



The 5 Minute Game Plan

A Catechesis Supplement for Youth Sports

7th Grade 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

5 Minute Game Plan - 7th Grade Year

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 fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "J".

Peter J Piscitello

5 Minute Game Plan - 7th Grade Year

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

Read aloud by coach or child

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

"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.

5 Minute Game Plan - 7th Grade Year

Year Outline

Fall Seasons

- Preseason Week 1 - **Theme:** Acts of the Apostles - Pentecost **Scripture:** Acts 1:1-13 **Saint:** St. Andrew
- Preseason Week 2 - **Theme:** Acts of the Apostles - Election of Matthias **Scripture:** Acts 1:15-16, 21-26 **Saint:** St. Matthias
- Regular Season Week 1 - **Theme:** Acts of the Apostles - Cure of the Lame man **Scripture:** Acts 3:1-10 **Saint:** St. John
- Regular Season Week 2 - **Theme:** Acts of the Apostles - Ananias and Sapphira **Scripture:** Acts 5:1-11 **Saint:** Sts. Bartholomew and Simon
- Regular Season Week 3 - **Theme:** Acts of the Apostles - Peter and Cornelius **Scripture:** Acts 10:1-33 **Saint:** None
- Regular Season Week 4 - **Theme:** Acts of the Apostles - Stoning of Stephen **Scripture:** Acts 7:55-8:3 **Saint:** St. Stephen
- Regular Season Week 5 - **Theme:** Acts of the Apostles - Paul and Silas **Scripture:** Acts 16:25-36 **Saint:** St. Matthew
- Regular Season Week 6 - **Theme:** Acts of the Apostles - Conversion of Paul **Scripture:** Acts 9:1-22 **Saint:** St. Paul
- Regular Season Week 7 - **Theme:** Sacraments of Service - Holy Orders **Scripture:** Ephesians 4:11-12 **Saint:** St. Scholastica
- Regular Season Week 8 - **Theme:** Sacraments of Service - Marriage **Scripture:** Colossians 3:18-21 **Saint:** St. Joseph

Winter Seasons

- 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
- Regular Season Week 1 - **Theme:** Applying Jesus' Teachings - Parables **Scripture:** Matthew 13:10-13 **Saint:** None
- Regular Season Week 2 - **Theme:** Applying Jesus' Teachings - Miracles **Scripture:** Luke 5:4-9 **Saint:** St. Philip (Apostle)
- Regular Season Week 3 - **Theme:** Applying Jesus' Teachings - Service **Scripture:** John 13:12-17 **Saint:** St. Angela Merici
- Regular Season Week 4 - **Theme:** Applying Jesus' Teachings - Mission **Scripture:** Luke 9:21-22 **Saint:** St. Philippine Duchesne
- Regular Season Week 5 - **Theme:** Applying Jesus' Teachings - Discrimination **Scripture:** Galatians 3:28 **Saint:** St. Maximillian Kolbe
- Regular Season Week 6 - **Theme:** Applying Jesus' Teachings - Eucharist **Scripture:** John 6:35 **Saint:** St. Thomas Aquinas
- Regular Season Week 7 - **Theme:** Applying Jesus' Teachings - Respect for Life **Scripture:** Psalm 139:13-16 **Saint:** St. Peter Claver
- Regular Season Week 8 - **Theme:** Applying Jesus' Teachings - Modesty **Scripture:** Matthew 5:27-30 **Saint:** St. Therese of Lisieux
- Regular Season Week 9 - **Theme:** The Holy Spirit - Unifying the Church **Scripture:** Acts 2:1-4 **Saint:** St. Catherine of Siena
- Regular Season Week 10 - **Theme:** The Holy Spirit - Vocational Discernment **Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 **Saint:** St. John Neumann

5 Minute Game Plan - 7th Grade Year

- Regular Season Week 11 - **Theme:** Mary as Mother - The Memorare **Scripture:** Luke 1:41-44 **Saint:** None
- Regular Season Week 12 - **Theme:** Hail Holy Queen - Mary as Queen of Heaven **Scripture:** Revelation 12:1-6 **Saint:** Mary, Queen of Heaven

Spring Seasons

- Preseason Week 1 - **Theme:** Stations of the Cross **Scripture:** Luke 23:20-25 **Saint:** St. Longinus
- Preseason Week 2 - **Theme:** Liturgy **Scripture:** Acts 2:42 **Saint:** St. John Chrysostom
- Regular Season Week 1 - **Theme:** Perpetual Adoration **Scripture:** 1 Chronicles 29:10-13 **Saint:** St. Faustina
- Regular Season Week 2 - **Theme:** Sacramentals **Scripture:** 1 Timothy 4:4-5 **Saint:** St. George
- Regular Season Week 3 - **Theme:** Novenas **Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 14:15 **Saint:** St. Anthony of Padua
- Regular Season Week 4 - **Theme:** Popular Piety **Scripture:** CCC 1674-1676 **Saint:** St. Francis of Assisi

5 Minute Game Plan - 7th Grade Year

Fall Sports Preseason Week 1

Theme: Pentecost

Scripture: Acts 1:1-13

To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God. And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me, for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit." So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." And when he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Saintly Example: St. Andrew

St. Andrew is considered the first disciple of Jesus, and he was the brother of Simon Peter (St. Peter). Both were fishermen when they began to follow The Lord, at which time Jesus invited them to become "fishers of men" and they became true disciples, following Jesus in all his ministry. While not much is known about St. Andrew's life beyond what is written in the gospels, it is believed Andrew went to Greece to preach the Gospel after Christ's death, and that he was eventually put to death on a cross like Christ.

Discussion:

St. Andrew left everything to become a disciple of Jesus, his work, home and family. This is never easy, but Christ is calling us to leave things behind to follow Him as well. Are there things that are getting in the way of your prayer and following Christ? What things each day prevent you from truly following Christ? (Ex. friends who are bad influences, too much tv or video games, sports?)

Practice Plan: Focus on how this team can become better disciples of Christ, following Him in everything that the team does. Remind the team of this during practice, that they are practicing, studying or working hard for Christ. Remind the team that this requires competing and acting in a Christ-like way at all times.

Prayer:

Lord, you called St. Andrew to be among your first disciples and one of the 12 apostles. Through his intercession may we come to know what we need to do to follow you. Just as St. Andrew was willing to give up his possessions and home to follow you, may we too be willing to give up whatever you call us to follow you. Bless our team in this season, that we may grow in our relationship with you through prayer and virtuous actions. May we have a safe and fun season, seeking you in all things. Amen.

End of Practice: Remind kids about the example of St. Andrew. Though we are not called to give up our team or school to follow Jesus, encourage kids to understand the things that might be getting in the way of their relationship with Jesus. 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 Andrew, Pray for Us! Amen.

5 Minute Game Plan - 7th Grade Year

Fall Sports Preseason Week 2

Theme: Election of Matthias

Scripture: Acts 1:15-16, 21-26

In those days Peter stood up among the brethren (the company of persons was in all about a hundred and twenty), and said, "Brethren, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David, concerning Judas who was guide to those who arrested Jesus. For he was numbered among us, and was allotted his share in this ministry."

So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection." And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed and said, "Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show which one of these two thou hast chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside, to go to his own place." And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was enrolled with the eleven apostles.

Saintly Example: St. Matthias

Through prayer, St. Matthias was chosen by the apostles to replace Judas Iscariot after he had betrayed Jesus and handed Him over to be crucified. It was important that the apostles have 12 "members" among them, as the number 12 was a very important number in the Jewish tradition, signifying the 12 tribes of Israel. In this way the apostles were a sort of new version of the 12 tribes, sent to go out and preach the Gospel of Christ in the new Christian tradition. St. Matthias was chosen in part to fill this role because he had actually been following Christ for much of His ministry on earth. They trusted Matthias and knew his love of Jesus was strong. Though it was the disciples who chose him and not Jesus, who selected the other 11 while on earth, they did so through prayer and knowing that it was the will of God.

Discussion:

One of the interesting things about St. Matthias is that he came from outside the original apostles, yet he was accepted as a brother in Christ and chosen to be a part of this important group of men. How do we treat people who are new to our group or team? Do we treat them like brothers/sisters in Christ? Do we understand that it is God's will that brought them into our life?

Practice Plan: If there are any new members on the team, make sure they are being included by the group in all things. If you notice anyone on the team who appears to be an outsider in any way, work to make sure the boys/girls include him/her so that all feel they are equal members of the team.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, you blessed St. Matthias with the role of joining the 12 in ministry after the death of your Son. Help us to follow his example of following you and taking your word to all we meet. Help us also to welcome all new members of our team, classes or groups so that they may know they are our brothers and sisters in Christ. Keep us safe and help us to have fun at this practice. Amen.

End of Practice: Remind the children to follow the example of St. Matthias in following Jesus and to treat all newcomers with love and respect. Pray the following:

- 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. Matthias, Pray for Us!

5 Minute Game Plan - 7th Grade Year

Fall Sports Regular Season Week 1

Theme: Cure of the Lame Man

Scripture: Acts 3:1-10

Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at that gate of the temple which is called Beautiful to ask alms of those who entered the temple. Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked for alms. And Peter directed his gaze at him, with John, and said, "Look at us." And he fixed his attention upon them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but I give you what I have; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. And leaping up he stood and walked and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God, and recognized him as the one who sat for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Saintly Example: St. John

St. Peter and St. John perform a miracle in the cure of the lame man we read in today's gospel. In this miracle, performed not by Christ in the flesh but by His disciples, we see that through Christ anything is possible. St. John certainly understood this, having followed Jesus and loved him, even caring for His mother Mary after His death. St. John is perhaps most notable for the Gospel which bears his name and tells in rich detail of Christ's life, ministry and death. One of the key themes of this gospel is "love". As we see in the scripture today, the compassion and love that Peter and John have for the lame man at the gate of the temple allows Christ to work through them and they cure the man. Miracles are often used throughout the gospels and lives of the apostles to signify the immense love of Christ or a greater conversion to His love. Through St. John, we are able to see this love in action and gaze in "wonder and amazement" just as the people who saw this miracle did at the temple.

Discussion:

How does the example of St. John teach us how we are to live? Do you show compassion and care for the sick as Sts. Peter and John did at the temple? Are you willing to share the message of Christ with your friends, family and teammates? How can you demonstrate this kind of love on this team?

Practice Plan: Encourage the kids to follow the example of the Saints and to know that through Christ, anything is possible. Relate this to sports by letting them know that if they trust Him, treat teammates with love and compassion, and work hard to be the best person they possibly can, anything is possible.

Prayer:

Jesus, just as your apostles worked miracles in your name, may you also enter our hearts and do your heavenly will through us. Help us to have love and compassion for others as you taught, so that we may follow the example of the apostles who spread your message, helped those in need, and understood that through you, anything is possible. Bless us as we strive to become the best version of ourselves during this practice, both as person and athlete. Grant us safety and bless our fun. Amen.

End of Practice: Remind that kids that through Christ anything is possible and that we are all called to love as He taught us. 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 John, Pray for Us! Amen.

5 Minute Game Plan - 7th Grade Year

Fall Sports Regular Season Week 2

Theme: Ananias and Sapphira

Scripture: Acts 5:1-11

But a man named Ananias with his wife Sapphira sold a piece of property, and with his wife's knowledge he kept back some of the proceeds, and brought only a part and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? How is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and died. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him. After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much." And she said, "Yes, for so much." But Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Hark, the feet of those that have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." Immediately she fell down at his feet and died. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all who heard of these things.

Saintly Example: St. Bartholomew

St. Bartholomew was one of the 12 apostles and is widely believed to be the same person as the Nathaniel mentioned in the Gospel of John. In that story, Nathaniel is under the fig tree when Philip calls him to come with the apostles and follow Jesus. Though he is initially skeptical, famously asking "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" he quickly realizes that Christ is the Son of God and devotes himself to our Lord for the rest of his life. We know that St. Bartholomew stayed with the apostles until after Christ's death and it is believed that he then went as far as India to spread the gospel. He died a Martyr proclaiming the Word of God.

Discussion: In today's scripture we see that the path of lies and sin leads to death, but we also see in the example of Nathaniel a person who ultimately chose to follow the Truth (Christ) and became a saint. In what ways can each of us be more honest in each day? How do lies and deceit hurt a team and how can being honest help us to be a great team?

Practice Plan: Focus on honesty and truthful communication amongst teammates, reminding them that not only does Christ call us to always seek Truth, but that the best teams are built on relationships that requires teammates be honest and trustworthy.

Prayer: Father, you reveal to us your desire for truth throughout scripture and help us to understand that in sin there is only death, but in seeking truth we can have eternal life. Help our team to practice the discipline of honesty and to seek truth, so that we may follow you and build relationships that lead us closer to you. May we follow the example of St. Bartholomew, who got up and followed you when he was called. Bless our practice with fun and safety. Amen.

End of Practice: Remind kids to seek the truth through Christ and His message of love. Encourage this as being important to both their relationship with God but also on the team. Close in 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 Bartholomew, Pray for Us! Amen.

5 Minute Game Plan - 7th Grade Year

Fall Sports Regular Season Week 3

Theme: Peter and Cornelius

Scripture: Acts 10:1-33

At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms liberally to the people, and prayed constantly to God. About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius." And he stared at him in terror, and said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and bring one Simon who is called Peter; he is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the seaside." When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those that waited on him, and having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa. The next day, as they were on their journey and coming near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. And he became hungry and desired something to eat; but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance and saw the heaven opened, and something descending, like a great sheet, let down by four corners upon the earth. In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. And there came a voice to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." But Peter said, "No, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." And the voice came to him again a second time, "What God has cleansed, you must not call common." This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven. Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision which he had seen might mean, behold, the men that were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood before the gate and called out to ask whether Simon who was called Peter was lodging there. And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. Rise and go down, and accompany them without hesitation; for I have sent them." And Peter went down to the men and said, "I am the one you are looking for; what is the reason for your coming?" And they said, "Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house, and to hear what you have to say." So he called them in to be his guests. The next day he rose and went off with them, and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him. And on the following day they entered Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his kinsmen and close friends. When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I too am a man." And as he talked with him, he went in and found many persons gathered; and he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit any one of another nation; but God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without objection. I ask then why you sent for me." And Cornelius said, "Four days ago, about this hour, I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house; and behold, a man stood before me in bright apparel, saying, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon who is called Peter; he is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the seaside.' So I sent to you at once, and you have been kind enough to come. Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord."

About the Scripture: In today's scripture, Cornelius is a Gentile and thus was considered "unclean" by traditional Jewish teaching. Yet Peter does as commanded and teaches Cornelius and those with him about Christ. Cornelius begins to follow Christ and an important lesson is set: that the word of God is for all people, not just some. This shows a call to evangelize to "all nations" and to all people.

Discussion/Practice Plan: Have the team consider in their hearts whether they fulfill today's teaching by spreading God's word and love to all people, or if they can live out this message better in their lives.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help us today to be more like Peter, willing to follow your call and to take your message to all, treating everyone we meet with love and respect. May our team be an example of Christ's love in all that we do, so that by our actions both big and small we can lead others to heaven. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

End of Practice: Remind the team to consider today's scripture and what it means to them in their interactions with others. 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. Peter, Pray for Us!

5 Minute Game Plan - 7th Grade Year

Fall Sports Regular Season Week 4

Theme: Stoning of Stephen

Scripture: Acts 7:55 - 8:3

But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God." But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together upon him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him; and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And he knelt down and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

And Saul was consenting to his death. And on that day a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the region of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Devout men buried Stephen, and made great lamentation over him. But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

Saintly Example: St. Stephen

St. Stephen is considered the first Christian martyr as he was a disciple sent by the apostles to minister to the poor. Through his preaching the Word of God he converted many souls, leading those who were against these teachings to falsely accuse him and take him outside the city to stone him. His story is captured in the Acts of the Apostles, which we read today. Amazingly, St. Stephen accepts his call to martyrdom and even prays for those who killed him as they threw stones. He remains an incredible example of faith and love, with his example being followed by so many saints who like him were persecuted and killed for their faith. Also interesting is the connection in scripture between St. Stephen and Saul, who though he consented to the killing of Stephen would ultimately have his own conversion.

Discussion: St. Stephen prayed for those who threw stones at him while he was facing his martyrdom. What does this teach us about forgiveness? If St. Stephen forgives even his murderers, who should we forgive? Also, consider in your hearts whether you are willing to be faithful to God, even unto death.

Practice Plan: Focus on the message of St. Stephen's great faith in the face of adversity and also the message of forgiveness. Apply this to practice or your team in whatever way possible.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, St. Stephen demonstrated in his martyrdom an incredible example of faith and love for your people, even those who condemned his teaching and threw stones at him. May we follow his example and grow in faith and courage through his intercession. Help us to remember your call to forgiveness and love at all times. Bless our team in this week and lead us ever closer to you. Amen.

End of Practice: Remind kids about the example of St. Stephen and our own call to show great faith, love and courage in following God. Then introduce the following prayer as the Memorare, in which we ask for the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary in our lives (they will have learned it or will be learning it in school or religious education - ask anyone who knows it to lead or allow them to recite from this page):

- 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. St. Stephen, Pray for Us! Amen.

5 Minute Game Plan - 7th Grade Year

Fall Sports Regular Season Week 5

Theme: Paul and Silas

Scripture: Acts 16:25-36

But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and every one's fetters were unfastened. When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out and said, "Men, what must I do to be saved?" And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their wounds, and he was baptized at once, with all his family. Then he brought them up into his house, and set food before them; and he rejoiced with all his household that he had believed in God. But when it was day, the magistrates sent the police, saying, "Let those men go." And the jailer reported the words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you go; now therefore come out and go in peace."

Saintly Example: St. Matthew

St. Matthew was an apostle and the author of the Gospel of Matthew, so he held an important position in the early church. Though we don't know much about his later life, we know that he heard and followed Christ's call while he was a tax collector. Like St. Paul in the scripture above, after St. Matthew left his previous life behind and followed Christ, he set about converting souls and preaching Christ to all peoples. Though we lack many specific details on Matthew, many stories of the souls won by the apostles for Christ are similar to the one in the scripture above. Through their example and compassion for even a prison guard - the apostles were wrongly imprisoned many times - they baptized and made a believer out of a man and his whole family.

Discussion: How can you work to bring souls to Christ in your daily life? While the apostles worked great miracles and converted souls in dramatic ways, what are the small ways each day you can live out your mission to draw people to God?

Practice Plan: Affirm that everyone is called to draw people to God through their example and actions. Tell the kids that this includes how they conduct themselves on this team and the example they set in practices and games, as well as small things they can do each day to help others and lead them to God.

Prayer: Lord, you give us the example of your apostles so that we can follow their lead in winning souls for you. We pray that you may help us to be an example of your love through our daily actions. Help us to understand your will for us and give us the courage to follow you as your apostles did. Bless our practice today and help us to grow as individuals and a team. Amen.

End of Practice: Remind kids that everyone is called to be an example of God's love and to work to draw others to God as well. Close with the following prayer:

- 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. St. Matthew, Pray for Us! Amen.

5 Minute Game Plan - 7th Grade Year

Fall Sports Regular Season Week 6

Theme: Conversion of Paul

Scripture: Acts 9:1-22

But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he journeyed he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed about him. And he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting; but rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. Saul arose from the ground; and when his eyes were opened, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank. Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." And the Lord said to him, "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for a man of Tarsus named Saul; for behold, he is praying, and he has seen a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to thy saints at Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon thy name." But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came, has sent me that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized, and took food and was strengthened. For several days he was with the disciples at Damascus. And in the synagogues immediately he proclaimed Jesus, saying, "He is the Son of God." And all who heard him were amazed, and said, "Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called on this name? And he has come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests." But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.

Saintly Example: St. Paul

St. Paul is one of the most dramatic examples of conversion in scripture. He was originally known as Saul, but later became known as Paul after his conversion. In the story of St. Stephen, we learn that Saul was a participant in his stoning and death. He is also mentioned numerous other times as persecuting early Christians. Yet in His mercy, The Lord appears to Saul leads him to a conversion of heart. As the scripture says, so bad was Saul that nobody could believe the new man he became. Given a new name symbolic of his conversion, Paul goes on to become a truly great disciple of The Lord, traveling to far away lands and converting great numbers of people while also writing many letters that remain in scripture and impact people today. Paul sacrificed a great deal and was ultimately persecuted himself through the rest of his life, but his example remains one of the most powerful examples in the bible today.

Discussion/Practice Plan: Ask the children to consider in their hearts what they must change in order to follow God as St. Paul did; no matter how dramatic the conversion, everyone can know God's love.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, you reveal to us in scripture the conversion of St. Paul as an example of your mercy and great love. We pray for all those who persecute the church today, that they too may have a great conversion and know The Lord. We ask for the intercession of St. Paul so that we may overcome sin and follow The Lord more perfectly. Keep us safe and grant us fun today in practice. Amen.

End of Practice: Remind kids of the example of St. Paul and pray 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. Paul, Pray for Us!

5 Minute Game Plan - 7th Grade Year

Fall Sports Regular Season Week 7

Theme: Sacraments of Service - Holy Orders

Scripture: Ephesians 4:11-12

And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.

Saintly Example: St. Scholastica

St. Scholastica was the twin sister of St. Benedict, who founded the famous monastery at Monte Cassino and wrote the Rule of Saint Benedict, which maintains widespread devotion today even outside the order of Benedictine monks. While Scholastica is perhaps less famous than her twin brother, she too was an amazingly pious and intelligent woman who helped shape modern religious life and founded her own monastery not far from Benedict's. The tale of her last few days on earth is likely the most well known story about her. Each year Benedict and Scholastica would travel from their monastery and convent to meet at a place in the middle for a day together that largely consisted of religious dialogue. On one of these days, Scholastica begged Benedict to stay so that they could continue their conversation into the night and the following day. When he refused, she simply bowed her head in prayer. Suddenly, a terrible storm blew in that would prevent Benedict and his companions from returning home. She is said to have told him "I asked you and you would not listen; so I asked my God and he did listen." Benedict departed the following morning and just three days later Scholastica died. When she died, Benedict saw from his monastery a vision of her soul ascending to heaven in the form of a dove. Both Benedict and Scholastica represent a beautiful example of the religious life through their devotion to Christ and following His mission for them on earth. St. Scholastica is the patron saint of nuns.

Discussion/Practice Plan: The Sacrament of Holy Orders is ultimately a sacrament of service to God and His Church. To a priest, this dedication is the response to a unique call from God. Each boy or girl should consider their own vocational discernment and to begin to determine to what service God is calling them. Remind them that whatever service God calls them to is what will ultimately make them the most happy. In the case of priests, it's important that we all understand their vow of service to God and His Church.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help each of us to understand the great gift your priesthood is to all those who are members of your holy church. May you help all youth to discern their vocation in the coming years, so that no matter what vocation they are called to, they may understand how to best serve you and know the true happiness you call all your children to. Bless this team and all its members and grant them the graces needed to serve you as you call them to. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

End of Practice: Remind team about the great respect we must all have for all those who have taken on a deep service to the church through the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Encourage them to get to know their priests, to thank them for their service to the church, and to remember the importance of discerning their own vocation. Close with the following prayer:

- 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. St. Scholastica, Pray for Us! Amen.

5 Minute Game Plan - 7th Grade Year

Fall Sports Regular Season Week 8

Theme: Sacraments of Service - Marriage

Scripture: Colossians 3:18-21

Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

Saintly Example: St. Joseph

For an example of faithful service to God's will and the Sacrament of Marriage, we need look no further than St. Joseph. Though not much is known about him beyond what we learn in scripture, those small scenes alone depict a man who was deeply devoted to God and dedicated to serving his wife Mary and their son Jesus. Though Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and begotten from God alone, He trusted Joseph to care for the young Jesus and His Mother, protecting them from harm and even teaching Jesus the trade of a craftsman. In this way, St. Joseph is the perfect model for the Sacrament of Marriage as one of service. Despite what the world would have him do, despite his own inclinations when he learns of Mary's pregnancy, St. Joseph always listens to God's message and His call to serve the Holy Family. What greater example of a husband and father is there than one who is so faithful to this service that he is called to care for God made Man.

Discussion/Practice Plan: Continue to encourage the team to consider the sacraments of Holy Orders and now Marriage as Sacraments of Service and impress upon the team the importance of discerning one's vocation from a young age. Ask them to consider the role of St. Joseph and how he exemplifies the role of service to his wife and child. For boys, how does this impact your view of marriage and what it means to be a husband and father? For girls, what can we learn from St. Joseph about the role of a wife and mother? Ultimately both are called to serve God and their spouse through this sacrament.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, you called your servant St. Joseph to care for Jesus and Mary in this world through a dedicated service to them and to you. Help us to imitate his love and willingness to serve you and his family. In our role as children may we dedicate ourselves to serving our parents, and may we continue to discern what the example of St. Joseph teaches us about our own future vocation, whether married or religious. Bless our team that we may serve you in all that you call us to do. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

End of Practice: Remind the children to consider the role of St. Joseph and his service to God, Mary and Jesus. Ask them to consider what this demonstrates for them about the Sacrament of Marriage. 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 Joseph, Pray for Us! Amen.

5 Minute Game Plan - 7th Grade Year

Acknowledgements and Sources

Many thanks go out to all those who were involved in the discussion, creation and implementation surrounding this initiative. In particular a special thanks to the Executive Board of the CYO of Johnson and Wyandotte Counties for their input and approval of this initiative. In addition a thanks to Dr. Kathy O'Hara, Superintendent of Schools for the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas, both for her discussion and support of this initiative. Further thanks to the Athletic Directors of each CYO parish for their hard work in implementing this program with coaches and teams. A thanks to the Directors of Religious Education and Youth Ministers at various parishes throughout the area with whom I discussed this initiative and bounced ideas off of. Finally a special thanks to Becky Skaggs for her work on editing and formatting these lessons.

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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