Week 1 Youth Basketball League Devotion

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul frequently used athletic competition as a metaphor for the challenges of the Christian life. You can also find fundamentals of good sportsmanship weaved throughout Scripture, all of which can be applied both on and off the playing field.

Here are just a few of the things the Bible says about good sportsmanship.

DEVO 1:

Learn as much as you can about your sport, play by the rules and don't cheat. A victory gained as a result of cheating is hollow.

According to Colossians 3:23-24 (have someone read it then reread it),

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Questions:

1. What does it mean to work at it whatever you do with all of your heart? (hard work, give 100 %, don't give up, etc..)
2. Why is it important not to cheat in sports? (If you accept cheating in sports, you accept it everywhere in your life. Cheating is something God does not like.)

Pray:

Lord, I pray that you give us the will to give 100% in everything we do not just sports. Be with us as we work with ALL of our heart today. And all of God's people say, AMEN.

Week 2 Youth Basketball League Devotion

DEVO 2:

Treat others kindly. This includes the officials, spectators, and teammates before, during, and after games or events. Even the opposing team, their coaches, and fans deserves your respect. In Philippians 2:3 it says,

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit,
but in humility consider others better than yourselves.

Questions:

1. How can you treat others kindly? (don't get mad at the other team if they beat you, by encouraging your teammates, saying thank you to your parents, etc.)
2. What does it mean to be humble? (never put yourself above anybody else, do not think that you are better than anybody else)
3. Did Jesus treat others kindly? How so? (He healed a leper - explain what that is- when no one else would go near them, he healed a blind person, He allows us to be healthy enough to be out here and play basketball)

Pray:

Lord, thank you for this day! Thank you that we are able to come out here and play basketball. I pray that you teach us what it means to be humble and how we can treat others kindly. Help us encourage one another and never lose focus on you. And all of God's people say, AMEN.

Week 3 Youth Basketball League Devotion

DEVO 3:

Don't lose your cool. Even if other players and teammates lose their tempers, it doesn't mean you have to. It's tough when the ref calls a play that you think is wrong or you lose the game. Remind yourself that the Bible says in 2 Timothy 1:7

For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self control.

Questions:

1. What might make us lose our cool or get mad during a basketball game? (the ref makes a bad call, you lose the game, you can't make a shot, etc.)
2. What might make us lose out cool outside of basketball? School? Home? (parents ground you, you have a bad grade on your test)
3. How can we practice not getting mad or losing our cool? (pray before the games/test/chore, help the bad grade or bad game motivate you to do better, realize that we were wrong)

Pray:

Dear Jesus, please be with us throughout today and this week. Teach us how to not lose our cool or get mad when things don't go our way. Give us patience and self-control. And all of God's people say, AMEN.

Week 4 Youth Basketball League Devotion

DEVO 4:

Be a team player. Just like in the body of Christ, we each have different talents and strengths, that when used together, can accomplish great things. (1 Corinthians 12:27) No one person can win without the help and support of others. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 says,

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!

Questions:

1. Can one player by himself/herself beat the entire other team win by themselves? (No, it would be 1vs5! You need your teammates to help win the game)
2. How can you be a team player? (by doing what the coach asks, by not being a ball hog, by encouraging your teammates even though some of them might not be as good as you are)
3. How did God show that He was a team player for us? (He sent His one and only son, Jesus, to die on the cross for us when he could have selfishly kept Him for himself)

Pray:

Dear Jesus, thank you for allowing us to be on this team. Allow each of us to learn what it means to be a team player and help us work together as one. And all of God's people say, AMEN.

Week 5 – Youth Basketball League Devotion

DEVO 5:

Encourage your teammates. Criticizing teammates for a foul or a missed free-throw takes away from the focus of working together and gives your opponent an advantage. Also, avoid trash-talking the other team. Words are powerful and you don't want to use them to harm others. Ephesians 4:29 says,

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

Questions:

1. What does it mean to encourage someone? (lifting someone up with words and not making fun of them)
2. What are some ways we can encourage our teammates? (say good job, you can do this, telling them good try even though they missed the game winning free throw)
3. Why should we not talk trash to the other team? (words hurt, God calls us to be kind, let your game do the talking)

Pray:

Dear Jesus, thank you for how big you are and for bringing us here today. I pray that you teach us what it means to encourage people and not to talk trash. Help us build each other up and not break them down. And all of God's people say, AMEN.

Week 6 Youth Basketball League Devotion

DEVO 6:

Acknowledge and applaud good plays, even when it's your opponent that makes them. Whether you win or lose, congratulate the other team on a game well played. Showing good sportsmanship is hard especially when the other team talks trash to you. However, if we tell them good game even after they won or we won, then we are teaching them how to be humble and what it looks like to encourage someone. Treat others the way you want to be treated.

Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing

.– 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Questions:

1. Last time, we talked about what it means to encourage someone. Can someone remind me what it means to encourage? (building others up with our words and actions instead of bringing them down)
2. How can we encourage kids in our schools? Encourage our parents? (pat them on the back when they had a bad day, etc…)

SAY: It is easy to accept encouragement but sometimes it is hard to encourage someone else, especially if they are on the other team and they just won. Practice encouraging someone today.

Pray:

Dear Jesus, you are an AWESOME God. You allow us to be out here playing the sport basketball. I just pray that you help this team encourage one another and help each other out. Allow each person here show good sportsmanship no matter the outcome to any game. And all of God's people say, AMEN.

Week 7 _ Youth Basketball League Devotion

DEVO 7:

Listen to and follow the directions of the coach. If you have a disagreement with the coach, discuss it privately. The coach knows what is best for the team so even though you might not agree with him/her, you must follow their directions. We are told in Hebrews 13:17 to

Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.

Questions:

1. If the coach substitutes you out of the game with 30 second left even though you don't want to come out, should you do it? (yes, because the coach is doing what is best for the team and you should respect and follow the directions of your coach!)
2. What are some other reasons you should listen to your coach? (because they have played the game and know more about it than you do, they are adults and you should respect them, they hold you responsible for your actions)
3. How can we listen to what God says to us? (we have to pray constantly and God will speak to us through someone or something but it will only happen on HIS TIME, we can't expect God to talk to us immediately. It will happen on HIS TIME)

Pray:

Dear Father, you are the ultimate authority in our lives. I pray that you allow us to look to you for guidance. Allow each kid here to respect their coaches, parents, and teachers. And all of God's people say, AMEN.

Week 8 – Youth Basketball League Devotion

DEVO 8:

Respect the officials. When they make a call you don't agree with, accept it gracefully. Remember that referees sometimes make mistakes but they're doing their best to be fair. A game is made up of all the plays and calls throughout the game, not one. 1 Peter 5:5 talks about respect for those in charge, no matter who they are.

Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

Questions:

1. What does it mean to accept a call from the ref with GRACE? (don't argue it and respect the decision of the ref, let your coach handle the ref, you may not agree with it but sometimes the ref will be right)
2. How does God give us GRACE? (He forgives us of our sins)
3. What happened that allowed your sin to be forgiven? (God sent His one and only son to die on the cross for you. Then he rose again 3 days later. On that day, Jesus defeated sin.)

Pray:

Dear Lord, thank you for giving us and showing us GRACE throughout each day. Teach us what it means to be more like you and to know you better. And all of God's people say, AMEN.