## bASKETBALL LEAGUE



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## SECTION 1

## GOALS FOR YOUR <br> 

Goals for the Season 4

## Goals For The Season

The goal of our sports ministry is:
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Success looks like:
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Success in our sports ministry is measured by:
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## SECTION 2

## COACHING <br> 

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## What You Do Matters

Thank you for coaching this season! You are about to influence the lives of families for the next several weeks but don't worry. This league and Upward Sports provide the tools you will need for the journey, even if you are new to a sport.

> Matthew 5:13-16 - You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless. You are the light of the world-like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

## $\Rightarrow$ Your Role in Sports Ministry

As a coach, you play a vital role in the sports ministry to players and families. You are on the front lines of what takes place this season.

Sports ministry requires that the sport and ministry are both done with excellence as you give your best effort in teaching the sport and caring for people through ministry opportunities. Your league is not "just an Upward league" or "just a church league." Sports ministry is your chance to provide the best youth sports experience in your community and demonstrate the gospel to the families you serve.

Hebrews 12:1-2 reads, Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer, and perfecter of our faith.

How do you plan to grow spiritually and as a coach this season?

## An Upward Sports Coach

Whether you are a first-time coach, veteran coach, or somewhere in between on the coaching journey, there are five crucial things to do as an Upward Sports coach.

## Five Keys To Coaching:

1. Be organized to teach the sport - Take time to teach the fundamentals of the sport and the rules through organized and detailed practices. Refer to the practice plans for drills and look to enhance each player's skill development.
2. Lead the practice devotion - Coaches lead a devotion, discussion, and prayer during practices using the devotion materials. If you need help, let the league director or coach commissioner know, as they are ready to provide support.
3. Communicate with parents - Parents on the team want you to communicate with them. Send a weekly email, text, or both to let parents know how the team is doing and remind them of upcoming events.

## 4. Instill sportsmanship, a competitive spirit, and a growth

 mindset - Help your players learn how these work together.- Great sportsmanship involves valuing others and showing appreciation for opponents, teammates, and officials regardless of the scoreboard.
- A competitive spirit is about doing your best in all situations during practice and games.
- A growth mindset focuses on growing and improving at each opportunity so that small improvements lead to more significant change as they compound over time. There is always growth potential.

5. Follow the Circle of Affirmation - Support game day officials by being their biggest fans and following the Circle of Affirmation on game days. Following the Circle of Affirmation will provide families with a positive experience and show we value people as God's creation.

As a coach, invest time in giving your best while considering Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:7. Realize that God created the participants you are coaching and those around you. As image-bearers of God, we should treat everyone with the love that God treats them, as you promote the discovery of Jesus.


## GENESIS 1:27

"So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."

## GENESIS 2:7

"Then the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person."

## Circle of Affirmation

## Game Day Attitude

Choosing the right game-day attitude is a key to being an effective Upward Soccer Coach. Actions and reactions on the field can either open or close the door to ministry. The Circle of Criticism and the Circle of Affirmation are simple diagrams that illustrate the results of a coach giving a referee either negative or positive feedback.

In Upward Soccer, coaches and referees work together as a unified team. Coaches have the opportunity and the responsibility to stop the Circle of Criticism by starting the Circle of Affirmation.


The Circle of Affirmation goes beyond the referee. A coach's affirmation of players inspires encouragement and praise from parents, family members and other players. Practicing the Circle of Affirmation makes the game a better experience for everyone.

## $\rightarrow$ Three Layers of Coaching

The three coaching layers are essential to understand the dynamics of coaching a team. They include a player, the team, and the coach.

THE PLAYER A coach will need to observe each player's skill level and teach accordingly. You may have a wide range of skill levels, with players who have experience and skill and some who have never played the sport. Work one-onone with players and give them direction on individual skills to try at home. Celebrate success as they develop and be patient with their mistakes.

THE TEAM As you coach each individual, you must also bring the team together. In a team sport, players must learn how to work well with each other. The team concept changes as players become more mature, advance in age, and can focus on others and not just themselves. Smallsided scrimmages and in-game scenarios at practices can aid in developing the team concept. Helping them communicate with each other by using participants' names and showing them how to encourage each other will help them come together as a team.

THE COACH You must prepare for practice and games to coach a team. Coaches should be willing to invest the time it takes to be ready to lead. Spend time reviewing practice plans and thinking about backup plans so that you can move forward if something isn't working. Take time to check the Scouting Report section of the practice devotion and spend time praying for your team.

## Interacting with Players, Parents, Coaches, and Referees

As you are in a coaching role, people watch how you respond at practices and games and how you lead the team. Your interactions influence the atmosphere of the league, if a family will return next season, and the league's and your ability to conduct ministry.

## Interacting with players

Interacting with players is pivotal for a coach. This coaching opportunity may place you as someone's first-time coach. In sports ministry, you have the chance to impact someone for eternity.

## Here are ten tips on interacting with your players.

- Greet each player by name as they arrive.
- Always be mindful of speaking on a level that the player can understand.
- Tell participants the details of what you are teaching, show them what you are teaching, have them do it, and then apply it in a game scenario.
- Focus on one skill at a time as you teach so that players can learn each one thoroughly.
- Recognize differences in skill levels so that you can help each player improve.
- Be familiar with the devotion and allow time for discussion.
- Hold a ten to fifteen-minute meeting with parents at the end of the first practice to set expectations and answer questions.
- Allow players to be creative during the game. Teach at practice and observe and encourage during the game. You don't need to control all of the player actions.
- Understand that there is a lot of information a player is processing during a game. When a player is not in the game, one simple question to gain understanding is, "What did you see?" This question requires listening and patience to discover what they saw from their perspective.
- When distributing stars on game days, give specific reasons each athlete earned a particular game-day star. Don't underestimate the value of recognizing players!


## What about distracted and disruptive players?

> A challenge for coaches is what to do with distracted or disruptive participants. Here are four things to understand in these situations that will help.

1. Understand that players have short attention spans. Be patient.
2. Players come into practice and, like coaches, are influenced by things that have already occurred during the day. Greet them by name to welcome them into a new environment, so they know you see them.
3. Maintain engagement by cutting down on lines and lectures. To do this, ask parents to help run a drill, so there are multiple stations.
4. Praise desired behavior right away, use the player's name, and let them know how it helps the team. Other players will recognize this and follow.

If undesirable behavior continues, address it with the player and parent so that the player doesn't disrupt a learning environment. Let the parent know that you need their help, as they may be able to offer insight into working with their player.

## Interacting with parents

Start the season by getting to know your players' parents and families. Include parents in your first post-practice huddle. Here are a few tips for interacting with parents.

- Introduce yourself to parents, share expectations, and explain why you are coaching.
- Share your contact information.
- Each week take time to have a conversation with one family.
- Encourage parents to have fun working on skills at home with their players.
- Be ready to step into any spiritual conversation with parents and talk about what you teach during devotion time.
- Demonstrate care and concern for players, so parents know you are looking out for their players.
- Be organized and prepared for practice. Parents want to know you value their time by coaches being prepared and organized.
- Communicate one time per week through email, text, or both. Keep it short and simple.

After you receive your roster, contact the parents right away. Families are eager to hear from you, and it cuts down on the number of calls and emails a league director has to spend time answering.

## Interacting with other Coaches and Referees

An Upward Sports league can set the standard in your community by how coaches and referees interact on game days. Parents, players, and families notice how both team's coaches and referees work together to provide a fantastic player experience. Remember, youth sports are about the youth.

## Here are some tips on how to interact with coaches and referees.

- Introduce yourself to the other coaches and referees on game day, and remember their names.
- Realize that you would not have a game day without the other team and referees. It's essential to work together.
- Review Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:7 and understand that we are all God's creation, which should be reflected in how we interact.
- Be the referee's biggest fan. If you want to have referees for your league, critical behavior does not help.
- Coaches work together for the experience of all participants.
* Love one another, John 13:34.
- Thank the coaches and referees after the game.
- Review the Circle of Affirmation and follow it.

What sets this league apart from others is that when differences of opinion or mistakes are made during a game, we are all part of one team, providing a great player experience that honors God.

## Create a Positive Culture

A positive culture is one of safety, learning, and fun. A team's attitude and mindset often mirror that of its coach. Use the beginning of the season to set a tone of positivity through the weeks ahead.

- Set expectations of behavior and communicate them with players and parents.
- Start and end each practice on time.
- Encourage players to support each other by cheering for teammates.
- View mistakes as teaching opportunities, not a chance to be critical at the moment.

One practical way to create a positive team culture and teach communication is to establish a team huddle at the end of practice. Have players circle up and include the coach. The coach can talk about things done well in practice.

Next, have players look to the person on their right, use their name, and offer something they saw their teammate do well in practice. Continue around the circle until everyone has had a chance to speak. The topic could be different at each practice, such as something the player would like to improve on their own, something they appreciate about the other player or something they would like to see the team accomplish in the next game.

## Play with Purpose

A coach can help develop not only a player but a person. That person has a long-term impact on the community, their family, and eternity. You coach, and they play with purpose. This relationship develops someone through a player development model that is remembered by the acronym M.A.S.S.

## PLAYER DEVELOPMENT MODEL = M.A.S.S.

As an Upward Sports Coach, you play a major role in encouraging your players mentally, athletically, spiritually and socially as they participate on your team.

This approach is based on Luke 2:52: "And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man."

Mental development for young athletes is a byproduct of the weekly practices and games where players participate. Players grow in confidence, courage, decision-making, and cognitive self-regulation.

Confidence and Courage - As players learn and improve their skills and confidence will increase. Players then gain the courage to attempt new skills and recognize that mistakes are a part of the game that they can overcome.

Decision-Making - The intricacies and complexities of sports, help train young athletes on making correct decisions quickly. When to pass a ball, when to attempt a move or make a defensive play are all part of building decision-making. Through observation and repetition, players improve their muscle memory and learn when and how to make individual and team decisions.

Cognitive self-regulation - Through intense games and drills, players learn to self-regulate emotions and gain focus. Through sports, they will enter various experiences (practices, scrimmages, games, etc.) where they will learn to narrow their focus from a broad range to a specific individual focus and team responsibilities in the pursuit of attaining particular goals.

## ATHLETICALLY

Athletic development compounds through small improvements over time. Players learn and grow in their sport to achieve long term growth

Exercise: In a recent State of Play report, the Aspen Sports Institute reported only $24 \%$ of youth ages 6 to 17 engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day, down from 30\% a decade earlier. With many kids spending over 6 hours in front of screens each day (TVs, computers, phones/ tablets), the desire to get out and be active is waning.

How can you tell if a child is getting proper exercise? Sweat. Sweat requires constant activity with little "downtime." Practices should have drills that allow for continuous movement using various muscle groups. Avoid players standing in lines when possible. Keep practice fast-paced and fun, allowing for water breaks and short periods of rest.

## Physical Development: Physical development has

 enormous benefits for children, including stronger bones and muscles, improved heart and brain health, and lowered risk of diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Participants may learn fundamental movements that allow them to run, jump, throw, catch, balance, and change direction. Basic moves will help participants enjoy a variety of sports and begin a path to physical literacy.Fun: The key to getting kids interested in physical activity is by making it fun. Sports do just that, provided the coaches in charge are focused on the development of the athlete. Practices should teach the game using fun and safe methods.

## SPIRITUALLY

Spiritual growth is an essential part of sports ministry. You play a vital role in the spiritual development of players on your team and help them discover a sense of self and a sense of purpose. This development happens in various ways.

Practice devotions - By guiding discussion around the practice devotions each week, you plant seeds of discovery within the minds and hearts of young athletes. Remember to guide every practice devotion conversation back to the Gospel and what Jesus has done for us.

Your relationship with players - You are a safe, trusted adult in the lives of young athletes. You hold a remarkable amount of influence. Listen intently, guide carefully, and be someone who continually points young athletes to Christ in your interactions.

Your relationship with parents - The top spiritual influence in a child's life is their parents. What they learn from their home life will speak more into their spiritual development than anything else. Your relationship with a child's parents must be strong. Share with them what their child is learning each week in practice. Discuss the devotions. Talk about how their child is developing in their skills. When parents know you care and are investing in their child's well-being, they'll trust you and your spiritual influence on their child.

Your example - Be ready to step into opportunities God provides during practices, games, and your communications to demonstrate and share the gospel message

## $\checkmark$ SOCIALLY

Participants develop socially by learning how to work as a team, communicate, and serve others through a sport.

Teamwork: Through team sports, children learn how to interact with peers and adults in positive ways. These include numerous opportunities for "selfless" behavior, focusing all mental and physical efforts towards the goals of the team. Participants learn how to navigate relationships, encourage others, and recover from mistakes.

Communication: Players learn how to communicate in complex social situations with teammates and competitors. This learning carries over to other areas of life, helping them communicate in school, at home, and in other environments.

Serving: Serving others becomes a critical component for social development in team sports. Children learn to share the ball, encourage teammates, and give their best effort to help the team and not just themselves.

## Coach Resources and Tools

Many resources are available to help you provide a great experience for your team, plan and efficiently use your time this season.

MyUpward.org - This is the primary tool for you as a coach. The league director will send you an invitation to access resources on MyUpward.org. After you accept the invitation and create a username and password, you can also create an icon on your home screen when accessing from a mobile device.

## Blasters

Getting Started
*Prepare for your role this season

Team
» Manage your roster, view schedule, see team details
n Text and email communication tools

- Getting Started includes how-to videos and other resources to help you this season.
- Team area helps you manage your roster and see participant information and the schedule for practices and game days.
- Practice Resources provide a step-by-step outline for each practice, devotions, skills and drills, and sports rules.
- Communication is where you will find email and text capabilities, as well as attaching a link to the team page.
- Game Day helps you to manage the substitutions with the Upward Sports game day rotation and the ability to track game day stars.

Devotions - Weekly devotion content for your practices is located on MyUpward.org or in the Coach Playbook.

Game Day Stars - Use these stars on game day to highlight each player's contributions during the game.

Gospel Video - Sent out from the league director to families to share a video version of the gospel message with them during the season.

Practice Cards - The practice cards show the bible verse associated with the weekly devotion. Depending on the devotion track, you will hand out cards every week or only at designated weeks noted in the devotion.

Practice Plans - Use the practice plans found on MyUpward. org and print them out before practice or use them directly from your mobile device.

Season Celebration - Celebrate the season with your team. Your league may have individual team parties or a leaguewide celebration.

Team Page - Share the team page with your team to give them access to the practice and game schedule. The team page also includes your contact information and a team roster. The team page link is available to send from the communication area of the mobile view of myupward.org.

Upward.org/coach - Helps you learn more about sharing the gospel using the 3 Circles.

## SECTION 3

## PRACTICE

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## $\Rightarrow$ Invest in the team by preparing for practice

Your investment shows in the results each week. There are entire practice plans for each week of the season found on MyUpward.org. These plans have been designed for each age group and include age-appropriate skill development and devotion material that progress through the season.

As the season continues, you may need to modify the plans based on what takes place in practices and the game. Be sure to always focus on the fundamentals of the sport. As you become more experienced, you may begin to include other resources for practice. Be sure to use the weekly devotion material as you design a practice.

Coaches are named as the top reason parents and players return or not each season. Parents want to see organized and detailed practices.

## Practice Breakdown

Opening practice huddle (3-5 minutes) - Start on time the signal to the team parents that you are ready to begin. Point out a couple of things that you will cover in practice. Once games occur, use the first few minutes of practice to talk about the previous game and something you will work on from the game and highlights from the game.

Warm-up activity (3-5 minutes) - Provide players with the opportunity to warm up their bodies slowly.

Practice skills through drills (20 minutes) - Focus on specific skills that matter to the sport. Use drills and game scenarios that reinforce skill development.

Practice devotion (5-7 minutes) - Share the practice devotion for each week. Be mindful of the opportunities to demonstrate the gospel throughout practice, so players see you living it out.

Scrimmage or skill challenges that teach (20 minutes) Use a controlled scrimmage or skills challenges to test their skills.

End of practice huddle (3-5 minutes) - Review the skills learned at practice and praise efforts. Hand out practice cards and stars and do things to create a positive team culture.

Post-practice time - After practice, take time to get to connect with one family each week.

## Here is a chart that outlines the weekly practice plans you can find on MyUpward.org.

| Practice | Practice Focus | Team Meeting | Rules to Cover | Skills \& Drills |
| :---: | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 1 | Get to know each <br> other | Teammate introductions <br> Evaluate skills <br> Riscuss practice ground <br> rules | Introduce basic footwork, <br> dribbling, and shooting <br> skills | Practice rules |

## Warm-Ups \& Stretching

Use the first five minutes of practice to get the players moving. This can be done by incorporating athletic development exercises like the examples below. Warm-up first and then follow with stretching.

Here are warm-up activities that you can use. Add music, move to the beat and create a warm-up activity you will use at the start of each practice.

- Arm Circles: Hold arms out standing in a T and circle them
- Back pedal: Run backwards while stepping back as far as possible.
- Donkey Kicks: In a standing position or moving forward, kick heels toward up toward your back side.
- Feet on fire: Running in place.
- High Knees: With hands in front and waist high, lift knees up and alternate between knees. Vary speed as desired.
- Hops: This can be done in one sport of moving forward. It can be done on one foot of both feet.


## - Jumping Jacks

- Log Step: With both feet on one side of an imaginary log high step sideways with one foot and then the other to cross over the "log." Vary speed.
- Lunges: From a standing position large step forward while keeping the back foot in place without the knee touching the ground.
- Push-ups: May use a modified version for very young players.
- Running: One minute around the room. If you have limited space, run in place and change the pace.
- Shoulder circles: With arms by your side, lift your shoulders and take them back down, creating a circular motion.
- Side lunge: Fee wider than shoulder width apart, keep one leg straight while the other bends into a squat position. Keep your back flat, chest up and rear out behind you.
- Trunk twists: From a standing position, twist back and forth slowly.

Here are stretch activities you may use after warm-ups.

- Neck Stretch: Sit or stand with arms by your side. Tilt head to the right and hold for eight seconds, then tilt head to the left and hold for eight seconds.
- Triceps Stretch: Bring one arm up beside your head, bending it at the elbow while reaching across with the other arm and hold. Repeat, using the other arm.
- Biceps Stretch: Reach one arm out straight in front of you with palm facing up. With the other hand gently push down until you feel a slight stretch in your bicep.
- Shoulder Stretch: Reach one arm across your chest, holding it at the elbow with the opposite hand.
- Hug: Reach as far as you can and wrap your arms around your chest giving yourself a hug.
- X Stretch: With feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart, stretch your arms and hands up and out, forming an $X$ with your body. Reach high and stand on your tip-toes.
- Quadriceps Stretch: Support yourself against a wall or stationary object. Pull one heel up behind your body and hold. Repeat with opposite side.
- Hamstring Stretch: Sit on the floor with right leg straight out in front. Bend left leg and cross it over the right one. Pull the knee across your body toward opposite shoulder. Change legs and repeat.
- Pike Stretch: Sitting with feet straight in front of you and together, put both hands straight up and above your head and then slowly bend forward to reach your toes.
- Calf-Muscle Stretch: Lean toward and support yourself against a wall while keeping your leg straight. Press you heel to the floor. Reverse and stretch other calf-muscle.


## Skills \& Drills

This section reviews the fundamental skills of basketball, explains why each is important and emphasizes the skill's basic teaching points. Each skill is followed by a basic drill that reinforces the skill. For more drills for each skill, as well as complete practice plans, go to MyUpward.org.

Many of the drills described in this playbook require one ball per player. If you are limited in the number of balls you have for practice, you will need to modify the drill by creating lines based on the number of balls you have available.

## KEY TO DIAGRAMS

Use this key for the drills located on the following pages.

| $X$ | player <br> $=$ player movement without the ball |
| :---: | :---: |
| $\sim \sim$ | = dribble |
| (P......) | $=$ pass |
| (5) | $=$ shoot |
| (R) | $=$ rebound |
|  | $=$ screen |
| C | $=$ coach |
| 123 | $=$ sequence |
| $\triangle$ | $=$ cone |

## - Footwork Drills

Proper footwork promotes balance, quickness, and readiness to make something happen on the court. Being proficient at this skill will improve a player's performance both offensively and defensively. Here are the three basic footwork skills:

## Triple Threat Position

- Provides a player the option to pass, shoot, or dribble
- Position the basketball in the "shooting pocket" with shooting elbow over knee
- Have "strong hands" with possession of the basketball so that defenders cannot easily knock the ball away


## Jump Stop

Allows a player to establish a pivot with either foot off a dribble or pass

- Leap/jump should be low to the floor (like sitting in a chair), not a high jump
- Both feet hit floor at the same time - good balance
- Land on floor in triple threat position
- Use when catching a pass; teach "ball in air/feet in air" concept


## Front Pivot and Reverse Pivot

- Lift heel, protect ball, stay low, and lead with elbow
- Allows a player to pivot in one or more directions by keeping one foot planted on the ground
- Allows an offensive player to move away from defenders while protecting the basketball
- Remind players to keep their eyes up to be able to see the court.
- Skill is also important for setting screens and rebounding.


## $\Rightarrow$ Footwork Drills

## Footwork Line Drills (no basketball required)

- Players form lines on baseline or sideline - two players deep
- Use cones or mark the court for starting/stopping spots minimum 3 spots
- No basketball necessary - players dribble and hold imaginary basketball
- Players will start/stop on voice command or whistle
- Players should stop at each spot with jump stop and land in triple threat position
- Pause between stops/starts to check for proper balance
- The second player in line starts as the preceding
player leaves the first spot



## Rotate the Following Footwork Line Drills:

- Jump Stop/Triple Threat
- Jump Stop/Triple Threat/Right Front Pivot
- Jump Stop/Triple Threat/Left Front Pivot
- Jump Stop/Triple Threat/Right Reverse Pivot
- Jump Stop/Triple Threat/Left Reverse Pivot

Have each player raise his or her hand in the air that coincides with the desired pivot direction. This will help each player pivot in the correct direction.

> Variation: Add basketballs after your players understand the above concepts. Allow them to practice the above skills after picking up their dribble and receiving passes.

## Pivot Drill (no basketball required)

- Players should spread out in your practice area - no basketball necessary
- Players start in triple threat position, protecting an imaginary basketball
- Instruct players to establish a pivot foot
- Practice half-turns and front/reverse pivots
- Repeat with opposite foot established as the pivot

Variation: Add basketballs and defenders after your players understand the above concepts. Allow them to practice the above skills after picking up their dribble and receiving passes.

## Ball Handling \& Dribbling Drills

An adept ball handler and dribbler can make things happen on the court. Mastering these skills can help create open shots, obtain better passing angles, and lead to fewer turnovers. A great offensive player must be able to handle the ball!

- Dribble with fingers, not palms - similar to typing on a keyboard
- Proper body position, with knees bent and body flexed at the waist
- Keep head up - see the court
- Protect the basketball - use your non-dribbling arm as an "arm bar", meaning sticking it outward with the elbow slightly bent to protect the dribble from defenders reaching in
- Work both hands - be able to go right and left
- When picking up a dribble, end in triple threat position


## Basic Dribbling Skills

## Control Dribble <br> (Use against defensive pressure)

- With body turned to the side, dribble basketball near the back knee
- Keep the dribble low and compact, below the knees
- Non-dribbling arm should be held out in front of the body to protect the ball from defenders - arm bar


## Speed Dribble

(Use to push the ball up the court and on fast break situations)

- Dribble is pushed out in front of the body but controlled
- Dribble is higher and softer


## Retreat Dribble

(Use to avoid defensive pressure and to keep dribble alive)

- Dribble backward (hop back) to avoid pressure
- Dribble requires a change in speed and change in direction
- Dribble teaches players not to habitually pick up their dribble when heavy, defensive pressure is applied


## Crossover Dribble

(Use to break down a defender; good penetration move)

- Dribble must be kept low when crossing over from one hand to another, keeping it away from the defender
- Use head and shoulder fakes to help "sell" the move
- Goal is to get the defender on his or her heels
- Explode to the basket with speed dribble after the crossover


## Whirl Pivot Dribble

(Use to avoid defensive pressure and to dribble by defender)

- Pull the basketball through low during the pivot
- Keep the basketball in the same hand until completing the pivot
- Pivot should be low and quick with head up
- Explode to the basket with speed dribble after the whirl pivot


## Behind the Back Dribble

(Use to break down a defender; good penetration move)

- Use head and shoulder fakes to help "sell" the move
- Swing the basketball behind your waist, turning the hips and driving the ball down with a snap of the wrist
- Slap opposite back thigh during the exchange


## $\Rightarrow$ Ball Handling Drills (Team Drills)

(one basketball per player or divide your team into two groups)

Ball Slams - With feet shoulder-width apart, have players slap the basketball with fingers spread wide. Players should "slam" the ball by alternating their right and left hands.

Fingertip Drill - With feet shoulder-width apart, players pass the basketball from hand to hand in front of the body using only the fingertips. Move ball from ankles, to knees, to waist, to chest, to head, and to above head using the fingertips. Encourage players to keep their arms straight.

Side to Side Dribble Drill - With feet shoulder-width apart, have players dribble with one hand while moving the ball from side to side in front of them.

Front to Back Dribble Drill - With feet shoulder-width apart, have players dribble with one hand while moving the ball at their side from front to back.

## $\rightarrow$ Ball Handling Drills (Team Drills)

Dribbling Line Drills (three to five basketballs required)
During all dribbling line drills, you should stand in front of the players to teach, encourage, and evaluate each player's performance.

1. Players form lines on baseline or sideline (two players deep) - one basketball per line
2. Use cones or chairs to represent stopping/ starting points or change-of-dribble spots
3. Players will begin the drills in triple threat position
4. Players will start/stop/ change dribble on voice command or whistle
5. Pause between stops/ starts to check for balance, arm bar, and if head is up
6. At the turnaround point, require jump stops with pivots
7. Work opposite hand on return dribble
8. Players should end drills with a jump stop, giving the basketball to the next player in line

## Rotate the following dribbling

 line drills:- Speed Dribble
- Speed Dribble/Control Dribble - on command, stationary control dribble
- Speed Dribble/Retreat Dribble - on command, two to three dribbles backward against imaginary defender followed by speed dribble



## $\Rightarrow$ Passing and Receiving

Passing and receiving a basketball allows a team to effectively and quickly move the ball around the court. A team that has players with strong passing and receiving skills will spread the defense and be hard to guard.

## Passing Teaching Points

- Two hands on the basketball, with fingers on the sides of the ball
- Ball in middle of body
- Step toward target
- Push thumbs through ball and snap wrists, creating backspin on the basketball
- Extend arms completely as you follow through toward target


## Receiving Teaching Points:

- Both hands up in ready position - show a target
- Step toward the ball when passed - meet the pass
* "Ball in air/feet in air" concept - leads to jump stop, triple threat position, and ability to pivot with either foot
- Look the ball into the hands


## Basic Passing Skills

Two-Hand Chest Pass

- Basketball is held with two hands at chest level
- Keep elbows out and wide
- Passer targets the receiver's chest area
- Passer steps toward their target with either foot as the ball is thrown
- Snap the thumbs down extending the arms

Two-Hand Bounce Pass

- Basketball is held with two hands at chest level
- Passer aims for a spot on the floor about two-thirds (a little more than halfway) of the way to the
receiver
Passer targets the receiver's chest area from the bounce


## Overhead Pass

- Basketball is held with two hands above head

Passer targets the receiver's chest area

## $\rightarrow$ Passing and Receiving Drills

## Distance Passing (one basketball for each pair of players)

Be sure to incorporate all three basic passes into this drill.

- Pair up players and have them face each other six to eight feet apart
- Instruct players to pass the basketball back and forth using a chest pass
- After several repetitions, have each player take one to two steps backwards and continue passing
- Continue moving players back until they are passing from a challenging distance

Two-Line Passing (two basketballs required)
Two pairs of players can perform this drill at one time.

- Pair up players and have them face each other six to eight feet apart
- Establish a starting and turnaround point
- One player in each pair needs a basketball
- Using defensive slides, players move up and then back down the court
- While sliding, instruct players to pass the basketball back and forth using a chest pass
- Players pass the ball immediately upon receiving the ball


[^0]
## Shooting

## Shooting Teaching Points

- Square up shoulders to the basket
- Ball on fingertips, not palms
- Opposite hand should be lightly placed on side of ball (balance/weak hand)


## Practice BEEF Principles

- Balance - Learn to prepare for the shot by stopping with the feet set, knees slightly bent, ready to jump (good triple threat position)
- Elbow - Proper shooting alignment; ball should be directly over the elbow with the wrist cocked
- Eyes - Pick a spot (front of the rim, back of the rim, etc.) and focus on that target as the shot is being attempted
- Follow through - Release the ball smoothly, completely extend the arm, and snap the wrist, which should create good backspin on the basketball


## $\Rightarrow$ Shooting Drills

Lay-Up Steps (no basketball required)
Instruct your players to shout "STEP-HOP-SHOOT" when performing this drill. Mirror this drill to practice left-handed layups.

1. Allow players to spread out in your practice area, at least four to five feet apart
2. Players start in triple threat position, holding imaginary basketballs with heads up and eyes on the target
3. On the STEP command, players step with their left foot (right-handed lay-ups)
4. On the HOP command, players raise their right knee and right arm toward the basket (visualize a string connecting a player's right arm and right leg)
5. On the SHOOT command, players extend their right arm as they shoot an imaginary ball

## Wall Shooting

(one basketball per player or divide your team into two groups)

This is a great drill to keep idle players busy while running a drill on the court that may not involve your entire team.

1. Player stands about four to five feet away from the wall
2. Help the player find a reasonable shooting target on the wall
3. Player assumes triple threat position
4. Player shoots the ball at the target, concentrating on elbow in and full extension
5. Player should finish the shot up on his or her toes with proper follow through, creating good backspin

Variations: If coaching third- through sixth-grade players, allow them to shoot using only their shooting/strong hand.

Two Line Shooting Drills (one or two basketballs required) Players rotate lines after each turn. After several repetitions shooting from one side of the goal, change the designation of both lines and shoot from the other side of the court.

1. Players form two lines opposite the goal in each corner of practice area: a shooting line and a rebounding line (use cones or chairs to mark a starting point)
2. Shooting line: Assume triple threat position, showing ready hands to receive a pass.
3. Rebounding line: Players should block out an imaginary defender and rebound the ball above their head.
4. The player from the rebounding line secures the rebound and dribbles to a designated cone, makes a good jump stop landing in triple threat position, and uses proper passing techniques when passing to the next shooter in line.
5. Shooter receives the basketball and performs the drill as instructed by a coach.


## Rotate the following two line shooting drills:

- Lay-ups - Stress jumping off the proper foot and using the backboard (STEP-HOP-SHOOT)
- Pull-up Off the Dribble - Set a cone at desired shooting spot (stress good jump stop and use of backboard when shooting from appropriate angle)



## Rebounding

When discussing offensive rebounding, remind players that each shot taken by a teammate is a pass to them! Second chance points (put-backs) can be a big contributor to a team's offensive production.

## Rebounding Teaching Points:

- Defensive player stays between the opponent and the basket
- Using a front or reverse pivot, the defensive player pivots and makes contact with the opponent's body when the ball is shot ("block out")
- Defensive players should yell "shot" to signal a rebounding opportunity
- Hold the "block out" position momentarily, with the head up and body facing the goal
- Release the "block out" - be hungry for the basketball
- Secure the basketball
- Be strong with the basketball, keeping the ball at chin level with elbows out


## Rebounding Drills

Rebound Outlet Drill - no defender (one basketball required)

- Facing the basket, players form two lines: one at the corner of the free-throw line (elbow), the other at the foul line extended (wing)
- Coach stands at the other elbow with a basketball. Coach throws the ball off the backboard
- The first player in line at elbow catches the rebound with strong hands, elbows out, and ball to the chin. The player then pivots toward the first player in the wing line and throws a two-handed chest pass
- Player from the wing line passes ball back to the coach
- Both players swap lines and drill is repeated with second players in each line


Rebound Outlet Drill - with defender (one basketball required)

1. Facing the basket, players form two lines: one at each corner of the free-throw line
2. Place one player at each wing area to serve as an outlet receiver
3. The player in the front of each line will turn his back toward the basket (defensive player), facing the next player in line (offensive player)
4. When the coach shoots the basketball, the defensive players will yell "shot" and pivot into the offensive players to obtain a good "block out"
5. Offensive players cannot move
6. Once a defender secures the basketball, pivot and throw a crisp overhead outlet pass to an outlet receiver
7. Players rotate from offense/to defense/to outlet receiver/to back of the line

## Variations:

- Use one line instead of two
- When the ball is shot, the offense can move and try to score off a missed shot


## Defense

## Defense Teaching Points:

- Proper defensive stance
»Stand with feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart
»Knees bent, with waist slightly bent forward
» Good balance - ready to move and slide
"Place weight on the inside front of the feet but not on the toes
»Extend arms to the side, slightly bent
„Open hands, so palms face the offensive player
"Eyes on the offensive player's chest or "head on the ball"
- Ball/you/basket principle: When the offensive player being guarded has the ball, the defensive player should stay between this assigned offensive player with the basketball and the basket
- See the ball at all times
- Sprint down the floor on a change of possession, stopping any fast breaks


## $\Rightarrow$ Defense Drills

Defensive Slides (no basketball required)
Focus on players' feet sliding (rather than hopping or skipping) and players maintaining a proper defensive stance. Have fun with this drill! Allow players to express enthusiasm and desire by slapping the playing floor and yelling "DEFENSE" on command. Drill should last 20-30 seconds. Allow short rest and repeat as desired.

1. Allow players to spread out in practice area, at least four to five feet apart
2. On command, players yell "DEFENSE" and freeze in the defensive stance
з. On command (either verbal or hand signals), players will slide left, right, up, and back

Zigzag (no basketball required)
Focus on players making a drop step each time they turn (rather than crossing their feet) and on players sliding correctly while maintaining a proper defensive stance.

1. Form a line of players at one end of your practice area
2. Set-up cones or chairs in a zigzag pattern, spaced 10-12 feet apart (minimum 3 spots)
3. On command, the first player in line will assume the correct defensive stance and will slide in a zigzag pattern as dictated by the cones or chairs
4. Next player in line starts as the preceding player leaves first spot

5. As each player reaches the final spot, he or she should sprint back to the end of the line

## $\Rightarrow$ Offensive Plays

The following offensive plays are provided to help your team with floor spacing and floor balance. These plays are intended for Levels 3 and 4.

Reminder: View the Skills and Drills videos on the coach section of MyUpward.org for live demonstrations of the following offensive plays.

## HALF-COURT SETS

## Box Set - Motion

## Scoring Options:

1. Player 5 posting up down on ball-side block
2. Player 4 coming off of low screen
3. Player 3 cutting to the free-throw line

- Players 2, 3, 4, and 5 are in the "box" offensive set (diagram 1)

- Player 1 (point guard) yells "MOTION" or "GO" to start the play (player 1 should keep dribble alive until making a pass)
- Players 4 and 5, who are standing outside the lane area at the freethrow line extended areas, will screen down for players 2 and 3 (diagram 2)
- Before the screens occur, players 2 and 3 will take two to three steps toward the lane area (to set up their defenders) and then make hard V-cuts to their respective wing areas (diagram 2)
- Player 1 will pass the basketball to player 2 or 3 (assume player 2 in this example) who will square up to the basket (diagram 3)
- Player 5, post player on the ball-side of the court, will post up for two seconds (diagram 3)

After two seconds, player 5 will screen away for opposite post player - player 4 (diagram 3)

- As player 5 turns to screen away for the opposite post player, player 3 will cut toward the free-throw line and player 1 will "fill" his or her spot at the wing (diagram 3)
- If a pass cannot be made to player 4 coming off the low screen or to player 3 on the cut to the lane area, player 3 will move to the top of the key area to receive a pass from player 2 (diagram 4)
- If the pass is made to player 3 at the top of the key area, team will be in the "box" offensive set again (diagram 5)


## Box Set - (Double Down)

## Scoring Options:

1. Player 3 coming off of low screen
2. Player 2 coming off the double screen

## Procedure:

1. Players 2, 3, 4, and 5 are in the "box" offensive set
2. Player 1 (point guard) yells "DOUBLE" or "GO" to start the play (player 1 should keep dribble alive until making a pass)
3. Player 1 dribbles to right-side of the goal - can go to right or left (diagram 1)
4. As player 1 dribbles to the wing area (attack zone), player 2 will screen away for player 3 (diagram 1)
5. Player 3 cuts to the ball-side block area hoping to receive a pass from player 1 (diagrams 1 and 2)
6. As player 3 cuts to the ball-side block area, players 4 and 5 will set a double screen in the middle of the lane for player 2 (diagram 2)
7. Player 1 looks for player 2 as he or she curls around the screen for an open jump-shot (diagram 3)

## Inbounds Plays

## Stack (baseline)

1. All four players line-up straight across from the player throwing in the basketball (diagram 1)
2. When the passer slaps the basketball or yells "break," the players move simultaneously as follows (diagram 2):

- First player in line breaks to ball-side corner
- Second player in line cuts to opposite block
- Third player in line moves straight down to block area toward the ball
- Fourth player in line takes two to three steps back, serving as a safety valve


Move on the slap of the ball


## Note:

All inbounds plays - Players should use fakes and jab steps to set up their defenders and get open. Encourage players coming off a screen to rub shoulders with the screener. As the person throwing in the basketball can pass to any teammate, encourage ready hands.

- Each player takes a spot outside the lane area, with the post players (Players 4 and 5) at the block areas and the perimeter players (Players 1 and 2) at the free-throw line extended areas. Player 3 will throw in the basketball (diagram 1).
- When the passer slaps the basketball or yells "break," the players move as follows:


## Box Option \#1

1. Player 5 sets a diagonal screen for Player 1 (diagram 2)
2. Player 1 waits for the screen and moves toward the basketball to the opposite block (diagram 2)
3. If Player 1 does not receive the basketball, he or she continues to the ball-side corner (diagram 3)
4. Player 4 moves up to set a screen on Player 5, who cuts
 down toward the weak-side block (diagram 3)
5. Player 4 rolls toward the middle of the lane after setting the screen (diagram 4)
6. Player 2 serves as a safety valve (diagram 4)

## Box Option \#2

1. Players 4 and

5 screen up for
Players 1 and 2
(diagram 1)
2. If a pass cannot be made to either 1 or 2, they each move to the closest corner (diagram 2)
3. After setting the screens, Players 4 and 5 should roll back toward the ball (diagram 2)


## Diagram 2



## Box Option \#3:

All four players will take one to two steps toward the closest sideline to set up their defenders (diagram 1)

1. Players 5 and 2 will both cross-screen for Players 4 and 1 on the weak-side (diagram 1)
2. After setting a screen, Player 5 will turn around with ready hands (diagram 2)
3. Player 2 will roll back to

Diagram 1


Diagram 2
 ball-side, free-throw line extended area to serve as a safety valve (diagram

## SECTION 4

## PRACTICE DEVOTIONS <br> 

WEEK 1: Truth ..... 61
WEEKS 2-4: Knowledge ..... 66
WEEKS 5-7: Wisdom ..... 81
WEEK 8: Good News. ..... 96
WEEKS 9-11: Honesty ..... 102

## Devotions

As an Upward Coach, you are not only teaching skills for the sport but also values for life. The devotion time allows you to teach the character of Christ through the virtues He modeled. This season will focus on virtues which are taught in your practices and are highlighted by Bible verses. The chart below is designed to assist you as you organize and prepare for your devotions. It shows the virtues and verses for each group of practices.

## PRACTICE NUMBER

## BIBLICAL VIRTUES

## VERSE

Week
1

Weeks
2-4
Weeks Wisdom

Week
8
Good News

Week
9-11

Knowledge

Wisdom

Lead me by your truth and teach me, for you are the God who saves me." - Psalm 25:5a NLT
"Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people." - Luke 2:52 (NLT)
"If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you." - James 1:5a (NLT)
"Jesus told him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."' - John 14:6
"People with integrity walk safely, but those who follow crooked paths will be exposed." - Proverbs 10:9 (NLT)

## PRACTICE 1

## TRUTH

## SCOUTING REPORT

Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion!
Background: As the creator of the universe, God is the author of all truth. All knowledge and wisdom come from Him. Nature, physics, mathematics, biology, genetics, psychology-every way the world works was set by Him as part of His grand design. And every way that the world has been marred by sin is within His knowledge. His understanding makes all the information on the Internet look like a toddler's picture book. So when we seek to know what is true and how to apply that truth to our lives, where should we turn? The point of our devotions this season will be to help the athletes on your team learn to turn to God for truth and to live in a way that promotes truth. We'll talk about gaining knowledge, growing in wisdom, and living honestly. We'll also spend Week 8 exploring the greatest truth: the good news about Jesus.

## BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read Psalm 25:4-5; Genesis 1:1-31; Romans 11:33-36; Psalm 145:4-5. If you don't own a Bible, you can download the YouVersion Bible App for free.

## ENCOURAGEMENT

This season, you'll be asking the athletes on your team to open their minds to learn and to be willing to grow in applying what they know. Take this journey along with them. Open your mind and be ready to learn and grow. What is God trying to teach you?

## QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

Do I believe truth ultimately comes from God? Why or why not?

Bottom Line: Truth comes from God.

Key Verse: "Lead me by your truth and teach me, for you are the God who saves me." - Psalm 25:5a, NLT

I am so excited for this season, and I hope you're all excited, too! Hey, raise your hand if you think you know a little bit about the sport we're going to be playing this season. Okay, now raise your hand if you know a LOT about it. Now, raise your hand if you think you know everything you could possibly know about our sport.

Did you know there is one person who knows everything? Not just about sports, but about everything?

God knows everything. He knows the number of stars in the sky. He knows the last digit of Pi. He knows how the dinosaurs went extinct. He knows your favorite ice cream flavor.

And not only does God know all these things and much more, but He's the reason all these things are true. If anything is real, if anything is true-God is the reason behind it. You see, the Bible says God created everything. The universe. The world. Your fingers and toes. God knows everything because He made everything. He designed how everything works.

Imagine that someone created a real flying car. Who would you trust to tell you about it-the engineer who designed it or your friend who plays a lot of Mario Kart? The engineer, of course!

God designed everything we know. He even designed each of us. Because He's the designer, He knows how everything works. He knows the truth about everything! We can trust that He knows what's true, what's right, and what's best-in every situation.

This season, we will be learning about knowledge, wisdom, and honesty. God designed all knowledge, has perfect wisdom, and wants us to live with honesty. If we respect God and want to honor Him, these things will be very important in our lives. God has so much truth to teach us. Our job is to pay attention by
learning about what He has made, by reading the words He's given us in the Bible, and by talking to Him in prayer to get to know Him better. Then, we can show we believe the truth God has given us by letting it guide the way we live.

Now, let's pray together.
God, we are so excited for this season. Thank You for putting us on a team together. Open our minds to learn amazing truths from You. Teach us to seek knowledge, use wisdom, and live honestly. We love You, Lord. Amen.

## PRACTICE 2



## SCOUTING REPORT

## Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion!

Background: It's a wonderful thing that God gave us the ability to learn. We don't just have a set amount of knowledge that can never be altered. We have brains that grow and change, minds that can acquire (and forget) knowledge. Learning is a significant element of the human experience. If God created truth, created us to learn, and gave us the Bible as His message to us, it only makes sense that we should spend time and effort to read the Bible and discover what God says through it. Second Timothy 3:16-17 (NLT) explains why learning the Bible is so beneficial: "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work." The Bible also explains the story of God at work throughout history and His plan of redemption for humankind. Understanding what the Bible says can help shape our actions and how we see the world.

## BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Psalm 19:7-8; Psalm 119:105.

## ENCOURAGEMENT

"Nobody ever outgrows Scripture; the book widens and deepens with our years." - Charles Spurgeon

## QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

Is learning from the Bible a priority in my life? If not, how might it change my life if I did make it a priority?

Bottom Line: Since God knows everything, I should discover what God says.

Virtue: KNOWLEDGE is discovering something new so you can be better at whatever you do.

Key Verse: "Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people." - Luke 2:52 (NLT)

What is your favorite thing to do at school? Raise your hand if it's math. Great. Hands down. Raise your hand if it's reading. Writing? Anyone love playing outside? I thought so!

You spend almost every day in a classroom learning new things. And each new thing you learn is added to what you already know to help you be better at something. For instance, you probably learned to sing the alphabet song, then the sounds letters make, then you started putting them together to learn to read.

Pretty cool, huh? Knowledge is discovering something new so you can be better at whatever you do.

It's pretty amazing that God gave us the ability to learn new things so we can be better at whatever we do. He tells us the best way to live our lives, what to do with our knowledge, and how to help others. That's the kind of knowledge you can only learn from God. So it only makes sense that if God knows everything, we should discover what God says.

One of the best ways we can learn what God says is by reading and studying the Bible. The Bible is God's message to us. It was written thousands of years ago over the course of hundreds of years by many different authors who were all inspired by God. They wrote about many different things in different styles. The Bible contains history, poetry, laws, prophecy, letters, and more. Together, they all tell the story of God's plan for the world. There is so much to learn from the Bible!

We can be thankful that God created us to be able to learn and that He gave us the Bible so we have a great way to learn about Him.

## Discussion Questions

## (K-2 ${ }^{\text {nd }}$ Grade)

What is something new you have learned this week at school?
What is the best way we can learn from God?
( $3^{\text {rd }}-6^{\text {th }}$ Grade)
Why is it important to learn new things?
What is the best way we can learn from God?

## ( $7^{\text {th }}$ Grade and up)

We can look up the answer to almost any question on our phones or other devices. Why is it still important to learn new things for ourselves?

What ways can you learn from God and His vast knowledge?
Let's Pray
God, thank You for showing us how to live and for giving us the ability to learn new things. Please help us to learn what Your Word, the Bible, says. Help us to learn to live the way You want us to live. Amen.

## PRACTICE 3



SCOUTING REPORT
Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion!
Background: One important benefit of learning what God says in the Bible is that it gives us the knowledge we need to make good choices. It tells us what honors God and what is disobedience. It helps us make decisions that will ultimately be better for us and those around us. The temptation of Jesus in the wilderness provides a great example of how we can use Scripture to help us know the right choice. Before He began His public ministry, Jesus went into the wilderness (the rocky, barren Judean desert), where He fasted for 40 days and 40 nights. Then the devil came to tempt Jesus with three specific trials. Jesus fended off each temptation by quoting from the book of Deuteronomy in the Old Testament and not giving in to the devil's lies. His knowledge of God's Word was His defense and motivation for making the right choice. In accomplishing this, Jesus did what the nation of Israel had failed to do in their 40 years in the wilderness centuries before. Each temptation Jesus overcame paralleled a failure of the Israelites: grumbling about food and not trusting God to provide (Exodus 16:3 versus Luke 4:3-4); worshiping a golden calf (Exodus 32:1-6 versus Luke 4:5-8); and testing God (Exodus 17:1-7 versus Luke 4:9-12). Jesus trusted God and His Word in every situation, proving that He really was the Son of God (Luke 3:21-22) and giving us an example to follow.

## BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read Luke 4:1-13; Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13.

## ENCOURAGEMENT

The temptation narrative illustrates why memorizing Scripture can be so helpful. We often have to make decisions in the moment. But if we know a certain verse well, God can bring it to mind when we need it most. If you haven't ever memorized Scripture before, start with one verse, then move on to a few more. You don't have to memorize whole books for it to start making a difference.

## QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

What factors do you consider when making decisions? Do you ever turn to the Bible for help? Why or why not?

Bottom Line: When I discover what God says, I can make good choices.

Virtue: KNOWLEDGE is discovering something new so you can be better at whatever you do.

Key Verse: "Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people." - Luke 2:52 (NLT)

You all know what a choice is, right? Like choosing between popsicles and ice cream sandwiches at the grocery store. Some decisions don't matter all that much, but others have a good choice-a "wise" choice-and a bad one. Like choosing between doing your homework or playing video games. Or like choosing between going along with kids making fun of the new student at school or being kind and sitting next to her at lunch.

In the Bible, we read about a time when Jesus had to make some choices. In Luke 4:1-13, Jesus had been in the desert for 40 days. He was very hungry and very tired. The devil gave Him three chances to take the easy way out, and every time, Jesus chose to please God.

Each time it went something like this. The devil would tempt Jesus by saying he'd give Jesus authority over all the kingdoms of the world-if Jesus would worship him.

But Jesus knew what God said in His Word. So Jesus would reply something like, "'The Scriptures say, 'You must worship the Lord your God and serve only him.'" (Luke 4:8, NLT)

Jesus made the right choice because He knew what God said. He was able to remember the truth and not give in to temptation.

The best way to gain knowledge is to learn more about the one who knows everything-God! One BIG way to discover what God says is by reading God's Word, the Bible. God wants you to make the wise choice because it's the choice that will be best for you in the long run. So what if you don't always know what the wise choice is? Try discovering what God has to say in the Bible. Because the more you learn about what God has to say, the better you'll be at discovering what the right choice really is. And the more you'll be able to remember what choice to make in tough situations.

## Discussion Questions

## (K-2 ${ }^{\text {nd }}$ Grade)

What is a choice you have had to make this week?
What is the best way to know which choice God wants us to make?

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(3'rd-6 th Grade)
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When is it the hardest to make the right choice?
What are some things you can do to help you remember what the Bible says?

## ( $7^{\text {th }}$ Grade and up)

Think back to the last time you had to make a tough choice. What helped lead you to your decision?

If you make good choices over and over again, that leads to good habits. How can knowing Scripture help you make good choices regularly and build good habits?

## Let's Pray

God, thank You for sharing Your wisdom with us in the Bible. Like Jesus, help us to learn and remember what Your Word says so that it comes to mind when we need it most. Please help us learn to make good choices. Amen.

## PRACTICE 4



SCOUTING REPORT

## Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion!

Background: The Bible is a long and complex book-and there's a lot we can learn from it. But for this devotion, we're going to highlight one specific theme that runs throughout the Bible: love. When the religious leaders asked Jesus to identify the most important commandment in God's law, this is what He said: "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:37b-40, NLT) Everything else that God tells us in His Word, everything we can learn from Him, is built on a foundation of love. We love God, and because of our love for God, we love other people. At their age, one of the most important things for the athletes on your team to learn is how to treat other people. The Bible is clear about how we can do that: love your neighbor as yourself.

## BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 6:31.

## ENCOURAGEMENT

"Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions." - 1 John 3:18 (NLT)

## QUESTION FOR REFLECTION <br> What is my guiding principle for how to treat others?

Bottom Line: When I discover what God says, I know how I should treat others.

Virtue: KNOWLEDGE is discovering something new so you can be better at whatever you do.

Key Verse: "Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people." - Luke 2:52 (NLT)

Practice Card Reminder: If your league uses practice cards, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled "Practice 4" at the end of practice.

How many of you have a best friend? Why did you choose this person as your best friend? Is it because they're selfish? Or because they never let you choose what game to play? NO WAY! I would guess you chose your best friend because you like to spend time with them, because they're kind to you, and because they listen to what you have to say. For the last two weeks, we've been talking about knowledge, which is discovering something new so you can be better at whatever you do. We've been talking about how we should turn to the Bible, God's Word, for knowledge because God knows everything-like how to make the right choice and the best way to treat others.

As we've been learning, God's Word tells us the best way to live. And one thing God really wants us to be good at is relationships-not only our relationship with Him but our relationship with others. God wants you to be a good friend. And He has given you His Word to show you how to do that. God wants you to care about the people around you. He wants you to listen and show compassion. And while you may not always get this right, the more knowledge you have-the more you discover what God has to say-the better you'll get at being the kind of friend God wants you to be.

Here's one of the most important things that Jesus says about how we should treat other people: "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:39b, NLT) That means we should treat other people the way we want to be treated. That's pretty good advice, right? And it's also pretty easy to remember. When you are with a friend, your sibling, your teammates, or your mom or dad-whoever-you can think, "How would I want to be treated right now if I were them?" And then you treat them that way. It can take practice to think this way and even more practice to actually live this way, but we know from the Bible that it's the perfect place to start.

## Discussion Questions

## (K-2 ${ }^{\text {nd }}$ Grade)

How can you be a good friend this week?
What does it mean to treat someone the way you want to be treated?
( $3^{\text {rd }}-6^{\text {th }}$ Grade)
What does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself?
What's a good example of someone doing this? Have you ever noticed someone treating you this way? What did that mean to you?

## ( $7^{\text {th }}$ Grade and up)

How does loving your neighbor as yourself help you have stronger relationships with others?

When is it the hardest to treat someone the way you want to be treated?

Let's Pray

God, thank You for reminding us that Your Word has something to say about how we should treat others. Please help us to be kind, forgiving, loyal, and patient. Help us to treat others the way we want to be treated. Thank You for giving us Your Word. Help us follow what it says. Amen.

## PRACTICE S



## SCOUTING REPORT

## Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion!

Background: While it is important to acquire knowledge and learn what God says, for that knowledge to do any good, it must be put into action. That's where wisdom comes in. For the next few practices, you'll teach your athletes that wisdom means finding out what you should do and doing it. Wisdom is understanding and applying your knowledge in the right way. The Bible actually has a whole group of books that scholars often label as "Wisdom literature." These writings emphasize important truths and their applications in poetic form. They include the books of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. Each of our devotions about wisdom will draw specifically from the book of Proverbs. "The book of Proverbs represents the basic and clearest model of Wisdom literature in the Bible . . . It presupposes that there is a fundamental order to the universe, that a person's conduct either strengthens or weakens that order, and that the universe is subject to the divine will." (Richard S. Hess, The Old Testament) In this practice, we'll focus on Proverbs 13:20, which encourages us to spend time with wise people rather than foolish ones.

## BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read Proverbs 13:20, 12:26, 22:24-25.

## ENCOURAGEMENT

The idea of choosing your friends wisely goes two ways. We want to be sure to spend time with and be influenced by wise people who make good decisions. But we also want to be sure that we act wisely and influence the people around us in positive ways.

QUESTION FOR REFLECTION
How do I choose my friends? Do I need more wise people in my life?

Bottom Line: If you want to be wise, hang out with wise people.

Virtue: WISDOM is finding out what you should do and then doing it.

Key Verse: "If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you." - James 1:5a (NLT)

Practice Card Reminder: If your league uses practice cards, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled "Practice 5" at the end of practice.

What qualities make for a good friend? (Let athletes answer.) Friends are really important! When you're having a bad day, they can crack a joke to make you feel better. When things are awesome, they're with you to celebrate. Friends can definitely help make things more fun!

How do you choose your friends? More than likely, the friends you have are friends from your neighborhood, from school, or maybe even on this team. But choosing friends requires some wisdom. Over the last few weeks, we talked about knowledge. It's important to learn and gain knowledge, but wisdom is about putting that knowledge into practice. Wisdom is finding out what you should do and doing it!

Let's talk for a few minutes about how we can apply wisdom when it comes to choosing the right kind of friends. Proverbs 13:20 (NLT) says, "Walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and get in trouble."

According to this verse, hanging out with wise people will help us, what? Yes, become wiser! That's a pretty cool benefit, right?

But the reverse is also true. Do you remember what the second part of that verse said? "Associate with fools and get in trouble." Do you know what a fool is? A fool is someone who lacks judgment or sense. This means that if you hang out with friends who don't make smart choices, you'll be much more likely to find yourself in trouble, too.

This isn't about leaving someone out or being unkind. When it comes to close friends you spend time with, it's wise to choose friends who lead you in the right direction. Choosing your friends is a big deal. Let's make sure that the people we spend the most time with are people who will make us wiser. So remember, if you want to be wise, hang out with wise people.

## Discussion Questions

## (K-2 ${ }^{\text {nd }}$ Grade)

What's a wise choice that you have made lately?
How can you be a wise friend to someone else?
( $3^{\text {rd }}-6^{\text {th }}$ Grade)
What does wisdom look like in your daily life?
Do you make wise choices regarding your friends? How can you be a good influence on your friends?

## ( $7^{\text {th }}$ Grade and up)

How have your friends influenced your decision-making?
What are some unwise choices people your age make? Have you considered asking God to give you wisdom? Why or why not?

Let's Pray

God, thank You for friends! We know that all good things come from you, and friends are definitely one of the best gifts ever. Help us to be wise about the friends we choose so that we can grow in wisdom, too! We don't want to be foolish or get into trouble. Thanks for loving us enough to care about who our friends are! We love you. Amen.

## PRACTICE 6



## SCOUTING REPORT

Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion!
Background: When we think of wisdom in the Bible, we often think of Solomon. Solomon was a young man when his father, King David, died and left him to rule. Solomon knew he was inexperienced and would need God's help to lead the nation of Israel. So when God offered to bless him with a gift, Solomon made this request: "Give me an understanding heart so that I can govern your people well and know the difference between right and wrong." (1 Kings 3:9a, NLT) This pleased God. He gave Solomon great wisdom and promised him wealth, success, renown, and long life. Proverbs is one of the books in the Old Testament attributed to Solomon, who was said to have written thousands of proverbs and songs (1 Kings 4:32). Proverbs 3:5-6 reminds us of what Solomon knew: trust in the Lord, and He will guide you. Solomon's wisdom came from God. And we can ask God to guide us, too.

## BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read Proverbs 3:5-6; Lamentations 3:2223; Hebrews 10:23; 1 Kings 3:4-15, 4:29-44..

## ENCOURAGEMENT

Trust can be challenging. We are used to people letting us down. We are used to letting other people down ourselves. But God is faithful. He always does what He says He will do. He always keeps His promises. You can trust Him.

## QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

Who or what do you go to when you need wisdom or guidance?

Bottom Line: If you want to be wise, trust God to give you wisdom.

Virtue: WISDOM is finding out what you should do and then doing it.

Key Verse: "If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you." - James 1:5a (NLT)

We started a conversation last week about wisdom. Wisdom is finding out what you should do and doing it. Where does wisdom come from? All wisdom comes from God because He is the wisest of all. Because all wisdom comes from Him, we can always put our trust in God to help us make wise decisions.

Check this out. Proverbs 3:5-6 (NLT) says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take."

You guys know what it means to trust in something, right? You trust in stuff every day. You trust a chair to hold you up when you sit down. You trust your bike to get you to your friend's house. You trust your best friend will want to hang out with you over the weekend.

But what happens when chairs or bikes break? Or your friend made different plans? Sometimes we trust in things or people that let us down. But God never will. He is completely trustworthy. When God makes a promise, He keeps it, always.

When it comes to wisdom, we shouldn't lean on or trust in our own way to make the right kind of choices. Why? Because we can't know everything. But God does. He made you, He loves you, and He has a perfect plan for your life. When you ask Him to help you, He will. You can trust that God will always lead you in the right direction. If you want to be wise, trust God to give you wisdom.

## Discussion Questions

## (K-2 ${ }^{\text {nd }}$ Grade)

What's something you trust each day without really thinking about it?

Why should we trust God more than we do other things or other people?
( $3^{\text {rd }}-6^{\text {th }}$ Grade)
Has anyone that you trusted ever let you down? How did you react?

Is it easier to trust in our own understanding or trust God? Why?

## ( $7^{\text {th }}$ Grade and up)

Has your trust in someone ever been broken? How did you react?

Do you trust yourself more than you trust God? Why or why not?

## Let's Pray

Heavenly Father, thank You for being completely faithful and trustworthy. Help us put our trust in Your ways instead of our own this week. As we make decisions, help us to pray and ask you for Your help. Show Your wisdom so that we can make choices that honor You. Amen.

SCOUTING REPORT
Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion!
Background: One key to living wisely is acting on what you already know and planning ahead. "The shrewd person knows where the dangers and pitfalls are in life and so can avoid them; the naïve person is unwary, untrained, and gullible, unable to survive the dangers of the world and blundering into them." (NET Bible Notes on Proverbs 22:3) Several proverbs express this sentiment, and it's suggested in many other ways throughout the Bible. Many biblical characters are found making the wise choice to trust and obey God in preparation for what is to come. It took Noah at least one hundred years to build his ark. Joseph paid attention to the dreams God sent him and wisely prepared all of Egypt for a coming famine. Gideon took time to listen to God and whittle down his army to the right group of men before successfully attacking the Midianites. Jesus didn't begin His public ministry until He was thirty years old. If we want to act with wisdom, we will listen to God and plan ahead instead of blindly jumping into an unknown situation.

## BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read Proverbs 22:3, 21:5, 21:29.


#### Abstract

ENCOURAGEMENT "We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps." (Proverbs 16:9, NLT) While planning ahead is good, we can't allow our own preparation to become a crutch or an idol that takes the place of our trust in God. It's an easy way to feel secure in ourselves apart from God. Instead, we want to plan prayerfully and prepare obediently, knowing that our plans will sometimes fail, but God will always be with us.


## QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

How can you do your best to plan and be prepared to act with wisdom?

Bottom Line: If you want to be wise, look before you leap.

Virtue: WISDOM is finding out what you should do and then doing it.

Key Verse: "If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you." - James 1:5a (NLT)

Raise your hand if you like to play hide-and-seek. You might not believe this, but I played hide and seek as a kid! It's one of those classic games that never goes out of style. Since you guys are such hide-and-seek experts, someone quickly explain how the game works.

## (Pause and call on a kid to respond.)

That was an awesome description! When you play hide-andseek, the goal is to get back to the base before you're found by the kid who is "it."

For the last few practices, we've been talking about wisdom. Wisdom is finding out what you should do and doing it! We've talked about how all wisdom comes from God and how He will help us choose wisely when we ask for His help. I'm glad that God doesn't keep all that wisdom to Himself. He is always willing to help us make wise choices when we ask.

Proverbs 22:3 (NLT) says, "A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences." Prudent can be another word for wise. A simpleton is someone who doesn't act very wisely.

According to this verse, wise people see danger and what? Yes! They go to a safe place, just like you run to "base" when you play hide-and-seek. Wise people pay attention. When they see they're going in the wrong direction, they move to a safe place, away from danger. But people who lack wisdom don't pay attention to the warning signs! They just keep going, and, well, things don't go so well.

You should always pay attention to what's ahead, and when you see danger, say "NO WAY!" and head in the opposite direction. When you aren't sure what to do or think you might be headed in the wrong direction, stop! Read God's Word, and pray to ask for wisdom. Talk to the people around you who know and follow God. Remember, if you want to be wise, look before you leap.

## Discussion Questions

## (K-2 ${ }^{\text {nd }}$ Grade)

Where would be the scariest place to play hide-and-seek?
Have you ever been in danger or close to it? What did you do?
( $3^{\text {rd }}-6^{\text {th }}$ Grade)
Why do small children sometimes do dangerous things like touching a hot stove or trying to go down stairs when they can barely walk?

What happens if we continue going toward dangerous places?

## ( $7^{\text {th }}$ Grade and up)

Why do we sometimes seek danger? What are the consequences of doing so?

What safeguards can you put in place to avoid danger? How can you trust God to help you?

## Let's Pray

Dear God, we love You. We know that all wisdom comes from You and that when we ask for help, you will show us the way to go. This week, when we find ourselves in situations where we might be heading in the wrong direction, help us to stop and look before we leap. Amen.

## PRACTICE 8

## SCOUTING REPORT

## Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion!

Background: All the knowledge and all the wisdom we can learn from the Bible can certainly help us live better lives, but we must be careful not to miss the main point. The Bible also tells us about God's plan of redemption for a broken world, and that plan ultimately lands on one person: Jesus. The Gospel of John states, "So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son." (John 1:14, NLT) Jesus, God's Son, is called the Word. All the knowledge and wisdom of God are wrapped up in Him because He is God, revealed to us in human form. God, in all His wisdom-and all His knowledge of past, present, and futuredecided that the very best course of action was to die for us. His sacrifice was intentional. It was monumental. It was true to who He is and how much He loves us. It made a way for us to have a relationship with God and to be with Him for eternity. All other wisdom and knowledge pale in comparison to this one great truth: "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16, NLT)

## BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read John 14:1-11; Acts 4:10-12; John 1920; John 1:1-18.

## ENCOURAGEMENT

Jesus spoke the words of John 14:6 in the context of the Passover meal with his disciples, their last supper together before he was arrested and killed. His final words for them (John 14-17) were full of comfort and preparation. Though Jesus was the one about to go to His death, He prayed fervently for His original disciples, and He even prayed for us (John 17:20-21). His purpose was always for us in His life and in His death.

## QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

Do I believe Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life? Have I put my trust in Him to rescue me from sin and death?

Bottom Line: Jesus came to rescue us.

Virtue: The GOOD NEWS is that Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins.

Key Verse: "Jesus told him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."' - John 14:6

Practice Card Reminder: If your league uses practice cards, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled "Practice 8" at the end of practice.

> Think about some of the most famous athletes of all time. Lebron James. Venus and Serena Williams. Lionel Messi. These athletes know their sport inside and out. They have spent most of their lives studying their game. They know a huge amount about what to do to be successful, to win. But guess what? Sometimes they make mistakes. Even though they know exactly what to do, sometimes even they-as great as they are-can't follow through. No one is perfect.

Did you know that's true when it comes to our relationship with God, too? We can read the whole Bible a hundred times. We can go to church every week. We can spend our lives learning about God. But no matter how much you know about God, no matter how much you try to be obedient to Him, you will still mess up sometimes. We all do. No one is perfect.

But making a mistake in sports is different from disobeying God. Mistakes are on accident. Sin, or disobeying God, is not on accident. It's on purpose, whether we realize it or not. Sin is doing our own thing instead of doing what God has told us is the right thing. We sin when we do things like lie, cheat, disobey our parents, or hurt someone else. The Bible says that we all do these things. We all sin.

Sin hurts our relationship with God. God created us, He loves us, and He wants to be with us. But God is also holy and perfect. Sin is us going against Him and what He has told us is right and true, so it separates us from Him. Because of sin, we are all lost. We've wandered away from God, and we have no way to get back to Him on our own.

But guess what? God loves us so much that He sent His son, Jesus, to rescue us. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.'" (John 14:6, NLT) Jesus is the only way back to God. But how does that work?

Jesus came to earth a long, long time ago. He was born as a baby like you or me. He grew up. He spent time with His family, He made friends, He worked. And then He started teaching God's truth. He started doing amazing things, like healing people. He asked people to follow Him because He could show them how God wants us to live. And while Jesus did all of that, He never sinned. Not once. Some people got mad that Jesus said He was the way to God. They arrested Him and nailed Him to a cross. Jesus died. But three days later, He came back to life! He appeared to many of His followers before He went back to heaven, where He is still alive today!

Jesus is our way back to God because He paid the price for all our sins when He died on the cross. For your sin and for mine. The Bible says the consequence of $\sin$ is death and being separated from God forever. But when Jesus died, He took our punishment Himself, so when we ask God to forgive us for our sins, He will-because Jesus took the consequences and made a way for us to be forgiven. And when Jesus rose again, He defeated death. If we trust in Jesus, when we die, we get to live with Him in heaven forever instead of being separated from God.

Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. He is our way back to God. When we believe in Jesus, He gives us new life, and He gives us the Holy Spirit, who helps us live in a way that follows God's truth and God's plan for our lives. If we ask Him, Jesus will come and find us and bring us to God. Jesus came to rescue us from sin and death.

If you have questions or want to talk more about what all this means, l'd be happy to talk with you after practice.

> God, thank You for Jesus and what He did for us. We know we often choose our own way over Your way. Forgive us for our sins. Help each of us to trust in Jesus to save us. We know He can bring us back to You. We love You, Lord. Amen.

If someone has questions about following Jesus, let your League Director know and ask them about the follow-up process for your league. You can also let the parents know their child is asking questions. If the family does not attend church, this would be a great opportunity to invite them to come to church with you.

## PRACTICE 9 <br> 

SCOUTING REPORT

## Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion!

Background: Our final virtue for this season is honesty. Someone who is honest tells the truth and lives in a way where they do what they say they will do. Honesty and integrity go hand-in-hand. The book of James in the New Testament addresses what it looks like to live honestly. James (the halfbrother of Jesus) wrote about doing what you say you will do and how faith and good works are both essential parts of the Christian life. "But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like." (James 1:23-24, NLT) Living honestly means practicing what you preach. It means following up on what you say you will do. James also warned, with very strong language, that we should watch what we say. "People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right!" (James 3:7-10, NLT) To James, Christians were meant to live authentically. They should speak truthfully and peacefully, being careful of what they say. They should live authentically, backing up what they said they believed with their actions. This is the kind of honest life that follows Jesus' example.

## BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read James 1:19-27, 2:14-20, 3:3-12; Proverbs 10:9.

## ENCOURAGEMENT

James is perhaps the most practical of the New
Testament letters. It makes you wonder if the author drew from his experience growing up with Jesus. Though James didn't place his faith in Jesus until after Jesus' resurrection, it is likely he would have looked back and remembered how Jesus spoke to others and how Jesus' actions were always in step with His beliefs.

## QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

Do my beliefs drive my behavior? Why or why not? Am I careful about what I say? Why or why not?

Bottom Line: When you're not truthful, you lose trust.

Virtue: HONESTY is choosing to be truthful in whatever you say and do.

Key Verse: "People with integrity walk safely, but those who follow crooked paths will be exposed." - Proverbs 10:9 (NLT)

Practice Card Reminder: If your league uses practice cards, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled "Practice 9" at the end of practice.

Have you ever listened to someone and thought, "That's not true"? Maybe a friend tells you a story that just sounds outrageous. Or maybe your sister promised that she didn't take something of yours, but you know she did.

For the next few practices, we will be talking about honesty. Honesty is choosing to be truthful in whatever you say and do. Choosing honesty is a big deal. Why? Because we know that God created truth, and He wants us to spread truth and not lies. And because no one really wants to hang out with someone who isn't truthful. When others act dishonestly, it's hard to trust them in the future.

There's a book in the Bible called Proverbs that was written by a very wise man named Solomon. Solomon wrote down hundreds of truths in the book of Proverbs for us to read and think about. Although these truths were written thousands of years ago, they are still real to us today. Here's what Solomon had to say about honesty. "People with integrity walk safely, but those who follow crooked paths will be exposed." (Proverbs 10:9, NLT)

Being honest is about telling the truth and also about the way you live. We live with honesty and integrity so that our words are the same as what we actually do. We live with honesty so we'll be on that straight and safe path, and the people around us can trust us. But when your words and actions don't match, it's like a crooked path where trust is broken.

The question is, are we saying one thing but doing something else? Do you find yourself making up stories or not giving the whole truth to avoid getting in trouble? Living honestly builds trust with the people around you. Because when you're not honest, you lose trust.

Let's ask God to help us live honestly this week so we can build trust with the people around us.

## Discussion Questions

## (K-2 ${ }^{\text {nd }}$ Grade)

How does it feel when someone lies to you?
Why is it important to tell the truth?
( $3^{\text {rd }}-6^{\text {th }}$ Grade)
What does it mean to be honest with your words AND actions?
What does integrity mean? (Integrity is doing the right thing, even if no one is watching you.)
( $7^{\text {th }}$ Grade and up)
Have you ever lost trust with someone because you were dishonest? What happened?

How can you make sure your actions back up your words?

Let's Pray

Heavenly Father, thank You for keeping Your promises to us. We know that You are always truthful and that we can trust you no matter what. Help us to choose to live honestly this week so that others will trust us, too. We love You. Amen.

## PRACTICE 10



SCOUTING REPORT
Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion!
Background: In today's devotion, we'll look briefly at the story of Esther in the Old Testament of the Bible. This narrative takes place after the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were conquered by foreign powers, and many Jews were taken from their homeland to live in exile. Eventually, the Jews were allowed to return home, but some chose to stay. "The book of Esther gives us a unique glimpse into life among the Jewish exiles who did not return from Babylonia. Long after many of their compatriots had returned home to Jerusalem in the years following Cyrus's decree of 538 B.C., the Jews in this book lived and flourished in a foreign land." (David M. Howard Jr., An Introduction to the Old Testament Historical Books) Esther and her cousin-turned-father-figure Mordecai were some of these Jews living in Susa, the Persian fortress. Esther became the queen of the Persian ruler, Xerxes I (Ahasuerus). When Haman's plot threatened the lives of all the Jews in Persia, Esther and Mordecai were able to use Esther's influence with the king to deliver the Jews from this unjust fate. While we see the result of Haman's pride, vitriol, and scheming as the main obstacle to overcome, it appears that it took time for Esther to summon the courage to be truly honest with the king at risk to her own life. But she did so in order to save her people..

## BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read Esther 3-8.

## ENCOURAGEMENT

"If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?" Esther 4:14 (NLT)

## QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

What sacrifices am I willing to make to speak honestly and to act with integrity?

Bottom Line: When you lie to help yourself, you hurt yourself instead.

Virtue: HONESTY is choosing to be truthful in whatever you say and do.

Key Verse: "People with integrity walk safely, but those who follow crooked paths will be exposed." - Proverbs 10:9 (NLT)

Have you ever heard of Esther from the Bible? She was a queen with an unbelievable story. And just like any good story, there's a good guy and a bad guy! You've probably guessed that the good guy, or girl rather, was Queen Esther. The bad guy was named Haman.

Haman wanted power any way he could get it, so he made up a terrible lie about the Jewish people who were living in the kingdom of Persia. And those lies convinced the king of Persia to have all of the Jews in his kingdom killed. Haman was a really bad guy.

What Haman didn't know was that Queen Esther was a Jew. When she found out what Haman was trying to do, she made a plan and trapped him in his own lie. Esther and her people were saved!

In our own lives, we probably won't face the same end that Haman did when we choose to be dishonest. But we definitely get hurt when we aren't truthful. We've all been tempted to bend the truth a little to get ahead or make things go how we want. But lying to help ourselves get out of something or to gain something we think we deserve is never the wise choice. Remember, when you lie to help yourself, you hurt yourself instead. And you often hurt others, too. We can pray and ask God to help us choose honesty.

## Discussion Questions

## (K-2 ${ }^{\text {nd }}$ Grade)

Have you ever gotten into more trouble because you weren't honest about something?

How can lying hurt other people?

## ( $3^{\text {rd }}-6^{\text {th }}$ Grade)

Have you ever been tempted to lie to avoid getting in trouble or to get something you thought you deserved? What happened?

How can choosing to be dishonest in the moment hurt you rather than help you?

## ( $7^{\text {th }}$ Grade and up)

Can you think of an example of when lying had bad consequences for the person who lied? What is it?

What are some of the possible consequences of lying to your parents? To your teachers? To your friends?

Let's Pray

> Heavenly Father, we know honesty is a big deal. When we're tempted this week to bend the truth to avoid getting in trouble, help us to remember that honesty is always the wise choice. We don't want to hurt ourselves or others. Thank You for always loving us, no matter what. Amen.

## PRACTICE 11



## SCOUTING REPORT

## Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion!

Background: Dishonesty can have many consequences, but it can be especially damaging to our relationships with others. Though sometimes dishonesty feels like the easy way out of an uncomfortable situation, like many quick fixes, it can actually make things worse. The Bible encourages us to cling to truth and goodness instead: "Then keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies! Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it." (Psalm 34:13-14, NLT) Often, that means we must own up to our failures and apologize for our sins and mistakes. None of us are perfect. But we can choose to make decisions that build up our relationships instead of doing further damage.

## BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read Psalm 34:13-14; James 5:16; Matthew 5:23-24.

## ENCOURAGEMENT

One of the best ways to learn is by example. Many times, kids aren't used to receiving apologies from adults. As a coach, you have the opportunity to be quick to own up to your mistakes and to show the athletes on your team how much you value them as people by being willing to apologize when you yell a little too loudly or say something you shouldn't have said. Being quick and genuine with your apologies can go a long way.

## QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

Am I more likely to apologize for, deny, or cover up my mistakes? Why?

Bottom Line: When you're not truthful, you hurt others.

Virtue: HONESTY is choosing to be truthful in whatever you say and do.

Key Verse: "People with integrity walk safely, but those who follow crooked paths will be exposed." - Proverbs 10:9 (NLT)

Can anyone remember what we've been talking about for the last few practices? Yes, honesty! Honesty is choosing to be truthful in whatever you say and do. Honesty is a big deal because it builds trust. Have you ever done something you weren't supposed to do and then your parents asked you about it? In that moment, maybe you were tempted to lie, to blame it on someone else, or just deny it. But you and I both know that if you lied about it and your parents found out, the consequences would be way worse than simply telling the truth from the beginning.

Have you ever spent hours working on something, like a LEGO creation with a million pieces or a big art project for school? What would happen if you left the room and I kicked your LEGO creation across the room like a soccer ball or poured a cup of water over your art project? How would that make you feel? The first thing you would probably do is tell your parents what you thought I did.

What if your parents came to me and asked me what happened, and I told them I didn't know, even though I actually did ruin your LEGO creation or your big art project? You would be hurt, confused, and angry with me. Once your parents found out I lied, that would be terrible and damage that relationship, too. When you aren't truthful, you hurt others.

Just like it would take hours to rebuild that amazing LEGO creation or to somehow recreate your art project, it can take a while to build back the trust you lose when you're dishonest. But here's the good news. You can build it back.

It is possible when you decide to tell the truth and ask for forgiveness. We all mess up from time to time, especially when it comes to living honestly. And no matter what you do, God loves you and will always forgive you and help you start over.

This week, when you're tempted to lie to someone or do something dishonest, I want you to think about protecting the other person and your friendship first. Let's think about how it would make the other person feel and make a different choice so that the people around us can really trust us because we practice honesty.

## Discussion Questions

## (K-2 ${ }^{\text {nd }}$ Grade)

Why is it important to be honest?
What is one thing you've learned this season?

## ( $3^{\text {rd }}-6^{\text {th }}$ Grade)

What is one practical thing you could do this week to help you live honestly?

What's one thing you've learned this season?

## ( $7^{\text {th }}$ Grade and up)

Why is it easier to lose trust than to build it? How can we protect our trust with other people?

What's one thing you've learned this season?

Let's Pray

Heavenly Father, thank You for a great season. Thank
You for loving us and for helping us learn about honesty. Please help us think about how our words and actions affect the people around us this week. Help us to live honestly so others will trust us. Amen.

## SECTION 5

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## $\rightarrow$ Circle of Affirmation

## Game Day Attitude

Choosing the right game-day attitude is a key to being an effective Upward Basketball Coach. Actions and reactions on the field can either open or close the door to ministry. The Circle of Criticism and the Circle of Affirmation are simple diagrams that illustrate the results of a coach giving a referee either negative or positive feedback.

In Upward Basketball, coaches and referees work together as a unified team. Coaches have the opportunity and the responsibility to stop the Circle of Criticism by starting the Circle of Affirmation.


The Circle of Affirmation goes beyond the referee. A coach's affirmation of players inspires encouragement and praise from parents, family members and other players. Practicing the Circle of Affirmation makes the game a better experience for everyone.

## The Levels of Upward Basketball

Upward Basketball suggests a four-level age appropriate format that progresses with each player. Each level of Upward Basketball is tailored to meet players where they are in their age development and ability, allowing them to reach their full potential.


## Basic Rules for Levels 1-3

## Note: These rules do NOT apply to Level 4.

Except where the following rules apply, play is governed by the National Federation of State High School Associations' (NFHS) Rules Book www.nfhs.org

## Game Format

- Referees lead both teams in prayer at center court before every game. This sets the tone and focus for the game.
- A coin flip or other impartial method determines which team receives possession first. In jump ball situations, possessions will alternate. This promotes fairness for both teams while adhering to the NFHS rule for jump ball situations.
- Clock format: Running clock throughout the game, stopping only for pre-determined substitutions at the end of each segment and halftime.
- At the end of each segment, the team that receives the ball next is based upon the direction of the possession arrow. This avoids the offensive team that may have possession in the next segment from stalling at the end of a period.
- All coaches will adhere to the Upward substitution system. The substitution system allows for equal playing time for all players.
- There are no timeouts. This allows more playing time and keeps the games on time.
- Teams switch goals at halftime. This rule is in compliance with NFHS Rules. It also evens any advantage that may occur because of the court.
- Standings add unneeded pressure to the game and therefore will not be maintained." Any game ending in a tie should remain in a tie. No overtimes are played so games stay on schedule.


## Rules for Play

## Defense

- Man-to-man defense will be played at all times in Levels 1-3. In a man-to-man defense, players are only guarding the opponent that closely matches their ability and height. This allows for a more competitive system for every player on the court while creating an equal opportunity for each player.
- Defensive players must stay within approximate arm's reach of the player they are guarding. This prevents defenders from sagging or crowding an area of the court to gain a defensive advantage. When a violation occurs award the team in possession a throw in from the spot nearest to the violation or have the player step back and establish their dribble.
, After a warning to the player, the player will be assessed a personal foul for subsequent violations.
- Double-teaming is not allowed and prevents players not guarding their correct player from stealing the ball off the dribble.. However, help and recover defense is strongly encouraged in the instances below. Help and recover lets a player temporarily guard another player as outlined in the examples below, but must leave as the other player gets within arms reach as double teaming is not allowed.
, Lane Area: If a defender is in the lane and the player he or she is guarding is within arm's reach, the defender is allowed to provide help defense inside the lane. Since many goals are scored in the lane, it provides the defense more opportunity to properly defend this area.
, Picks and Screens: Defensive switching is allowed on offensive picks or screens. The non-screened defender can help his or her teammate by temporarily switching until the teammate recovers to defend their offensive player. This is commonly referred to as "help and recover." This prevents the offense from continually setting screens to gain an advantage.
, Fast Breaks: When a transition begins in the backcourt and the offense quickly moves the ball up court, another defensive player may help and recover. Upon stopping the fast break, defenders should return to guarding their assigned players. This rule is meant to prevent the defenders from helplessly watching the offensive player score without being able to help.
- At the beginning of each segment, players will line up at half court and "match up" with whom they are guarding. This act is performed to promote equal player match-ups. Equal match-ups combined with man-to-man defense create five competitive pairings on the court.
- Full court presses are not allowed. Defensive players may not guard their opponents in the backcourt. This will allow for more play to occur in the front court and create an equal opportunity for each player to participate both on offense and defense.
- When playing on a short court, backcourt violations will not be called. If playing on a regulation-size court (84 feet) as opposed to cross-court, backcourt violations should be called. 10 seconds should be called on short courts or regulation size courts.
- A player committing two fouls in one segment must sit out the remainder of that segment. The next player in the rotation comes in as the substitute and is rewarded some
extra game time. This does not change the normal rotation as the fouled-out player does not re-enter the game until they are next scheduled to do so. This rule allows the offending player time to regroup during the remainder of the segment while realizing that there is a consequence for the violation.


## Offense

- The offense must purposefully attack the defense in every situation - no stalling or throwing the ball into the backcourt to "reset" a play or "retreat" from the defense. After a warning from the referee, a violation will be called resulting in a turnover. This will prevent a team with the lead from running the clock out by staying in the backcourt where the opponent is unable to play defense.
- Isolation plays will not be a part of Levels 1-3 because they take away the opportunity for improvement for all players and contradict the spirit of the rules. For offense this prevents players being positioned at half-court to isolate defenders away from the play.
- Non-shooting fouls will result in the ball being inbounded from either the baseline or sideline. All shooting fouls will result in two free throws. By not administering "bonus" situation free throws, all players on the court can contribute to consistent game action.
- No score will be given for a basket in the wrong goal. It will be treated as a turnover and will be taken out along the baseline. This will prevent further embarrassing a player for making this mistake.


## $\Rightarrow$ Level 1 (K5) Modifications

| RULE | EXPLANATION / COMMENTS |
| :---: | :---: |
| Goal Height | 7 feet |
| Ball Size | 27.5" |
| Games consist of six, 6-minute segments and an 8 minute halftime. One minute is allotted for substitutions between segments. | This keeps games to approximately an hour time frame |
| Score is not kept | The focus of this age is to learn fundamentals, not winning and losing. |
| 3 -second violation is not called | Referees should advise players of this potential violation but not penalize. |
| Coaches are allowed on the floor with players | The focus is for coaches to instruct and encourage players at all times. |
| Stealing the ball from the dribbler is not allowed | To encourage the offensive player to dribble with correct form without the pressure of having the ball stolen. |
| Stealing the ball off a pass is not allowed | To encourage the offensive player to pass with correct form without the pressure of having the ball stolen. A block should not be considered a steal. |
| Violation is not called for having two hands on the ball while dribbling | Due to limited hand-eye coordination, this allows a player to establish correct dribbling form through rhythm and pressure on the ball. |
| Violation for double dribbling is called but does not result in a turnover | Players should learn the concept of double dribble but should be allowed the opportunity to correct it without penalty. |
| Violation for traveling is called but does not result in a turnover | Players should learn the concept of traveling but should be allowed the opportunity to correct it without penalty. |
| Violation for traveling is not called when a player shuffles feet when trying to set up for a shot | Because this age group is single skill focused, players will tend to shuffle their feet when focusing on setting up for a shot. This is corrected as the player develops in skill as he gets older. |
| Fast Breaks are allowed in any transition situation | Players at this age will learn proper transition offense. |
| Free throws are awarded on all shooting fouls | Two shots are attempted by the fouled player at the 8'10' line. Offense may have up to 2 players on the lane, not including the shooter. Defense may have up to 3 players on the lane. After the last free throw attempt, the ball becomes live. |


| RULE | EXPLANATION / COMMENTS |
| :---: | :---: |
| Goal Height | 8 feet |
| Ball Size | 27.5" |
| Games consist of six, 6-minute segments and an 8 minute halftime. One minute is allotted for substitutions between segments. | This keeps games to approximately an hour time frame. |
| Score is Optional | Focus on teaching young athletes the proper skill development traits needed to handle winning and losing after a game. This will translate into life lessons. |
| 3-second violation is not called | Young athletes at this age should focus on offensive basics (dribbling, passing, shooting, and rebounding). |
| One Coach per team is allowed to walk the sidelines to encourage and instruct players | Players will be able to focus their attention on the coach standing. Walking the sidelines allows the coach to instruct and encourage players at all times. |
| Free throws are awarded on all shooting fouls | Two shots are attempted by the fouled player at the 10 ' line. Offense may have up to 2 players on the lane, not including the shooter. Defense may have up to 3 players on the lane. After the last free throw attempt, the ball becomes live. |
| Stealing the ball off a dribble or pass is allowed | Players at this age should be taught and held to these basic basketball rules. |
| Double dribble violation is called in all circumstances |  |
| Traveling violation is called in all circumstances |  |
| Fast breaks are allowed in any transition situation |  |

## $\rightarrow$ Level 3 (3rd \& 4th Grade) Modifications

## RULE

| Goal Height |
| :--- |
| Ball Size |
| Games consist of six, 6-minute segments and <br> an 8-minute halftime. One minute is allotted <br> for substitutions between segments. |
| Score IS kept |
| 3-second violation is called and results in a <br> turnover |

One coach per team is allowed to stand in their coach box area to encourage and instruct players.

Clock runs continuously with special rules in effect with fewer than two minutes remaining in the game:

- Non-shooting fouls result in the offensive team getting one point and the ball.
- Shooting fouls result in the offensive team scoring two points. The opposing team then takes possession.
- Players fouled in the act of shooting and making the basket are credited with the basket plus one point. The opposing team then takes possession.

Free throws are awarded on all shooting fouls.

## EXPLANATION/COMMENTS

9 feet
28.5"

This keeps games to approximately an hour time frame.

Young athletes at this age should learn how to handle winning and losing after competition. This translates into life lessons.

At this age, young athletes should understand the concept of offensive movement by not allowing an offensive player to stay in the lane more than 3 seconds

Players will be able to focus their attention on the coach standing. Walking the sidelines allows the coach to instruct and encourage players at all times.

Because the clock does not stop, this rule keeps the game moving without wasting the running game clock on lining up for free throw attempts

Two shots are attempted by the fouled player at the 12 ' line. Offense may have up to 2 players on the lane, not including the shooter. Defense may have up to 3 players on the lane. After the last free throw attempt, the ball becomes live.

Players at this age should be taught and held to these basic basketball rules.

Traveling violation is called in all circumstances

Fast breaks are allowed in any transition situation

## Level 4 (5th Grade \& Up) Rules

*The following rules are exclusive to Level 4. They follow a more traditional middle school format and game play. Except where the following rules apply, play is governed by the National Federation of State High School Associations' (NFHS) Rules Book www.nfhs.org

## RULE

## EXPLANATION / COMMENTS

$\left.$| Referees lead both team in <br> prayer at center court before <br> every game | This sets the tone and focus for the game |
| :--- | :--- |
| Goal Height | 10 feet |
| Ball Size | $28.5^{\prime \prime}$ (girls), 29.5' (boys) |
| Games consist of 4, six <br> minute quarters | Follows middle school rules and allows <br> game to begin and end within an hour <br> timeframe |
| The clock stops at each <br> whistle | Stoppage of play includes violations, fouls, <br> out-of-bounds play, timeouts, and injury |
| Overtimes are 2 minutes in <br> length (regulation clock) | Gives both teams the opportunity to win <br> the game with reasonably extended time. If <br> the game is still tied at the end of the first <br> overtime period, you have two options: <br> The game ends in a tie |
| Teams team to score a basket wins the <br> go-second timeout per half (1 |  |
| per team per half) |  | | This allows a coach to meet with players and |
| :--- |
| adjust strategy during a game | \right\rvert\, | All games are played on a |
| :--- | :--- |
| full-sized regulation court |
| (no cross court) |$\quad$| This is appropriate floor size for players at |
| :--- |
| this level |

## $\Rightarrow$ Level 4 (5th Grade \& Up) Rules Cont.

## RULE

 EXPLANATION / COMMENTSAll players are allowed five fouls each game. After the 5th foul is committed, the player is out for the remainder of the game

After the seventh team foul in each half, bonus free throws are awarded to the fouled team (1 and 1)

After the tenth team foul in each half, double bonus free throws are awarded to the fouled team (2 shots)

Three point shots are allowed only if the court features a three-point arc.

Courts without a 3-point line should not award 3 points no matter the shot distance

Playing time requirements for each player in Level 4 are:

- Each athlete plays a minimum of $1 / 4$ of each game
- Each athlete must play in both halves of each game

End of season tournaments are encouraged for Level 4

Level 4 does not use the substitution system found in Levels $1-3$. This allows flexibility in managing playing time for each coach based on the game situation while promoting fair game participation for all players

End of season tournament play adds excitement to your league. (see Resources on MyUpward.org for tournament templates)

## Upward Substitution Rotation

- The basic Upward substitution system applies to ONLY Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 divisions.
- Level 4 division does not use the basic Upward Substitution Rotations detailed in this training guide. Playing time for this division are:
- Each player plays a minimum of $1 / 4$ each game.
- Each player must play in both halves of each game.
- In Level 1 games consist of six 6-minute segments with an 8 -minute halftime. Levels 2 and 3 plays six 6 -minute segments with an 8 -minute halftime.

The Upward Substitution Rotation for Levels 1-3 is designed to provide every player equal opportunity for improvement. The substitution system ensures the following:

- Every player will play at least half of the game. This eliminates preferential treatment of players.
- No player will sit out more than six minutes at a time. This allows each player to be involved in consistent game action and assists in keeping players focused and engaged in the game.
- The starting lineup shifts down one player for the start of every game allowing every player to be in the starting lineup. This gives all players a time to be on the court first and no child feels as though they are used only as a reserve player.
- Coaches are not open to making unfair substitutions. Following substitution rotation helps coaches manage who should be in the game.
- Coaches are free from monitoring playing time for each player. The substitution system allows coaches to focus more on instructing and encouraging players than awarding playing time.
- Playing time for all players is virtually even over the course of the season. This gives all players game experience and to allows them to be a contributing teammate.


## When using MyUpward, mark the game complete to see a summary of the stars and notes you took during the game for easy post game star presentation.

MYUPWARD MAKES THE SUBSTITUTION SYSTEM EASY TO MANAGE. IT SHOWS THE GAME BY GAME PER PERIOD ROTATION WHERE YOU MAY ACTIVATE PLAYERS, REMOVE PLAYERS FROM THE LINEUP, TAKE NOTES AND TRACK GAME DAY STARS.

## Filling Out the Substitution Form

Here is how to use substitution form in the back of the book if you are not using MyUpward.org.


For Week 2, begin with Player "B" and fill in five players for the starting lineup.

Using the previous method, you would then fill in the rest of the form accordingly for Week 2.

## Week 2

| PLAYER NAME | FIRST HALF |  |  | SECOND HALF |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | 18 min | 12 min | 6 min | 18 min | 12 min | 6 min |
| A Beth |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| B Ann | $x$ |  |  |  |  |  |
| C Susan | X |  |  |  |  |  |
| D Kim | X |  |  |  |  |  |
| E Mary | X |  |  |  |  |  |
| F Karen | x |  |  |  |  |  |
| G Amy |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| H |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| J |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## Substitution Scenario

It's Week 3 and, as game time approaches, Mary has not arrived (she is supposed to be in the starting lineup for Week Three). She did not call prior to the game and inform you that she will not be present.

How to fill out the form:
Since it's Week 3, you'll start with Susan followed by Kim. For the first segment only, draw a line through the box for Mary. Fill in the box for Karen and Amy (this now gives you four players). To occupy the fifth spot, fill in the next person in the rotation (Beth). This is your new starting Iineup for Week Three.


For the second segment, start with the next person in the rotation (Ann) and work down the form to include Susan and Kim. Draw a line through Mary's box and continue down the form to include Karen and Amy.
If by the third segment Mary has yet to arrive, draw another line through her name and begin with the next person in the rotation (Beth) to begin this segment. Continue this lineup with Ann, Susan, Kim and Karen.

| Week 3 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | FIRST HALF |  |  | SECOND HALF |  |  |
| NAM | 18 min | 12 min | 6 min | 18 min | 12 min | 6 min |
| A Beth | X |  | $X$ |  |  |  |
| B Ann |  | X | $x$ |  |  |  |
| C Susan | X | X | X |  |  |  |
| D Kim | X | X | X |  |  |  |
| E Mary | --- | --- | --- |  |  |  |
| F Karen | X | X | X |  |  |  |
| G Amy | X | X |  |  |  |  |
| H |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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If Mary arrives during halftime, continue with the current cycle including Mary in the proper rotation. Then continue with the rest of the rotations through the end of the game. As you can see with the previous example, it is important to NOT fill out your form prior to the game. If a participant is absent, it is best to fill out your form segment by segment in case the absent player arrives at some point during the game.

## Week 3

| PLAYER NAME | FIRST HALF |  |  | SECOND HALF |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | 18 min | 12 min | 6 min | 18 min | 12 min | 6 min |
| A Beth | X |  | X | X | X |  |
| B Ann |  | X | X | $X$ | X |  |
| C Susan | X | X | X | X |  | X |
| D Kim | X | X | X | X |  | X |
| E Mary | --- | --- | --- |  | X | $x$ |
| F Karen | X | X | X |  | X | $x$ |
| G Amy | X | X |  | X | X | $x$ |
| H |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| J |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## Game Day Stars

If your league is using Game Day Stars, you have an Award Stars booklet. These multi-colored stickers are given to each player at the end of every game. Star presentation should be an exciting time. Encourage parents to cheer as stars are distributed to each player. Make specific points why each participant receives a particular star. Notes you or your assistant coach take during the game should be used during this time as you encourage their efforts.

TIP: Find a location off of the court and take your time with this activity after the game.

Here is an example of how to conduct a star presentation:
"During the game today Luke was in the right position on defense every time with his arms out and palms up and defending the other players strong hand. Luke made great decisions and made the defensive stop each time. Today Luke will get the red star for his defensive effort. Great defense today Luke!"

Use the star distribution form on MyUpward in the Gameday area or in the back of your coach playbook to track which stars each participant has received. Make an attempt to award each participant all five stars throughout the season.

Encourage players to display the stars they receive on their posters. Here is a list of the game day stars and what they represent.


## Blue is for Effort

## Gold is for Sportsmanship

Gray is for Offense


## Red is for Defense

Wった? is for Christlikeness

## SECTION 6


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NOTES FOR NEXT PRACTICE:


## Game 10 - Sub. Form

|  | Player's Name |
| :---: | :---: |
| A |  |
| B |  |
| C |  |
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| E |  |
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| J |  |

NOTES FOR NEXT PRACTICE:

L"


NOTES FOR NEXT PRACTICE: $\square$

## Upward Basketball star distribution form

Use a pencil to record the color of the star that players receive each game.

| Player's Name | $\begin{gathered} \text { Game } \\ 1 \end{gathered}$ | $2$ | $\begin{gathered} \text { Game } \\ 3 \end{gathered}$ | 4 | $\begin{gathered} \text { Game } \\ 5 \end{gathered}$ | Game | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Game } \\ & 7 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Game } \\ & 8 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{gathered} \text { Game } \\ 9 \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} \text { Game } \\ 10 \end{gathered}$ | Game | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Game } \\ & 12 \end{aligned}$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
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Award Stars help you to celebrate effort and place value in individual and team growth. Coaches should give sincere praise, which is specific to what participants have earned. Consider recruiting a "Star Coach" who can take notes and help with times where stars are presented.

BLUE STAR - The blue star represents EFFORT which means giving your best at all times regardless of the circumstances.
GOLD STAR - The gold star represents SPORTSMANSHIP which means treating your teammates and opponents the way you want to be treated. You show respect to yourself, teammates, opponents, referees, coaches, and the game by demonstrating sportsmanship.
RED STAR - The red star represents DEFENSE which means coordinating with your team to slow down or stop the opponent from making a play or scoring. Defense requires an awareness of being in the right position, hustle and hard work.
GRAY STAR - The gray star represents OFFENSE which means working with your team for a positive play or a score. Offense requires being aware of your teammates and their opportunities as well as using your skills to advance the goals of your team which leads to a score.

WHITE STAR - The white star represents CHRISTLIKENESS which means doing your best to imitate Jesus in every way through your words, attitudes, and actions.

# Find tools online at MyUpward．org to teach the sport and share the gospel． 

Accept the invitation from your League Director to MyUpward．org and have access to：
－Team roster
－Practice and game schedule
－Practice plan and devotion material
－Videos for practice
－Communication Tools
－Game day management
－Tutorial videos


[^0]:    Variations: Both players running up and down the court, rather than sliding. You may also require the receiver to perform a jump stop upon catching the basketball and immediately passing it to his or her moving partner.

