather have – a friend who liked you because you were nice to them or if you gave them stuff (conditional) or a friend that liked you even when you weren't nice to them or gave them stuff (unconditional)? Why? (because we are not always going to be nice) We all want friends who will be our friends and like us regardless of how we act.

Biblical Truth – God's love is unconditional.

Comments - (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- Unfortunately, while we may hope for friends like that, no friend will always be that way.
- God is different. He loves us regardless of how we act.
- We can't do anything to make God love us less, nor can we do anything to make God love us more.
- His love is so great, so amazing. The verse says "he is abounding in love." His love abounds – flows over to us unconditionally – no reasons, no ifs, no because. His love just is. This is God's great love.

Psalm 85:15: "But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness."

Week 10 - A Loving God! (Continued)

Purpose – For players to understand that God demonstrated his unconditional love in giving us his Son, Jesus.

Basketball Skill

- Do the same drill from last week – passing back and forth from half court and eventually shooting a layup.
- Before you start, quietly tell one player of the pair, without the other player knowing it, to make sure he takes the shot - every time.

Comments during drills – (Make age appropriate.)

- I noticed that only some of you got to shoot. How come? How did it feel to never get the shot? (not very good, didn't like it, mad) How come? (Wanted to shoot) What do we call someone who takes all the shots? (ball hog)
- How did it feel to be the player who got all the shots? (good or bad) How come?
- Do you want to do the drill again with the same arrangement? Why not? (no fun for those who don't shoot, fun for those who did)
- How would it change your attitude – those who didn't get to shoot – if you wanted the other player to always have the joy of shooting? What if you wanted them to get better at shooting and were glad for their opportunity to get better, score more points? How would that change what you feel? (from anger, sadness, to joy, happiness)

Life Principle – We see the same reactions to this game in our friends.

Comments during drills – (Make age appropriate.)

- When you look around your school, do you think your friends act more like:
 - the player who is sad who didn't get any shots
 - the player who is happy because he got all the shots
 - the player who is happy because he made it possible for the other player to get all the shots
 - Why? (Especially why are there so many people who want to take the shots?)

Biblical Truth – God unconditionally loved us in giving us Jesus.

Comments – (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- Now I want you to think for a moment about God in a basketball game. Who is the best player? (He is) Who rightfully should take all the shots? (He should – because he is the best, perfect) How should we feel because he gets all the shots - glad or sad? (Why?)
- You know what we do in the game of life? Rather than pass to him and give him all the shots, we hog the ball for ourselves. We don't want him to be glad because we think making him glad would take away our happiness. So we keep the ball and shoot. We do what we want, not what he wants. When we do something only thinking about ourselves, when we don't want God's joy and only want our own, when we don't do what he wants, God calls that sin; something we all do.
- Yet, because God loves us even when we aren't nice to him, even when we don't pass him the ball, he still wants our joy, he still wants to help us. He wants to deal with our sin. The Bible says that "God demonstrated or made clear his love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." He passed us the ball, the ball of life, at the time we least deserved it. (Remember back to grace) Why? Because of his love –unconditional love.

Psalm 85:15: "But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness."

Week 11 - "VICTORY"

Purpose – For the players to learn what it means to win in life.

Basketball Skill – Discovering that winning is more than the score on the scoreboard.

No particular Drill or Mechanics

Comments - (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- How do we determine the winner? (Who scored more points?)
- Who came up with this method of determining the winner? (*The inventors of the game of basketball*)
- Is the score the only way to figure out who wins and loses? See if there are any other ideas – ask these specific questions:
 - What if you played a team much better than you and played really well and almost beat them, did you lose?
 - What if you played a team much worse than you and beat them really badly, did you win?
 - Imagine – Championship Game - Would you rather play a bad, horrible game and our team win or play the game of your life and have us lose?
- Being a winner is much more than just who scores the most points.
- From the first practice, I have asked you to give yourself to what I say. You are a winner if you do it with all your heart, you give your all, regardless of the score.
- Why? Because you pleased God with your effort.
- This is the most important part of winning, not the score on the scoreboard.

Life Principle – Winning in life is determined by more than the score.

Comments - (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- How do you know if you are winning in life? Just like you look to the scoreboard, so we look to scoreboards there. What is the scoreboard at school? (*Grades, accomplishments there*)
- How about at home? That is a little tougher. What do you think is the scoreboard in your family? (*See what they say - interesting to see what they say – I would imagine it will be some things like “make good grades, cooperate with mom & dad/family” but interesting to see. Some may think there is no score. If they have a difficult time answering, this illustrates the idea.*)
- Do you notice the difference in our answers? So which one is right? How do we know the best or right answer to what is the score in life?
- Go back to basketball, where I said pleasing God is the biggest part of winning. Pleasing your God in life is the biggest part of winning, more important than the score on the scorecards there.

Biblical Truth – God has made it clear that when we please God we are winners in life.

Comments - (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- Let’s go back to football for a moment. Who determines what it means to score? (*inventor of the game*)
- So who determines what it means to score in life? Inventor of life. And who is that? *God*
- And just like the football inventor, God has told us what it means to score in life. He did this in the Scriptures.
- If you were to sum all that up in one sentence it would be – To score in life, to be a winner in life, is to live in a way that pleases God. That makes him happy.
- How do we do that? By obeying what he has said to do in life.
- Can you think of some things he has told us to do? (*See what they come up with*)
- Doing these things makes him happy.

- When we make him happy, we score in life, and we are winners. That is why the apostle Paul says, “I make it my goal to please God.” (2 Corinthians 5:9) In 1 Corinthians 10:31, he tells us “Whatever you do, do it all to make God happy.” (My translation)
- Now obeying one thing makes him happier than all the rest – that is to believe in his Son, Jesus Christ, the one who offers to be our coach.
 - To believe that you need him as your coach.
 - To believe that he is perfect in his wisdom to coach you.
 - To believe that he is perfect in his care for his players and you.
 - To believe that he demonstrated that love and perfection when he died and rose again.
- If you have never accepted Jesus’ offer to be your coach and would like to do so, then follow me as I pray. (*Pray a prayer that says you believe these things about yourself and Jesus and want him to be your coach*)
- If you prayed that prayer, would you tell me? I would like to celebrate with you.