



The 5 Minute Game Plan

A Catechesis Supplement for Youth Sports

7th Grade - Winter Edition

Created by Peter Piscitello, Executive Director, CYO of Johnson and Wyandotte Counties.

5 Minute Game Plan - 7th Grade Year

August 1, 2013

Dear CYO Coaches,

Greetings and welcome to a new year of CYO Sports! We're thrilled you have taken the time out of your busy schedule to be involved in such a fantastic ministry; by coaching our youth and helping them to develop as persons and athletes, you are making an impact that is larger than you probably even imagine. We sincerely appreciate your efforts to this end and look forward to working with you in the coming season.

The most important part of developing any child is helping that child to grow in his or her relationship with God. With that in mind, we have created the enclosed materials. Titled *The 5 Minute Game Plan*, the goal is for this to be exactly that: a 5-10 minute supplement to CYO practices that creates a curriculum for faith formation in our CYO. We have worked our Archdiocesan schools and School of Religion programs to create a program that supplements the specific themes and curriculum addressed in your child's primary faith formation. Of course, we have also taken into account that their primary formation begins at home. On this page and the one that follows, I will provide an overview of your role as a coach, and instructions on how to implement this new requirement within your team.

First, a quick word of encouragement. We understand that the majority of our parents weren't theology majors or may not even be comfortable praying in front of a group of children. I can assure you that this program has been developed so that it can be implemented by anyone. Simply follow these instructions and you will be on your way to a truly fulfilling addition to practice each week. It's as simple as following each week's lesson in this packet.

As you may have already noticed, this packet is split into a couple of parts. First you will find an overview of the entire year that includes the theme, scripture and saint for each week. Then you will find the individual "lessons." The requirement is simple: at your team's first practice of each week, you will need to begin practice with the lesson for that week. Lessons begin with the second week of preseason and go until the end of the season for each sport. Within each lesson, you will find the following:

- Theme: based on age-appropriate themes from school and religious education curriculum
- Scripture: a weekly scripture passage based on the theme
- Saint or Topic: a relevant Saint or topic that helps convey the scripture and theme
- Discussion Question: 1-2 Questions that help connect the theme to individual and team
- Practice Plan: A tip for coaches on how to make this theme come alive during practice
- Prayer: A prayer that will close the lesson and lead into practice
- Post-Practice Prayer: A simple reminder of the week's theme and closing prayer

That's it, a full lesson that should take 5-10 minutes depending on discussion and is fully scripted. We also encourage you to involve the children by having them take turns reading the scripture each week and say the prayers. Either the head coach or assistant should usually lead the saint/topic and discussion, but you can simply read the material on the page. You can certainly take some time to prepare prior to practice if you desire, but the program is designed so that you can simply take the lesson to practice and use it without preparation. We have also

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encouraged parishes to adjust practice times so that this time is “added” to the allotted time and not a part of your hour or so of practice time. Remember that this only takes place at the first practice of each week, though following up during other practices that week is a great idea.

Again, we appreciate your time as a volunteer coach and your implementation of this new requirement. Our goal is not to add to anything to your already busy schedule, but rather to create a program that can be easily implemented each week to greatly enrich the spiritual element of practice and supplement a child’s primary faith formation curriculum. As you probably already understand, the impact that sports has on children is dramatic and can be very positive; by connecting sports to concrete topics from scripture and theology, we hope to draw parallels that can help transform lives and deepen the relationship each child has with God. We hope that you’ll find this process to be fruitful and rewarding for your children and you as a coach.

Of course, if you have any questions do not hesitate to contact your Athletic Director or our CYO Office. Our office can be reached at (913) 384-7377 or by email at admin@cyojwa.org. More information about this initiative, including lessons for all ages and seasons, is available online at www.cyojwa.org. Best wishes this season and know I will be praying for you and your team!

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter J. Piscitello". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Peter J Piscitello

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Executive Director, CYO

Season and Practice Week Number



SAMPLE PLAN WITH INSTRUCTIONS

Fall Sports Preseason Week 1

Theme: The Trinity
Scripture: 1 John 5:7-9

Scripture length may differ based on curriculum in schools (if a specific verse is required in school, entire verse was generally placed here)

Read aloud by coach or child

"And the Spirit is the witness, because the Spirit is the truth. There are three witnesses, the Spirit, the water and the blood; and these three agree. If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for this is the testimony of God that he has borne witness to his Son."

Saintly Example: Saint Patrick ← Coach reads written script aloud to team.

Saint Patrick is most well known for his work teaching the people of Ireland about Jesus, but he also gave us important teachings about the Holy Trinity. When he was teaching people in Ireland, he used a local plant called a Shamrock to teach about the trinity. He showed that the Shamrock has three leaves, but is still one plant; just like the Holy Trinity has three persons (God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit) but is still one. The people of Ireland were so inspired by St. Patrick's teachings, they asked to be baptized and have carried their love of Jesus and Mary all over the world! St. Patrick was known as a courageous man who worked his entire life to help people grow closer to God and to know about the Holy Trinity.

Discussion: ← Read each bullet point aloud to generate discussion. Try to get 2-3 answers each or more if time and participation allows.

- Explain that the sign of the cross is a constant reminder of the Holy Trinity. As we say "In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we remember that God is three persons and are praying that He will guide us in our prayer!
- St. Patrick used the shamrock to teach people about God, what are some ways that you can show that you believe and God and teach others about God at school and during our sports season?

Coaches are encouraged to try to get different kids involved with discussion each week so that all are being included in discussions through year.

Practice Plan

- Ask the kids to remember the Holy Trinity every time they make the sign of the cross and to think about ways they can help spread the gospel like St. Patrick did.

A tip or theme for the coach to consider in order to connect theme through practice. Don't read aloud.

Prayer

- Jesus, we thank you for bringing us together as a team in this new season. We pray that during all our practices and games this year that we can put you first and remember you in all that we do. Help us to be safe and to have fun this year. We ask this as we pray together the Glory Be prayer: Glory Be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, a world without end. Amen.

Prayer can be read by coach or by child and ends "before practice" portion.

End of Practice: Remind kids about the example of St. Patrick and ask them to think about the Holy Trinity every time they make the sign of the cross. Say the following prayer to close practice: ← Reminder of theme by coach.

Our Father, Who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen. St. Patrick, Pray for us!

← Closing prayer read by coach or child.

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Winter Season Outline

- Preseason Week 1 - **Theme:** Applying Jesus' Teachings - Beatitudes **Scripture:** Matthew 5:1-12 **Saint:** Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati
- Preseason Week 2 - **Theme:** Applying Jesus' Teachings - Prayer **Scripture:** Matthew 6:1-6 **Saint:** St. Benedict
- Preseason Week 3 - **Theme:** Applying Jesus' Teachings - The Will of God **Scripture:** Matthew 7:7-8, 21 **Saint:** St. Elizabeth Seton
- Preseason Week 4 - **Theme:** Applying Jesus' Teachings - Parables **Scripture:** Matthew 13:10-13 **Saint:** None
- Preseason Week 5 - **Theme:** Applying Jesus' Teachings - Miracles **Scripture:** Luke 5:4-9 **Saint:** St. Philip (Apostle)
- Preseason Week 6 - **Theme:** Applying Jesus' Teachings - Service **Scripture:** John 13:12-17 **Saint:** St. Angela Merici
- Regular Season Week 1 - **Theme:** Applying Jesus' Teachings - Mission **Scripture:** Luke 9:21-22 **Saint:** St. Philippine Duchesne
- Regular Season Week 2 - **Theme:** Applying Jesus' Teachings - Discrimination **Scripture:** Galatians 3:28 **Saint:** St. Maximilian Kolbe
- Regular Season Week 3 - **Theme:** Applying Jesus' Teachings - Eucharist **Scripture:** John 6:35 **Saint:** St. Thomas Aquinas
- Regular Season Week 4 - **Theme:** Applying Jesus' Teachings - Respect for Life **Scripture:** Psalm 139:13-16 **Saint:** St. Peter Claver
- Regular Season Week 5 - **Theme:** Applying Jesus' Teachings - Modesty **Scripture:** Matthew 5:27-30 **Saint:** St. Therese of Lisieux
- Regular Season Week 6 - **Theme:** The Holy Spirit - Unifying the Church **Scripture:** Acts 2:1-4 **Saint:** St. Catherine of Siena
- Regular Season Week 7 - **Theme:** The Holy Spirit - Vocational Discernment **Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 **Saint:** St. John Neumann
- Regular Season Week 8 - **Theme:** Mary as Mother - The Memorare **Scripture:** Luke 1:41-44 **Saint:** None
- Regular Season Week 9 - **Theme:** Hail Holy Queen - Mary as Queen of Heaven **Scripture:** Revelation 12:1-6 **Saint:** Mary, Queen of Heaven

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Winter Sports Preseason Week 1

Theme: Applying Jesus' Teachings - Beatitudes

Scripture: Matthew 5:1-12

Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down his disciples came to him. ² And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

5 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Saintly Example: Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati

Pope John Paul II once called Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati a "man of the beatitudes," and this seems a fitting description of this modern example of holiness. Though Pier was born into a very wealthy family, he very early on took a particular interest in those who were most in need. From the beginning it seems that he was a boy of exceptional holiness, always praying; praying the rosary, asking for the intercession of his favorite saints, or spending time in Eucharistic adoration as much as possible. He was known by family and friends for being exceptionally joyful, always quick with a smile or joke and full of love. When he contracted polio and died at the age of 24, his parents were shocked to find that the city's poor and sick came to their home to pay respects, for it seems that young Pier had quietly spent much of his life providing for these people's needs. He would go into the slums to provide food, clothing or simply care and support for those in need of assistance, never boasting of his work but merely living out the gospel message as best he could. He remains an example for all of us in living the beatitudes.

Discussion:

- Even as a boy, Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati lived out the beatitudes by showing special care for those in most need. How can we live out the beatitudes in our own community? What can our team do this year to provide a ministry to those in need so that we might live out the beatitudes as Christ taught?

Practice Plan: Now is an excellent time to consider a service project for your team this year. This could be as simple as collecting food or clothes to donate, or it could include finding a ministry and devoting time as a team to a service. Talk to the team and find out what they are interested in doing, then help facilitate this service, providing guidance but allowing the team to take ownership of the service. Your parish likely has plenty of resources if you are looking for ideas or ministries that might facilitate this.

Prayer: Lord, you give us the example of holy men and women like Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati so that we might learn from them and come to know your call for us more deeply. Grant that we might be filled with the joy and compassion of Bl. Pier Giorgio and that we too might find ways to live out the beatitudes in our lives. Bless our team this year that we may be focused on you and use our talents to glorify you in all that we do. Draw us near to you during this practice and as we seek ways to serve those in most need in our community. We pray that you will watch over us this day and always. Amen.

End of Practice: Remind the team of the service project you developed and close with a prayer of your team's choice.

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Winter Sports Preseason Week 2

Theme: Applying Jesus' Teachings - Prayer

Scripture: Matthew 6: 1-6

"Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them; for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. 2 "Thus, when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. 3 But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. Concerning Prayer 5 "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. 6 But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Saintly Example: St. Benedict

St. Benedict is considered the father of modern monasticism, as his *Rule of St. Benedict* laid out the guidelines for living in a community focused on God and the methods of prayer he used are still in practice all over the world today. When St. Benedict created his famous community at Monte Cassino in Italy, he was developing a concept that nobody had ever used before, but impact the history of the Church in a phenomenal way. In particular, his devotion to prayer that focuses on the psalms, hymns, scripture and silent reflection became a source of great blessings for the church. Known popularly as the Liturgy of the Hours, methods of this prayer are used by monastic communities and lay faithful worldwide. In this method of prayer, the community joins together for prayer at key times through the day, including Morning Prayer, Mid-Day Prayer, Evening Prayer and Night Prayer. St. Benedict's holy example and his simple rule serve as powerful guidelines for all of us in today's world.

Discussion:

- What can today's scripture and St. Benedict's example teach us about prayer? In today's busy world, how can we find time to pray each day and focus ourselves on The Lord?

Practice Plan & Prayer: As an introduction to a very simple example of the Liturgy of the Hours prayers, begin practice by praying the prayer on the following page. If possible, make a few copies of this and divide your team into two groups.

*See Following Page for Prayer

End of Practice: Remind children about the importance of prayer and close with the team's choice of prayer.

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Evening Prayer (Example for Practice Week 2)

Leader (L): God come to my assistance

All (A): Lord make haste to help me

L: Glory to the Father, to the Son and to the Holy Spirit

A: As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever.
Amen.

Psalm 10 (11)

All: The Lord cares for the weak and oppressed.

Group 1: In the Lord I have taken my refuge.

How can you say to my soul:

'Fly like a bird to its mountain.

Group 2: See the wicked bracing their bow;
they are fixing their arrows on the string
to shoot upright men in the dark.

Foundations once destroyed, what can the just
do?'

1: The Lord is in his holy temple,
the Lord, whose throne is in heaven.
His eyes look down on the world;
his gaze tests mortal men.

2: The Lord tests the just and the wicked;
the lover of violence he hates.
He sends fire and brimstone on the wicked;
he sends a scorching wind as their lot.

1: The Lord is just and loves justice;
the upright shall see his face.

2: Glory to the Father and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be for ever. Amen.

All: The Lord cares for the weak and oppressed.

Short Reading: Colossians 1:9-11 (Choose Reader)

Through perfect wisdom and spiritual understanding,
may you reach the fullest knowledge of God's will. So
you will be able to lead the kind of life which the Lord
expects of you, a life acceptable to him in all its
aspects; showing the results in all the good actions you
do and increasing your knowledge of God. You will
have in you the strength, based on his own glorious
power, never to give in, but to bear anything joyfully.

Short Responsory

L: Heal my soul, for I have sinned against you.

A: Heal my soul, for I have sinned against you.

L: I have said, 'Lord, take pity on me.'

A: Heal my soul, for I have sinned against you.

L: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the
Holy Spirit.

A: Heal my soul, for I have sinned against you.

Intentions (Optional for Team Use)

All: Our Father, Who art in heaven. Hallowed be
Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be
done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this
day our daily bread, and forgive us our
trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass
against us. And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Leader: Let our worship give you glory, Lord,
who for our salvation
looked upon the lowliness of Mary, your
handmaid: raise us up to share with her
the fullness of redemption.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy
Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

All: Amen.
(Sign of the Cross)

*Adapted from Evening Prayer, *Universalis* (Nov. 11,
2013)

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Winter Sports Preseason Week 3

Theme: Applying Jesus' Teachings - The Will of God

Scripture: Matthew 7: 7-8, 21

"Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."

Saintly Example: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

Elizabeth Ann Seton was born into wealth and married into more wealth in New York City around the end of the 18th century. She had little to trouble her for the first part of her life and found herself happily married with her life seeming to go as planned. Then, in 1801 things began to take a turn from the way she expected them to go. First, her father-in-law passed away, leaving her and her husband to care for his 7 siblings. Then her husband became ill and required a trip to Italy in an attempt to heal him. He died in 1803. Among their 5 children, 3 died over the next 20 years. This was a trying time for Elizabeth and she began to rely more and more on God to get by. In fact, it was during this time that she began to see the beauty of the Catholic Church and she eventually entered into the church in 1805. She frequently made reference to God's will in her life and relied upon faith in His will and a devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary to get through difficult times. God indeed had great plans for Elizabeth and following His will made for another significant set of events in her life that led to her professing vows of poverty, chastity and obedience in 1809 and becoming the foundress of the American version of the Sisters of Charity (originally begun by St. Vincent de Paul). Henceforth known as Mother Seton, the order she helped create founded orphanages and schools across the United States. By her death in 1821 at only 46 years old, her life had crossed many paths and she had gone from wealthy heiress to taking vows of poverty and caring for the very poor and sick as a Catholic nun, all thanks to following God's will. When this remarkable woman was canonized in 1975, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton was the first native born citizen of the United States to receive the title Saint in the Catholic Church.

Discussion:

- The word *discernment* means to "judge well" and with a particular interest in obtaining spiritual guidance through prayer. How does a person go about discerning God's will in his/her life? Have you had the experience of praying to God about something and having Him reveal to you His will?

Practice Plan: One of the keys to discernment is having the tools to make decisions. This includes both prayer and the experience of learning to make decisions big and small. Do your part in this process by both encouraging prayer this week and making it a point to allow the children on the team to make more decisions on the floor. Whereas practice is the time to coach, give them more opportunities to read the floor and call the plays during this week's game, instead of feeling the need to do this as coach. Studies have shown this will help make them better basketball players for you as well as improve their ability to make decisions as they grow and develop.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank you for our own free will and the many blessings you have bestowed upon us. We ask you for the graces to understand your will in our lives and to follow that will regardless of how difficult it may be, for we know it will truly make us the most happy. We ask for the intercession of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, who focused on always following your will and became a great saint. Be with us in the decisions we make this week and bless our team with a safe and fun practice. Amen.

End of Practice: Encourage kids to pray always and seek God's will. Close with the following prayer.

- Glory Be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, a world without end. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Pray for Us!

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Winter Sports Preseason Week 4

Theme: Applying Jesus' Teachings - Parables

Scripture: Matthew 13: 10-13

Then the disciples came and said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" 11 And he answered them, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. 12 For to him who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. 13 This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

Lessons on the Parables:

Parables have been called a distinctly Jewish style of storytelling, so it makes sense that Jesus would have taught so frequently by using parables during His ministry. The basic idea is that by using a parable, the teacher can draw particular attention to a lesson or teaching from God. As He seems to indicate in today's scripture passage, there were many during this time that did not believe in God; these people were not likely to hear someone simply tell them that He exists and believe. Rather, Jesus could grab their attention with a parable about something they would understand from their own life, then use that story to illustrate His point. For example, the story told in the gospel of Matthew directly before his disciples asked him (above) why he speaks in parables is called the Parable of the Sower. In that popular parable, Jesus teaches a large crowd by telling the tale of a man who sowed (planted) seeds. He scattered some along the path, where the birds could eat them. Others fell on rocky ground and died immediately, still others fell into thorny brush and could never grow amidst the thorns. Yet some fell on good soil and those grew and produced great grain. Jesus then continues beginning in Matthew 13:18-23 to explain this parable. In this case, he tells what he means by each place the seed fell: the seeds are really people and the places they fall represent their state in life and willingness to hear the Word of God. *As for what was sown on good soil, this is he who hears the word and understands it; he indeed bears fruit* (Mt. 13:23). In this way, Christ is using our own earthly experiences to reach those who were closed to hearing the message He came to share.

Discussion:

- Do you have a favorite parable story from the bible? How does this help you to draw closer to God?
- Often times stories from sports are used in society as a sort of metaphor or parable. Consider how the role of sports in your life helps draw you closer to God. Does participating in sports help you to understand God better? To follow His will better? Do sports help build virtues (holy characteristics) that will help you get to heaven?

Practice Plan: Emphasize this week the reading of scripture as the "greatest story ever told." Just as an athlete reads from his or her playbook to learn the way, we as Christians must read from scripture to learn the true way. As a coach, lead the children toward the true teacher, God himself, who became man and taught us how to follow Him.

Prayer

- Dear Lord, we thank you for this day and for the gift of our team and this practice. We thank you for the blessing of our coaches who help us to understand this game and grow in our abilities. Help us also to learn and understand the greatest teacher, Jesus Christ, who teaches us through the gospels. Give us the graces to read and understand scripture, to enter into prayer with you and grow in our knowledge of you. We pray that you will bless and protect us this week and we commit to do our absolute best so that we can use the talents you have given us. Amen.

End of Practice: Emphasize scripture and prayer. Then close with a prayer of your team's choosing.

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Winter Sports Preseason Week 5

Theme: Applying Jesus' Teachings - Miracles

Scripture: Luke 5: 4-9

And when he had ceased speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."⁵ And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets."⁶ And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking,⁷ they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.⁸ But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."⁹ For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the catch of fish which they had taken;

Saintly Example: St. Philip (Apostle)

What we know about the apostle Philip comes primarily from the gospels in the New Testament. In John 1:43 we hear of Jesus call to Philip, whom not only follows Jesus right away, but also finds Nathaniel and convinces him to come along telling him that he has found him of whom "the prophets wrote" (Jn 1:45). We also know that Philip remained one of the original apostles through Jesus life and that he was present in the Upper Room when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles. His name comes up from time to time with other events, but perhaps his most famous interactions takes place during one of Christ's great miracles in the feeding of the five thousand. When Jesus asks Philip how they will feed the masses coming to hear Him speak, Philip replies that "Two hundred denarii would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little" (Jn 6:7). This sets the stage of course, for Christ to turn the 5 barley loaves and 2 fish they do have into enough food for all to eat.

Discussion:

- One of the key points of Christ's miracles is that through a deep faith in God, anything is possible. Do you have any examples of times when something seemed impossible but through prayer and faith you were able to accomplish your goal?
- People often speak of "miracles" in sports. Though not the same as Christ's miracles, the theme of faith and belief is still present. Are there times when playing sports where you were part of a team that believed in itself and was able to accomplish more than seemed possible?

Practice Plan: One of the simple but beautiful virtues of the apostles was their steadfast faith in Our Lord. They were among the few who left their worldly possessions behind and followed Jesus from the beginning. Help your team to follow Christ by encouraging them in prayer and faith. This can be as simple as working to instill in them a faith in the athletic abilities God has given them, affirming each child's areas of mental and physical skill. Remind them that God has a plan for each of them and each of them has unique talents and skills whether in school, sports or life that will manifest if they have great faith.

Prayer

- Father, we praise your holy name and thank you for the example of your miracles and the apostles. Through their witness and faith in you, we come to know more deeply your love and mercy. We ask for the prayer of St. Philip that we may gain faith and resolve even when our lives are difficult. Bless our team and our coaches. May we seek to understand the talents you have given each of us and use them to the best of our ability so that we can glorify you and grow as a team. Increase our faith in you and in our abilities. Amen.

End of Practice: Affirm the abilities and talents in each child and encourage them to have faith as the apostles had faith. Close with the following prayer:

- Hail Mary, Full of Grace, The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. St. Philip, Pray for us! Amen.

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Winter Sports Preseason Week 6

Theme: Applying Jesus' Teachings - Service

Scripture: John 13: 12-17

When he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?" ¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. ¹⁴ If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶ Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. ¹⁷ If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

Saintly Example: St. St. Angela Merici

St. Angela de Merici founded a group of religious women that was known as the "Company of St. Ursula" and later became known simply as the Ursulines. The group was not formally considered a religious order during her life, but upon becoming officially recognized it was the first order of women religious dedicated to service through teaching. These nuns were unique in their beginnings in that they did not live in cloister (in a convent) like all other nuns did at the time, but rather remained living within their communities and neighborhoods with the purpose of educating those around them and founding schools that had an emphasis on Christ. The success of St. Angela de Merici's small group of women can be attributed to a large group of schools and religious sisters working all over the world today.

Discussion:

- Christ's teachings on service to others can be lived in many ways. The Ursulines demonstrate that service through teaching while other orders through care of the sick or other ministries. Your coaches serve by donating their time to lead your team and help you grow closer to God and maximize your abilities. What other roles of service can you think of? Is there someone who has made a great impact on your life through service?
- How can we individually serve others in our own lives? How can we serve our family and friends?

Practice Plan: Earlier in the season you created a plan for a team service project. Reference that and explain to the kids that they can perform all kinds of service on their own. Encourage them to discuss with their parents how they can serve their family, their school, or those in need.

Prayer

- Lord, you give us the gift of service so that we might demonstrate our love for our brothers, sisters and neighbors in Christ. May we always be willing to serve our family, our friends, our teammates and others with great joy, remembering that you called us to serve others in the gospel. Help us to overcome our fear or hesitation in service so that we can serve others through acts great and small. Bless our team that we may be models of your love through the way we practice and play, glorifying you and trying our hardest always. We pray for a fun and safe practice. Amen.

End of Practice: Remind the kids of Christ's message of service. Then close with the following prayer:

- Our Father, Who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Saint Angela de Merici, Pray for us! Amen.

5 Minute Game Plan - 7th Grade Year

Winter Sports Regular Season Week 1

Theme: Applying Jesus' Teachings - Mission

Scripture: Luke 9: 21-22

But he charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, ²² saying, "The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised."

Saintly Example: St. Rose Philippine Duchesne

It seems that from baptism this saint was given her mission in the church, as she was named after St. Philip the Apostle and St. Rose of Lima, who was the first saint of the new world. Like her namesakes, St. Rose Philippine Duchesne would go on to spread the Word of God and do so in the new world. After joining the Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in her native France, it is said she continued to feel a call toward missionary work that she had felt her entire life. She was sent to America in 1818 and arrived in St. Louis when much of the midwest was very much frontier country. After establishing her order in St. Louis, she went on to build schools in Missouri, Louisiana, and Kansas. In particular these schools were for young women and native americans. At the same time, she also worked hard to have a deep life of prayer and contemplation on her own. Through this prayer she gained the strength she needed to perform her ministry, even as she grew older. She died in St. Charles, MO at the age of 83.

Discussion:

- Jesus talks in the gospels about His own mission (see scripture above). Consider your personal mission. Do you ever think about where God is calling you? Do you think about what he's calling you to do now? In the future? Have you considered praying for your vocation?
- Create a team mission statement. What is the mission of your team? What goals do you have? What do believe God is calling you to accomplish this season through your team? What do you hope others gain from your mission?

Practice Plan: Pay particular attention to the second discussion exercise and create a mission statement for your team the remainder of the season. Consider that it's not truly a "mission" to try to win games (everyone tries to do that) but rather determine what your mission is beyond this. Is your goal as a team to draw closer to Christ? To lead others to Christ through the way you pray, practice and play? To help make your sport look fun so that other kids will want to join your team? There are many options!

Prayer

- Dear God, you sent your only son to take on the flesh of man so that He might live out His mission and overcome our sins on the cross. As we learn of your deep love, help us to consider our own mission. Develop in our hearts a desire to do your will and accept whatever mission you call us to in our lives. May we consider our vocation and the ways in which we can serve you. Bless our coaches as they help us to grow as a team this year and bless our families as they support us now and always. We ask this through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

End of Practice: Remind the team of the mission statement you created and encourage them to consider their own mission while praying and reflecting on Christ's mission and death on the cross. Close with the following prayer:

- Hail Mary, Full of Grace, The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. St. Rose Philippine Duchesne, Pray for us! Amen.

5 Minute Game Plan - 7th Grade Year

Winter Sports Regular Season Week 2

Theme: Applying Jesus' Teachings - Discrimination

Scripture: Galatians 3:28

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Saintly Example: St. Maximilian Kolbe

Even before he became a priest, St. Maximilian Kolbe displayed a deep devotion to the Blessed Mother when he founded the Immaculata Movement. This movement was designed to seek a deeper understanding and love of Christ through a consecration to His mother Mary. Though this became a worldwide movement leading people toward Christ through Mary, it was ultimately Kolbe's martyrdom that became a symbol of hope in the midst of perhaps the greatest evil of the 21st century. A Polish priest during the reign of Hitler and the Nazi regime, Kolbe was eventually arrested for practicing his faith and led along with thousands of others to the concentration camp at Auschwitz. When a prisoner escaped the camp one day, 10 people were chosen to die as punishment. Among them was a father and husband who pleaded for his life. Moved by his plea, Fr. Kolbe stepped forward and offered to take that man's place. He was led to a chamber where he and the others were to starve to death. Ordinarily this didn't take long, yet each day when the soldiers came to check on the group, the future saint Kolbe was celebrating Mass and joyfully leading them in songs and prayers. Kolbe remained the last one alive after nearly 14 days when they killed him. His amazing witness of love and faith in the face of evil remains one of the great blessings to come from the Holocaust and he was canonized a saint in 1982.

Discussion:

- St. Maximilian Kolbe was the victim of extreme discrimination when he was arrested and sent to the concentration camp along with thousands of others for being Catholic, Jewish or of any group not deemed by Hitler to be among the chosen. What discrimination do you see around you today? At school? In sports? In your community?
- What can you do on your team to eliminate discrimination and treat everyone with love and respect? How can your team set an example that impacts others?

Practice Plan: Discrimination of any kind remains a great problem in the world today, as we are all called to love each and every individual as Christ loves us. Regardless of who they are or whether we (or the church) agree with them on important matters, we must still treat them with love. Share this simple message of love with your team by making it a point to affirm each of them as individuals during practice today. Pick out something they do well or something that makes them unique and make a positive comment about that. If you can do this about a characteristic or personality trait rather than just athletic skill, all the better!

Prayer

- Dear Lord, we thank you for the freedom to freely practice our religion that we enjoy today. Yet we realize that some are still discriminated against and not treated with the love and dignity they deserve as persons. We pray for those people around the world and ask that you help us to love and serve them according to your will. Bless all victims of discrimination and we pray that they may know your love. Strengthen our faith individually and help us to grow as a team today. Bless our families at home and our coaches. Amen.

End of Practice: Remember those positive comments (see above) and close with a prayer of the team's choosing.

5 Minute Game Plan - 7th Grade Year

Winter Sports Regular Season Week 3

Theme: Applying Jesus' Teachings - Eucharist

Scripture: John 6:35

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst."

Saintly Example: St. Thomas Aquinas

When Pope Benedict XVI spent three successive general audiences in 2010 speaking about the legacy of St. Thomas Aquinas, one of the most important things he noted was the saint's particular devotion to the Eucharist. Aquinas noted the Blessed Sacrament as that of "the Passion of our Lord, (which) contains in it Jesus Christ who suffered for us" (Benedict XVI, 6/23/10). Indeed it is Christ Himself present in the Eucharist, a point which Thomas Aquinas reiterated eloquently in many of his works. Living in the 13th century, Thomas Aquinas is considered one of the great theologians in the history of the Catholic Church. His initial entry into a Dominican order was met with great opposition by his family, but he held firm in his vocation and eventually became a priest. He also continued his education and received a doctorate. Though his writing may be most well known, including the very large work *Summa Theologica*, his ability to speak and preach was responsible for earning him many prestigious invitations to dine with everyone from kings to the Pope. He is considered the patron saint of universities, academics and theologians, among other things.

Discussion:

- St. Thomas Aquinas was a brilliant priest, speaker and writer who taught us many beautiful things about the Eucharist. What impact has the Eucharist had on your life?
- Jesus tells us that He is "the bread of life" and that we are to come to him. How can our team find strength and draw closer to God through the Eucharist?

Practice Plan: Consider going to Mass together as a team. As there is no better way to draw close to God as a community, find a time that would work to invite the team and families to a parish Mass. This could be a weekday Mass (perhaps Saturday morning before the week's game), or a Saturday Vigil/ Sunday Mass. Simply extend the invitation and sit together with families as a team. Teams who have done this even once through the year have found great benefit from the graces they receive in the Eucharist as a team.

Prayer

- Heavenly Father, you give us our daily bread, the very flesh of your son Jesus Christ made real in the Eucharist. We thank you for this gift that we can receive and the many graces you pour out upon us through this sacrament. Thank you also for the gift of St. Thomas Aquinas and the many lessons he taught that still help us to know you today. Bless our team that we may continue to learn of you and grow in our athletic skill through the teaching of our coaches. Help us to have a thirst for knowledge of you and receive you in the Eucharist whenever possible. Protect and guide our team as we seek to do our very best in today's practice and always. We ask this through Christ, Our Lord, Amen.

End of Practice: Make a plan to attend Mass as a team, extending the invitation to the boys or girls and reminding them that Christ is truly present in the Eucharist. Close with the following prayer:

- Our Father, Who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Saint Thomas Aquinas, Pray for us! Amen.

5 Minute Game Plan - 7th Grade Year

Winter Sports Regular Season Week 4

Theme: Applying Jesus' Teachings - Respect for Life

Scripture: Psalm 139: 13-16

For you formed my inward parts, you knitted me together in my mother's womb. 14 I praise you, for I am wondrously made. Wonderful are your works! You know me right well; 15 my frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately wrought in the depths of the earth. 16 Your eyes beheld my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

Saintly Example: St. Peter Claver

St. Peter Claver was born and educated in Catalonia (present day Spain) where he became a priest. He was sent on mission to the northern edge of what is now South America and at that time was a hub of the slave trade. European merchants would gather slaves from Africa and ship them across the ocean to the new world, where they would arrive and be readied to be bought and sold by the merchants there. It was a brutal, inhumane environment and the place where St. Peter Claver worked for most of his life. There he would care for the slaves, providing for the sick or injured and catechizing them in the Catholic faith. It's believed that through his work over 300,000 slaves entered into the church (catholic.org)! Through his lifelong fight for those with no voice in society, he met opposition from the merchants, locals and even some within the churches where he gathered the slaves for worship. Yet he persevered and today is known as the patron saint of slaves.

Discussion:

- The Catholic Church stands firm in teaching that each and every individual, from conception until natural death, was created by God and as such has a certain dignity and worth. St. Peter Claver worked for over 30 years to provide for the slaves of his time. In what ways can you help stand up for the innocent and mistreated in today's world? How can you affirm the dignity of all human life through your work at home, school or in the community?
- In what ways can your team be a witness to the dignity of all human life? How can you affirm the dignity of each other, your coaches, and families? How can you work as a team to promote this dignity and respect for life?

Practice Plan: Work to affirm the dignity of each individual on the team through being positive and affirming their qualities and unique contributions to the team as a person. You might also consider looking into parish opportunities for witnessing to the dignity of life and inviting everyone on the team to participate at an event, whether that be through prayer or action.

Prayer

- Lord, we thank you for giving us the gift of life and for the opportunity to participate on this team. We thank you for our parents who love us, our teachers and coaches who teach us, and our friends. We pray together for those who have no voice, especially the unborn children and people today whom society does not treat with dignity and affirm as God's creation. We pray for the conversion of souls and the protection of all those in danger. May we be a witness to the dignity of life each day. Bless this practice and protect us, that we may grow in our athletic skill and come to know you more each day this week. Amen.

End of Practice: Affirm the dignity of all human life and try to leave each child with a positive comment that speaks to their character and contributions to the team as a person. Close with a prayer of the team's choosing.

5 Minute Game Plan - 7th Grade Year

Winter Sports Regular Season Week 5

Theme: Applying Jesus' Teachings - Modesty

Scripture: Matthew 5: 27-30

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

Saintly Example: St. Therese of Lisieux

St. Therese of Lisieux is known by many names, as she was also called "The Little Flower" and "St. Theresa of the Child Jesus." Though she died when she was only 24, she was a remarkable saint who lived in the late 1800's. A difficult childhood led to years of sadness, including outbursts of tears at the slightest issue. Yet as she became a teenager, she experienced a great joy as the result of her habits of prayer. She had what she called her "conversion" on Christmas as a 14 year old girl. She felt God calling her to the religious life and eventually convinced church authorities to let her enter the Carmelite convent at the age of 15, before most women were permitted to enter convents. There she developed what she called "The Little Way", a life of deep prayer and willingness to do the little things each day to provide for her sisters and glorify God. She did much cleaning and hard work in the convent, realizing that all these things were the way God had called her to serve Him. She prayed through all these "little" things and developed a close relationship with God so that she could find joy even in sacrifice. Even when she became gravely ill, she wrote down many of her thoughts and prayers, with her autobiography *The Story of a Soul* still available today as a look into her saintly life and a lesson for all of us.

Discussion:

- According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "modesty protects the intimate center of the person. It means refusing to unveil what should remain hidden" (CCC 2521). For both boys and girls alike, it should affect everything from actions to appropriate dress. Frankly, this becomes increasingly difficult in a world that champions a lack of modesty in young men and women. How can you and others work to be modest in today's world? At school? At home? Is this difficult to do?
- Sports may not be considered a threat to modesty, but many actions or styles of clothing/uniforms are just that. How can your team practice and promote modesty for athletes in today's world? Do you think this is difficult?

Practice Plan: Encourage modesty within your team by making sure that uniforms and practice clothes are appropriate and modest (this includes both boys and girls). Encourage modest actions amongst the kids in the way they speak and present themselves around the team. ****Important note:** while it seems society wants to attribute modesty as a female characteristic, it's certainly as important for young boys to learn. Young men should be taught to keep their clothes on (including shirts) in all situations around the parish and school, particularly where women or girls might be present. It may seem harmless, but this is part of teaching our young men about the dignity of the person and a healthy respect for the body.

Prayer

- Heavenly Father, we thank you for the example of St. Therese of Lisieux and her model of doing all the little things each day to glorify You. We pray in a special way for our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, that they may all feel the love and respect they deserve, knowing that they are your creation. May our actions and words serve to affirm their dignity at all times. We thank you for our team and pray that we may work hard to use the gifts you have given us, so that we may reach the very best of our ability in life and in sports. Bless us with a safe and fun practice. Amen.

End of Practice: Continue to encourage modesty and close with a prayer of the team's choosing.

5 Minute Game Plan - 7th Grade Year

Winter Sports Regular Season Week 6

Theme: The Holy Spirit - Unifying the Church

Scripture: Acts 2: 1-4

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Saintly Example: St. Catherine of Siena

Catherine was born in 1347 in Italy and lived only 33 short years. Yet during that time she became one of the great doctors of the church and was a brilliant theological mind. An uneducated daughter who was the 25th (!) child of her parents, it's said Catherine had her first vision of Christ as a 6 year old. From that time forward she committed herself totally to Christ and eventually entered the Third Order of St. Dominic. In her ministry she served people affected by the plague, those in prison, and many other sick and suffering. Her visions of Christ and the Blessed Mother continued and she also became known as a worker of miracles; she was even called upon by Popes to help end feuds and heal church schisms. Her writings during her short life are still considered among the most important and beautiful among the many saints. She died in 1380, though her body was found over 50 years after death to be in-corrputed, which means it was still in the pure condition of her death and had not deteriorated as is normal.

Discussion:

- One of St. Catherine's great gifts on earth was the ability to heal divisions and move souls to repentance and conversion. For her and for us, it is the Holy Spirit that is constantly with us to help guide our church and create unity. How can we promote unity and seek to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our lives? Are there divisions in our schools or communities where we can help be a part of creating unity? (These could be general or specific.)
- How do we promote unity on our team? In what ways do we seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit within our team?

Practice Plan: Promote unity within the team by working to heal any divisions that might be affecting the team. Often these are small things between boys or girls that may need to be addressed in order to fix issues. Promote forgiveness among teammates and encourage the kids to work together and treat each other with dignity and respect both on and off the court.

Prayer

- Lord, we thank you for the example of St. Catherine of Siena and of all the saints who followed the guidance of your Holy Spirit through the ages. We pray that we too may be guided by the Spirit and come to know you more each day. Heal our wounds and divisions on earth so that we might love our brothers and sisters as you call us to. May our team find unity and work together to glorify you in all that we do. Protect us and guide us. May the Holy Spirit come upon us and lead us in this practice and the week ahead. Amen.

End of Practice: Remind the children to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in prayer. Work to build unity as a team and close practice with the following prayer:

- Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Thy faithful and enkindle in them the fire of Thy love. Send forth Thy Spirit and they shall be created and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth. O God, Who didst instruct the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant us in the same Spirit to be truly wise, and ever to rejoice in His consolation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen. St. Catherine of Siena, Pray for us

5 Minute Game Plan - 7th Grade Year

Winter Sports Regular Season Week 7

Theme: The Holy Spirit - Vocational Discernment

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12: 4-11

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5 and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one. 7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 8 To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10 ¶ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

Saintly Example: St. John Neumann

Amazingly, when the young John Neumann was ready to be ordained a priest in the early 1800's, there was declared a stop to ordinations on account of too many priests across Europe. Feeling certain he was called to the vocation of the priesthood, he wrote to bishops in America and was eventually welcomed and ordained in New York. What a blessing he became for our country. After eventually becoming bishop of Philadelphia, he created the first diocesan Catholic school system in America (catholic.org). He further promoted growth in Catholic schools and saw a great increase in the number of schools in his diocese, which helped lead to an increase in schools across the region. His model for schools in Philadelphia was copied elsewhere and helped our Catholic schools become what they are today. By his death in 1860, it was beyond clear he was called to his role as a priest that was once withheld from him, and today he is considered the father of Catholic education in America as we know it.

Discussion:

- Everyone is called to discern their vocation by listening to God's call for him or her. You could be called to marriage, the priesthood or religious life, or even a single vocation. How can you go about discerning your vocation? Do you know what resources you have available? Are you discerning your vocation? (Though simply being open to God's call and praying for your vocation is a great place to start, the Archdiocesan Vocations Office is a great place for resources and can be accessed online).
- How can you support the discernment of vocations as a team? How can you support all vocations?

Practice Plan: Sports provide a great blessing in discernment and there are some great stories of athletes who chose to end their careers to follow the path to the priesthood. Consider looking up the stories of former baseball prospect Grant Desme or soccer pro Chase Hilgenbrinck and sharing those with your team as inspiration that even the best athletes need to discern their vocation to be sure where God is calling them.

Prayer

- Dear God, we thank you for the example of the saints and the gifts of the religious and priests who model your love in our parishes, schools and communities each day. We thank you also for our parents and for all those who model the vocation of marriage and family life. May you simply send the Holy Spirit to guide us as we grow older and discern our vocation, giving us the graces to hear your call so that we may be truly happy. Bless our team today and the remainder of this year that we may work together to help each other use our skills and talents to the best of our abilities. Bless our coaches as they teach us and grant us a safe and fun practice. Amen.

End of Practice: Encourage your team members to pray for their own vocation and each other's. Then close practice by praying for all our priests, religious and the grace to know our own vocation call.

5 Minute Game Plan - 7th Grade Year

Winter Sports Regular Season Week 8

Theme: Mary as Mother - The Memorare

Scripture: Luke 1: 41-44

And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the child leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴² and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³ And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the child in my womb leaped for joy.

Learning the Memorare: As Catholics we understand that Mary is indeed our Mother who intercedes for us from heaven. We are called to honor her and go to her so that we may learn more about her son. There are many beautiful Marian prayers that have become popular over the centuries, but the Memorare in particular has stuck as a plea for her intercession and protection. Practice the following prayer, which the children are required to know in school as well.

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thine intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

Discussion:

- How has Mary been a source of protection in your life? How has her intercession helped you? If you have not invoked Mary's intercession in your daily life, how do you think the Mother of our Lord can help us to grow closer to Him?
- Mary certainly plays a role in sports, with even famous plays named after her. If someone throws up a last second pass in football or shot in basketball from a long distance, it's usually called a "Hail Mary." A famous football play that took place just before Christmas decades ago was nicknamed the "Immaculate Reception" by a Pittsburgh sportscaster as a nod to the Immaculate Conception (Mary's conception). Many teams pray for her intercession during games. How can Mary be an integral part of our team? In what ways can we invoke her protection and care in our lives and on our team?

Practice Plan: Think of a unique way to ask for Mary's intercession and protection during the remainder of the season. This could be as simple as a prayer before each practice and game (consider the Memorare) or another devotion. Use this to encourage the children to draw close to Mary and go through her to her son, our Lord.

Prayer: Recite again the Memorare prior to beginning practice:

- *Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thine intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.*

End of Practice: Affirm and encourage a devotion to Mary as a way to grow closer to her son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Close with the following prayer, asking for her intercession and protection this week:

- Hail Mary, Full of Grace, The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

5 Minute Game Plan - 7th Grade Year

Winter Sports Regular Season Week 9

Theme: Hail Holy Queen - Mary as Queen of Heaven

Scripture: Revelation 12: 1-6

And a great sign appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; 2 she was with child and she cried out in her pangs of birth, in anguish for delivery. 3 And another sign appeared in heaven; behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems upon his heads. 4 His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, that he might devour her child when she brought it forth; 5 she brought forth a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, 6 and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which to be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

Saintly Example: Mary, Queen of Heaven

When a young virgin named Mary received a visit from the angel Gabriel, a mission was revealed to her that would define salvation history. While her "yes" remains a model for following the will of God, her journey began much earlier. From the beginning of her life which we celebrate as the Immaculate Conception, Mary was without sin. She was a part of God's plan as the most pure vessel from which could be born our God as man in Jesus. Thus, her entire creation and life is worthy of honor and devotion, for she is the perfect model of a human. It follows then that given her special mission Mary would have a special place in heaven reserved for her. Indeed, in her Assumption into heaven she takes her place by the Son's side, there to pray for us and love us as our own mother. Through the years she has not been distant either, appearing in many places to offer guidance and draw converts. These visions of Mary are often called "apparitions" and you've heard of them when we refer to Mary by names such as Our Lady of Lourdes or Our Lady of Guadalupe. We must remember that she is always there for us, as the Queen of Heaven, praising our Lord and welcoming us to come to her so that she might show us the way to Him. May we make Mary a special part of our lives as well.

Discussion:

- In what ways is Mary like our own mother? In what ways can we call upon her to protect us and guide us in our daily lives?
- Think of the role our mothers play in our activities and school. How do they help provide for us and help us to succeed in life? What role do you think Mary can play in our activities, such as sports? How can her presence help give us confidence and encourage us to strive for our best?

Practice Plan: Continue encouraging a devotion to Mary among the team, for her powerful intercession can lead them to Christ. Whether through Marian prayers or examples, invoke the name of our Blessed Mother whenever practical in practice or games.

Prayer

- Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of your Blessed Mother as our protector and guide. May we call upon her to lead us always to you, for she is our model of faithfulness and perfect love for Christ. Let us invoke her protection for our team and ask for her intercession in our lives, that through this athletic experience we may come to know The Lord more fully and prepare ourselves for a life in His service, no matter our vocation. We ask for Mary's prayers for our families, our coaches and our teammates. May you look with favor upon our team and help us to use our abilities to always glorify you. Amen.

End of Practice: Encourage a devotion to the Blessed Mother, Queen of Heaven and close with a Marian prayer of your team's choice. Mary, Queen of Heaven, Pray for us!

5 Minute Game Plan - 7th Grade Year

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The following are sources used for the materials in this publication. With the exception of scripture or where noted otherwise, no materials were quoted nor was content used directly from these materials. Sources were used for themes, ideas or general content regarding lives of the saints. All content herein remains the property of the CYO of Johnson and Wyandotte Counties through creator Peter Piscitello.

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