



BASKETBALL COACH PLAYBOOK

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SECTION 1

COACHING ESSENTIALS

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➔ What You Do Matters

Thank you for coaching this season! You are about to make a difference in 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.

Mark 10:45 - For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.

➔ 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.



When you do the sport and ministry well, there is an area of overlap where sports ministry occurs.

There are ***Five Keys to Coaching*** in an Upward Sports league.

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.

➔ **Key #1: Be Organized**

Parents want to see you value their time and are investing in their participant. This is demonstrated by how you conduct practice. Schedule 45 minutes on your calendar to prepare for practice each week.

The tools noted below can help you be organized to provide a great experience this season.

MYUPWARD.ORG

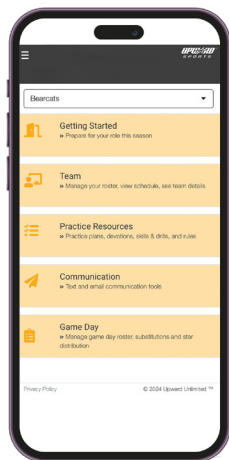
MyUpward is the primary tool for you as a coach. The league director will send you an invitation to access resources on MyUpward.org. After you accept the invitation and create a username and password, you should create an icon on the home screen of your mobile device for quick and easy access.

Some of the features you will find at your fingertips are outlined below.

- ◆ **Getting Started** includes how-to videos and other resources to help you this season.

- ◆ Video tutorial on MyUpward
- ◆ Referee handbook
- ◆ PDF practice plans*
- ◆ PDF devotion content*
- ◆ PDF Substitution and Star tracking forms*

*Helpful if you prefer paper copies or have limited internet access.



**Note: The coaches' tool can only be found through an invitation from your league director and is not listed in an app store.*

- ◆ **Team** area helps you manage your roster, see participant information, and the schedule for practices and games with the designated jersey color. There is also a link to your team page.
- ◆ **Practice Resources** provide a step-by-step outline for each practice including weekly devotion content, skills and drills, and sports rules.
- ◆ **Communication** is where you will find email and text capabilities, as well as the ability to attach a link to the team page.
- ◆ **Game Day** helps you to manage substitutions with the Upward Sports game day rotation that is easy to follow so you don't have to worry about tracking playing time. Players can be removed from the lineup (click the minus) or reactivated (click the three stacked circles). Assign stars and take notes by clicking the star next to each participant's name.

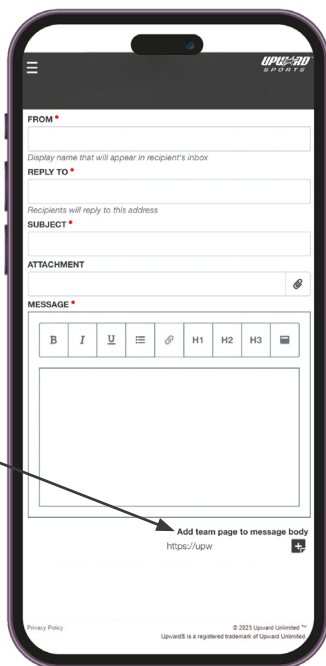
OTHER TOOLS

- ◆ **Practice Devotions** – As you prepare for practice, take about ten minutes each week to review the Scouting Report at the beginning of the devotion so that you can present the devotion which ends with prayer. These can be found on the Coach App under Practice Resources or in this book.
- ◆ **Game Day Stars** – Use game day stars to highlight each player's contributions made during the game each week. Stars can be tracked over the course of the season online or using the printed form in the Appendix.
- ◆ **Gospel Video** – Sent out from the league director to families to share a video version of the gospel message with them during the season.
- ◆ **Green Practice Stars** – Use these stars at practice to encourage participation in the practice devotion, scripture learning, or the goals your league has outlined for the devotion content.
- ◆ **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 the Coach App under the “Practice Resources.” Practice plans include skills and drills along with the practice devotion. If you are an experienced coach creating your own practice plan, be sure to include the devotion content each week.

- ◆ **Season Celebration** – Celebrate the season with your team. Your league may have individual team parties or a league-wide celebration so that you can connect with families.

- ◆ **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.

Share your team page from the communication area.



➔ Key #2: Lead the Practice Devotion

During practices, coaches use the devotion materials to lead a devotion, encourage discussion, and pray.

Before each devotion is a Scouting Report that gives coaches an inside look at the devotion for the week with detailed information about that week's topic.

After reviewing the scouting report, review the devotion and make any notes before going to practice. Be patient with participants as learning more about Jesus is a lifelong pursuit and not accomplished in a single devotion.

Green practice stars and practice cards are items used to support the devotion. If you need help with presenting the devotion content, please let your league director or coach commissioner know.

The Scouting Report features:

- ♦ **BACKGROUND** - Detailed information about that week's topic
- ♦ **BIG PICTURE** - Points to scripture for more insight on the topic
- ♦ **ENCOURAGEMENT** - Provides coaches with an inspirational quote, Scripture, or thought
- ♦ **COACH'S QUESTION FOR REFLECTION** - Allows coaches to think about the content's relevance to their own life before presenting to their team



Practice 1 — Peace

Scouting Report | Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion

BACKGROUND

This season, our devotions will focus on three virtues—peace, contentment, and joy—with peace being the overall theme. These characteristics can point us toward lives of goodness and well-being, helping us focus on what truly matters instead of being distracted by the chaos and disorder of a difficult world.

The theme of peace is prevalent throughout the Old and New Testaments of the Bible: God is a God of peace (Judges 6:24), and Jesus says He came to give us peace (John 16:33). The Hebrew word for peace, *shalom*, conveys the idea of wholeness, completeness, and well-being. In a broken world, we all desire peace at heart. Meanwhile, contentment helps us find peace, and joy helps us maintain it.

BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read John 16:33; John 20:19-23; Isaiah 9:6-7. If you don't own a Bible, you can download the YouVersion Bible App for free.

For a helpful overview of the biblical concept of peace, watch The Bible Project's video, "Shalom / Peace," at bibleproject.com/videos/shalom-peace

ENCOURAGEMENT

"[Shalom] is well-being that exists in the very midst of threats—from sword and drought and wild animals. It is well-being of a material, physical, historical kind, not idyllic: pie in the sky; but 'salvation' in the midst of trees and crops and enemies—in the very places where people always have to cope with anxiety, to struggle for survival, and to deal with temptation."

Walter Brueggemann, *Understanding Biblical Themes: Peace*

COACH'S QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

What comes to mind when I think

Bible Translation Note: All Scripture quotations in this devotion are taken from the New King James Bible.

➔ **Key #3: Communicate with Parents, Players, Coaches, and Referees**

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.

Parents and players 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

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 they can understand.
- ◆ Explain the details of what you are teaching, demonstrate what you are teaching, have participants do it, and then apply it in a game scenario.
- ◆ Focus on one skill at a time as you teach so participants 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 the player actions.
- ◆ Understand that there is a lot of information a player is processing during a game from many different areas.. 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 postpractice 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.
- ◆ 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 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 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 must work together for the experience of all participants.
- ◆ Love one another, John 13:34.
- ◆ Assume positive intent first rather than jumping to negative conclusions.
- ◆ Thank the coaches and referees after the game.
- ◆ Review the Circle of Affirmation and follow it.

➔ **Key #4: Teach the Sport**

Teaching the fundamentals of the sport allows players to put in place the building blocks for lifelong learning and enjoyment of the game. As players gain an understanding and work toward mastering the fundamentals you can then begin to add strategy and roles within a team.

As players learn the fundamentals, a sport experience must also include learning sportsmanship, an understanding of healthy competition, the rules, and a growth mindset where players are learning with each opportunity to compound small improvements over time that lead to noticeable changes.

➔ **Key #5: Lead By Example**

Being an Upward Sports Coach is a unique opportunity to not only teach the fundamentals of a sport but also share the gospel and create a positive environment for participants. This begins with your understanding of how to lead by example during practices and games.

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-on-one 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. Small-sided 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. Review practice plans and think 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.

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.

Team Huddle

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.

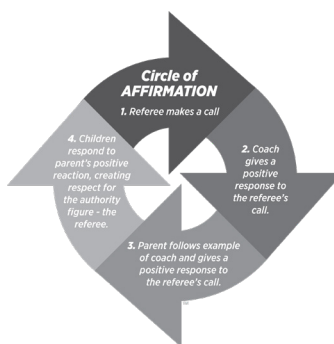
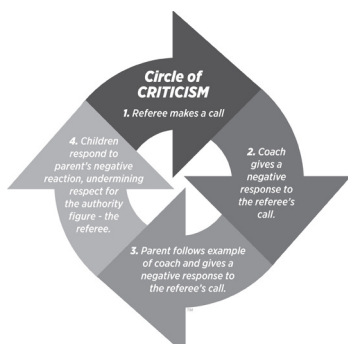
Next, have players look to the person on their right, use

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.

Circle of Affirmation

Choosing the right game day attitude is key to being an effective Upward Coach. Actions and reactions during games 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.

Coaches and referees work together as a unified team for everyone to have a great experience. Coaches stop the Circle of Criticism by starting the Circle of Affirmation.



The example set between coaches and referees using the Circle of Affirmation demonstrates to everyone how to value others, enjoy healthy competition, and create a positive environment for spectators and players to follow.

Practicing the Circle of Affirmation makes the game day experience better for everyone.

Play with Purpose

The influence a coach has not only helps participants to develop as players but as people who will engage as members of a community, family, and eternity.

The resources provided are created with a player development model in mind that helps us to understand we are here to Play with Purpose.

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 all the people.”



Mentally

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 to make correct decisions quickly. When to pass a ball, when to attempt a move, or when to 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.



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.

➔ Goals For The Season

The goal of our sports ministry is:

Success looks like:

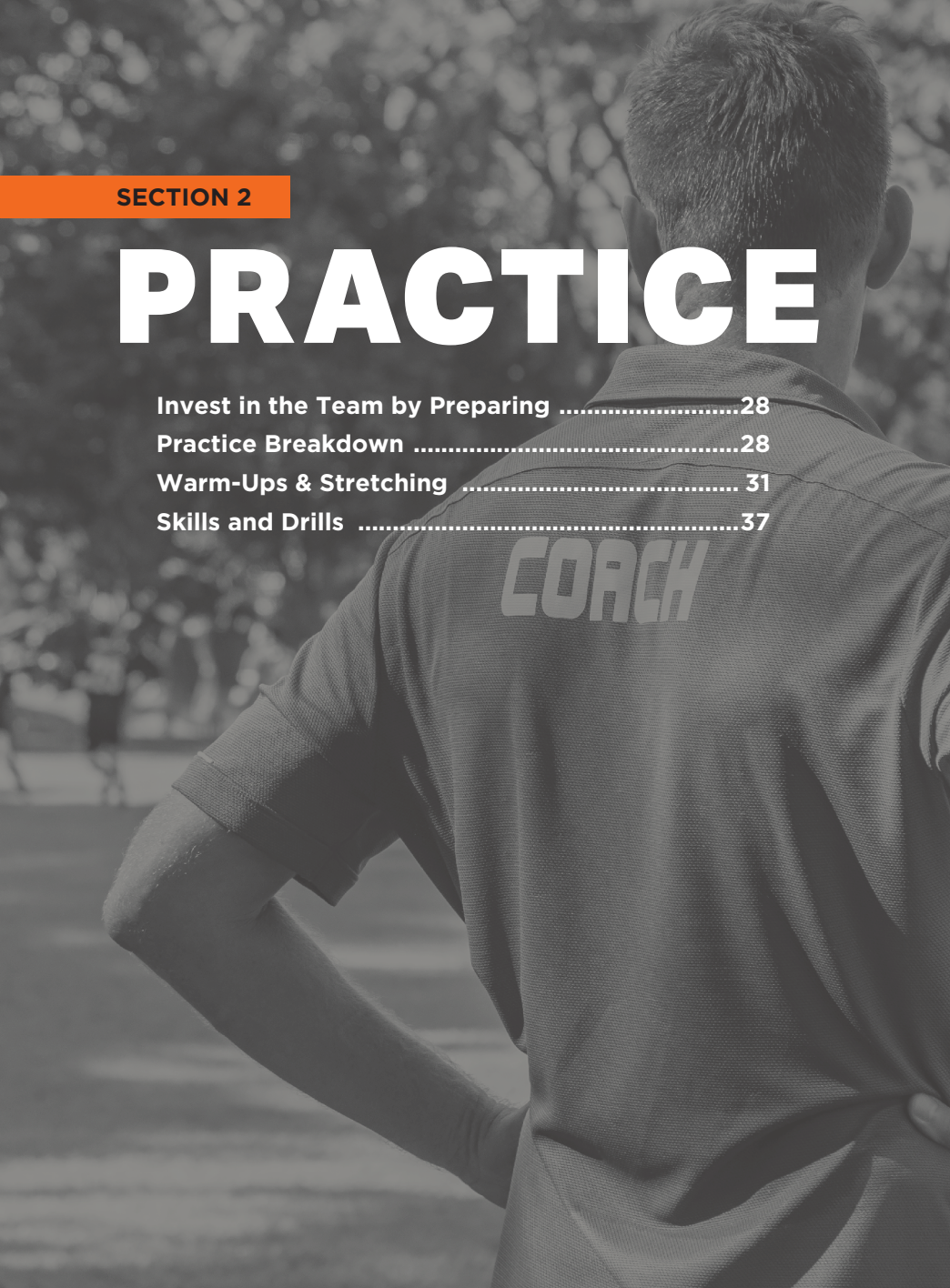
Success in our sports ministry is measured by:

How were you coached as a child, and how has that influenced how you plan to coach?

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

HEBREWS 12:1-2 READS:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. 2 We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith.



SECTION 2

PRACTICE

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➔ 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 / 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 green practice 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 - Write out a plan so you can maximize your time and are organized. This should include a Practice Focus, practice meeting, skills review, devotion (provided for you in the next section), rules review, new skills and wrap-up.

Practice	Practice Focus	Team Meeting	Rules to Cover	Skills & Drills
1	- Get to know each other - Evaluate skills - Set practice rules	- Teammate introductions - Discuss practice ground rules - Introduce basic footwork, dribbling, and shooting skills	Practice rules	- Footwork (Page 37) - Dribbling (Page 40) - Shooting (Page 49)
2	- Continue skill evaluation - Teach passing fundamentals - Teach positions and responsibilities	- Re-introduce players and coaches - Discuss some common violations	- Traveling - Double Dribbling - Palming or Carrying the ball	- Footwork (Page 37) - Ball Handling (Page 40) - Dribbling (Page 40) - Shooting (Page 49)
3	- Review re-start situations - Teach shooting fundamentals	- Review traveling, double dribble, and palming the ball - Game situations and court spacing	- Three second violation - Common fouls - Help defense	- Passing and Receiving (Page 46) - Defense (Page 57) - Rebounding (Page 54)
4 <i>week of first game</i>	- Teach 3-second violation - Discuss positions on the court - Skill developments	- Review defensive rules - Game situations and court spacing	- Three second violation - Common fouls - Help defense	- Rebounding (Page 54) - Defense (Page 57) - Scrimmage or more drills
5	- Teach offensive movement - Continue to teach court spacing	- Discuss practice focus - Review the last game - Review basic rules	Review all rules as a fun quiz	- Offensive plays (Page 60) - Areas the need improvement from the game
6-11	- Continue skill development - Analyze game performances, coach through improvements	- Review the last game and improvements that need to be made - Discuss practice focus	Continue to review rules for clear understanding	- Work on both offense and defense - Areas that need improvement

➔ Warmups & 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.
- ◆ **Heels to Hands:** Have players line up on one of the sidelines. On the coach's signal, players jog slowly with knees pointing toward the ground and their heels kicking upward toward their backsides where their hands are. Once all players have made it to the other side of the field, have them return to the starting point by sprinting back across the field.
- ◆ **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 movement. It can be done on one foot or both feet.

- ◆ **Jumping Jacks:** Players jump in place, extending arms out to the side and kicking legs out to the side.
- ◆ **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 of running. 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:** Feet 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.
- ◆ **Sprint to Backpedal:** Have players line up on one of the sidelines. On the coach’s signal, players sprint across the field then backpedal to the starting point. As players backpedal, instruct them to lean slightly forward and land on the balls of their feet so they don’t trip and fall backward.
- ◆ **Trunk Twists:** From a standing position, twist back and forth slowly.

HERE ARE STRETCH ACTIVITIES YOU MAY USE AFTER WARM-UPS.

- ◆ Neck: 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.

WARM-UP DRILLS

Run Laps

- ♦ This gets players' heart rates up and their blood circulating.

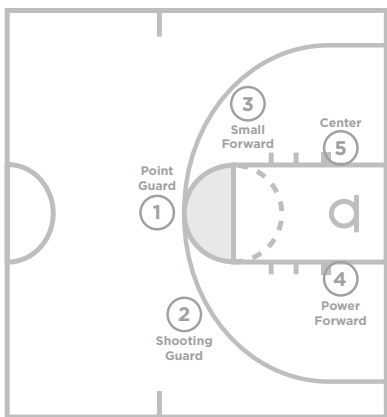
DYNAMIC STRETCHING

- ♦ **20 Jumping Jacks** - Players jump in place, extending arms out to the side and kicking legs out to the side.
- ♦ **1 Round Walking Knee Hugs** - Players start at the serving line walking toward the net. With each step, they lift the alternate leg up to the chest, "hugging" their knee with both arms. Once they reach the net, they turn around at the net and walk back. Each trip to the net counts as one round.
- ♦ **20 Arm Circles** - Standing in place, players extend arms and rotate them forward in circles 10 times. Then, players alternate direction, rotating arms backward 10 times.

- ◆ 10 Lunges - Starting in a standing position, players step forward, extending their right leg and bending down with their left leg. Players return to a standing position and alternate legs.
- ◆ 10 High Skips - Starting in a standing position, players jump with left leg while bending and raising right knee. To add momentum, players should swing arms as they jump. Alternate legs.
- ◆ Karaoke (sideline to sideline) - Move across the court placing one foot behind the other as you shuffle across.
- ◆ Shuffling (sideline to sideline) - Move across the court shifting one foot beside the other quickly.

BASKETBALL POSITIONS

- ◆ **Point Guard:** This player dribbles the ball up the court, sets up plays, and passes to their teammates.
- ◆ **Shooting Guard:** This player makes mid-range to long-range shots and drives the ball to the hoop to take shots.



- ◆ **Small Forward:** makes mid-range to short-range shots and rebounds.
- ◆ **Power Forward:** makes shots near the basket and rebounds.
- ◆ **Center:** makes shots near the basket and rebounds.

➔ Skills and 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.

-  = **player**
-  = **player movement without the ball**
-  = **dribble**
-  = **pass**
-  = **shoot**
-  = **rebound**
-  = **screen**
-  = **coach**
-  = **sequence**
-  = **cone**

Footwork

Proper footwork promotes balance, quickness, and readiness to make something happen on the court. Being proficient at this skill will improve a player's offensive and defensive performance.

Basic Footwork Skills:

Triple Threat Position

- ◆ Provides a player the option to dribble, pass, or shoot
- ◆ Position the basketball in the "shooting pocket" with shooting elbow over the 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 the floor at the same time – good balance
- ◆ Land on the floor in triple threat position
- ◆ Use when catching a pass; teach "ball in air/feet in air" concept

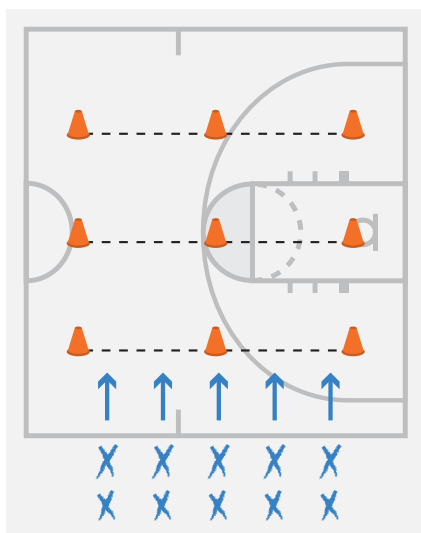
Front Pivot and Reverse Pivot

- ◆ Lift the heel, protect the ball, stay low, and lead with the elbow. Don't lean back from the defender
- ◆ Allows a player to pivot in one or more directions by keeping one foot planted on the ground

- ◆ Allows an offensive player to pivot away from defenders while protecting the basketball
- ◆ Remind players to keep their eyes up to be able to see the court and their teammates
- ◆ This skill is also important for setting screens and rebounding

Footwork Line Drills (No Basketball Needed)

- ◆ Players form lines on the 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 an imaginary basketball
- ◆ Players should stop at each cone 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 cone



Rotate the following footwork with the 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

Add basketballs after your players understand the above concepts.

Pivot Drill (no basketball required)

- ◆ Players should spread out in your practice area
- ◆ 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 or receiving passes.

Ball Handling & Dribbling

Strong ball-handling and dribbling skills are essential for creating scoring opportunities, improving passing angles, and reducing turnovers. Every great offensive player must master ball control.

- ◆ Use Your Fingertips – Control the ball with your fingertips, not your palms, for better precision.
- ◆ Stay Low – Bend your knees and keep a low stance to maintain balance and protect the ball.
- ◆ Eyes Up – Look forward, not at the ball, so you can read the court and make decisions.
- ◆ Keep It Low and Tight – Dribble close to your body and below your waist to reduce turnovers and stay in control.
- ◆ Change Speeds and Directions – Mix up your pace and angles to keep defenders guessing.
- ◆ Protect the Ball – Use your other hand and arm, and your body to shield the ball from defenders.
- ◆ When ending your dribble, end in the triple threat position.

Basic Dribbling Skills:

Stationary Dribble

- ◆ Use before starting a play or waiting for teammates to get open—helps maintain control under light pressure.
- ◆ Drill: Pound dribble with each hand for 30 seconds.
- ◆ Coaching Tip: Emphasize fingertip control, athletic stance, and waist-level dribble.
- ◆ Common Mistakes: Using the palm instead of fingertips; standing too upright.

Control Dribble

- ◆ Dribble with your body turned to the side, and the ball near your back knee. Use when a defender is close, and you need to protect the ball.
- ◆ Drill: Change directions with a zigzag dribble across the court slowly, keeping the ball low.
- ◆ Coaching Tip: Use body and off-hand to shield the ball.
- ◆ Common Mistakes: Dribbling too high; exposing the ball to defenders.

Speed Dribble

- ◆ Dribble slightly out in front, but under control. Use on a fast break after a rebound or steal—push the ball quickly up the court.
- ◆ Drill: Full-court sprint while dribbling with the dominant hand, then the weak hand.

- ◆ Coaching Tip: Keep the ball slightly ahead but under control.
- ◆ Common Mistakes: Slapping the ball; losing control at high speed.

Crossover Dribble

- ◆ Dribble low when changing from one hand to the other to keep the ball away from the defender. Use head and shoulder fakes to get the defender off balance. Explode to the basket. Use this move to get by a defender or change direction.
- ◆ Drill: Cone zigzag drill—perform crossovers at each cone by switching from right hand to left or left hand to right.
- ◆ Coaching Tip: Stay low and shift weight quickly to sell the fake.
- ◆ Common Mistakes: Standing tall; slow, lazy crossovers.

Retreat Dribble

- ◆ Dribble backwards to avoid pressure, and change speed or direction.
- ◆ Drill: Cone drill—perform a retreat dribble at each cone.
- ◆ Coaching Tip: Stay low and keep your eyes up.
- ◆ Common Mistakes: Standing tall, slow, and not being ready to change pace.

Intermediate Dribbling Skills:

Hesitation Dribble

- ◆ Pause your feet in movement to freeze a defender. Use to explode past the defender after they relax.
- ◆ Drill: Drive forward, pause for one second, then explode past a cone.
- ◆ Coaching Tip: Use eyes and shoulder lift to sell the fake.
- ◆ Common Mistakes: Hesitating too long; looking down at the ball.

Inside-Out Dribble

- ◆ Without changing hands, push your dribble inside before going back outside and continuing in the same direction. Use as a change of pace to a crossover dribble.
- ◆ Drill: Perform inside-out moves at each cone in a zigzag pattern.
- ◆ Coaching Tip: Push the ball slightly inside and keep your wrist loose.
- ◆ Common Mistakes: Over-exaggerating the move; losing speed after a fake.

Spin Move Dribble

- ◆ Pull the basketball through low while pivoting and change hands after pivoting.
- ◆ Drill: Spin around each cone while maintaining balance.
- ◆ Coaching Tip: Keep the ball low and protect it with your body.
- ◆ Common Mistakes: Spinning too upright; exposing the ball mid-spin.

Behind-the-Back Dribble

- ◆ Dribble behind your waist, and drive the ball down with a snap of the wrist. Use to penetrate to the basket or keep the ball away from the defender while changing hands.
- ◆ Drill: Dribble full court, alternating behind-the-back moves every 3–4 steps.
- ◆ Coaching Tip: Stay low and keep the ball close to your body.
- ◆ Common Mistakes: Throwing the ball too far behind; looking down.

Advanced dribbling Skills:

Double Crossover (Combo Move)

- ◆ Drill: Two quick crossovers at each cone, then accelerate past the cone.
- ◆ Coaching Tip: Make the first crossover believable—sell the fake.
- ◆ Common Mistakes: Doing both crossovers too fast without control. Over-dribbling.

Between-the-Legs Dribble

- ◆ Changing hands while dribbling between your legs. One leg is slightly in front of the other.
- ◆ Drill: Stationary reps for 30 seconds, then add forward movement or back to front versus front to back.
- ◆ Coaching Tip: Keep knees bent and ball low; avoid looking down.
- ◆ Common Mistakes: Standing tall; slow hand transfer.

Wraparound Dribble

- ◆ Drill: Practice wraparound moves against a defender or chair.
- ◆ Coaching Tip: Use the body as a shield and keep the ball tight during the wrap.
- ◆ Common Mistakes: Wrapping too wide; exposing the ball to the defender.

Euro Step with Double

- ◆ While driving to the basket, take a large, long step outside, then back inside.
- ◆ Drill: Combine a dribble with a Euro step finish at the basket.
- ◆ Coaching Tip: Emphasize timing—take long, controlled steps and keep your eyes on the rim.
- ◆ Common Mistakes: Traveling; losing ball control during step.

Ball Handling Drills (Team Drills) (one basketball per player)

Ball Slams

- ◆ With feet shoulder-width apart, have players slap the basketball with their 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 their body using only the fingertips. Move ball from ankles, to knees, to waist, to chest, to head, and to above head using the fingertips.

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.

King of the Court

- ◆ Have all players dribble in a defined area line inside the lane, while maintaining control of the ball and defending their own dribble from other players knocking it away.

Defensive Turns

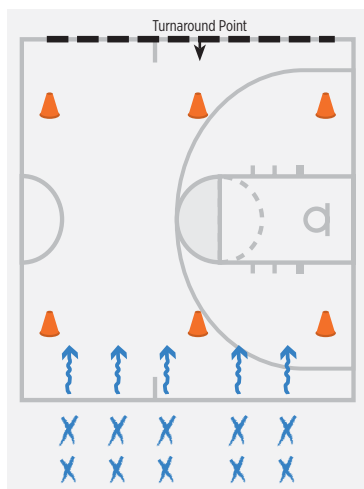
- ◆ Pair players with one basketball and a designated area about 15' wide and the length or width of the court. Without stealing the basketball, the defender must make the dribbler change their direction as they go the length of the designated area. Ball handlers must maintain control of the ball while protecting it from the defender.

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.

Dribbling Line Format

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



Use any of the beginner, intermediate or advanced dribbling techniques.

Passing & 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 to 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 all the way into the hands

Basic Passing Skills:

Chest Pass

- ◆ Description: A quick, straight pass using two hands, with elbows out wide from the chest of one player to a teammate's chest.
- ◆ When to Use: Short to medium distances with no defender in the passing lane.
- ◆ Key Points: Step toward the target, extend arms, thumbs down on follow-through.
- ◆ Drill: Partner Chest Passes — Players pair up 10–15 feet apart and pass back and forth. Next, see how many passes can be completed correctly in a minute. Progress by adding a defender to force quick decisions.

Bounce Pass

- ◆ Description: Ball hits the floor about two-thirds of the way to the receiver and bounces up.
- ◆ When to Use: When the defender's hands are high or in tight spaces.
- ◆ Key Points: Aim for low bounce, step toward the target, follow through.
- ◆ Drill: Triangle Bounce Drill — Three players form a triangle and one defender; pass using a bounce pass while a defender tries to intercept. Practice two-hand bounce passes and progress to one hand. Rotate roles.

Overhead Pass

- ◆ Description: Ball thrown from above the head using both hands.
- ◆ When to Use: For long passes or over a defender.
- ◆ Key Points: Elbows out, snap wrists forward, use core strength.
- ◆ Drill: Outlet Pass Drill — Player rebounds off the backboard, pivots, and throws an overhead pass to a teammate sprinting along the sideline line down the court. The player can complete a catch, dribble, and attempt a shot at the other end of the court. A player is ready to rebound and begins the drill by going in the opposite direction on the court. Rotate players' starting positions for the drill.

Baseball Pass

- ◆ Description: One-handed pass similar to a baseball throw.
- ◆ When to Use: Long-distance, fast-break situations.
- ◆ Key Points: Strong arm motion, lead the receiver, avoid turnovers.
- ◆ Drill: Full-Court Baseball Pass — Players throw baseball passes to teammates running toward the opposite baseline.

One-Hand Push Pass

- ◆ Description: Quick pass using one hand, often off the dribble.
- ◆ When to Use: In transition or under defensive pressure.
- ◆ Key Points: Push with wrist and fingers, maintain control.
- ◆ Drill: Off-the-Dribble Passing — Players dribble toward a cone, then make a one-hand push pass to a teammate cutting to the basket.

Wrap-Around Pass

- ◆ Description: Pass around a defender using one hand.
- ◆ When to Use: In close quarters, especially in the post.
- ◆ Key Points: Protect the ball, use body to shield.
- ◆ Drill: Post Entry Drill — Offensive player feeds the ball to a teammate in the post using a wrap-around pass while a defender pressures.

Lob Pass

- ◆ Description: High, arching pass.
- ◆ When to Use: For alley-oops or passing over defenders to a big player.
- ◆ Key Points: Judge distance and timing carefully.
- ◆ Drill: Alley-Oop Setup — Player throws a lob pass to a teammate over a coach near the rim for a layup.

Skip Pass

- ◆ Description: Long pass that skips over the defense to the opposite side.
- ◆ When to Use: To reverse the ball quickly and beat zone defenses.
- ◆ Key Points: Strong chest or overhead motion, accurate aim.
- ◆ Drill: Zone Skip Drill — Set up a 2-3 zone defense; offensive players practice reversing the ball with skip passes to beat the zone.

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

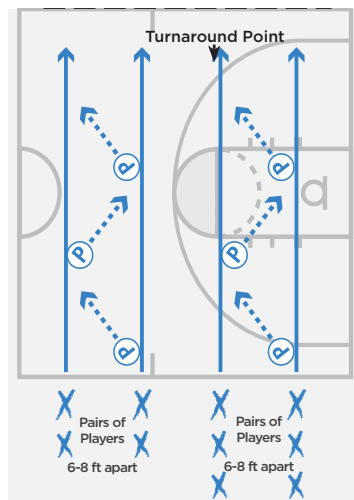
Be sure to incorporate all three basic passes into this drill.

- ◆ 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 Drill

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



Variation: 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 pass it to his or her moving partner.

Shooting

Shooting Teaching Points:

- ◆ Square up shoulders to the basket
- ◆ Ball on fingertips, not palms
- ◆ The non-shooting hand should be lightly placed on side of ball (to help balance the ball)

Practice BEEF Principles:

- ◆ **B**alance – Feet shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent, and weight evenly distributed for a stable shooting base
- ◆ **E**yes – Focus on the target (usually the center of the rim or the back of the rim) before and during the shot
- ◆ **E**lbow – Keep your shooting elbow under the ball and aligned with the basket to ensure a straight shot.
- ◆ **F**ollow Through – Finish with a full wrist snap and fingers pointing toward the target, holding the follow-through until the ball reaches the basket

Types of Basketball Shots

Layup

- ◆ Description: A close-range shot taken while moving toward the basket, usually off the backboard.
- ◆ When to Use: Driving to the hoop, fast breaks, or finishing near the rim
- ◆ Key Points:
 - Jump off the opposite foot of your shooting hand
 - Raise the same side knee as the shooting hand to create momentum
 - Extend the shooting arm
 - Aim for the top corner of the square on the backboard
 - Keep the ball protected from defenders
- ◆ Drills:
 - Mikan Drill: Alternate layups from both sides of the basket without dribbling
 - Cone Layup Drill: Dribble around cones and finish with a layup to simulate game movement

Jump Shot

- ◆ Description: A shot taken while jumping, usually from mid-range or beyond
- ◆ When to Use: When you have space from a defender or off a screen
- ◆ Key Points:
 - Square shoulders to the basket
 - Release at the peak of your jump
 - Maintain B.E.E.F. principles
- ◆ Drills:
 - Form Shooting: Start 3-5' from the hoop, focusing on mechanics
 - Spot Shooting: Shoot from five designated spots around the key

Free Throw

- ◆ Description: An unguarded shot from the free-throw line after a foul. Rule levels designate distances
- ◆ Key Points:
 - Consistent routine before every shot
 - Focus on rhythm and follow-through
 - Relax and breathe
- ◆ Drills:
 - Routine Practice: Repeat your free-throw routine 10–20 times.
 - Pressure Free Throws: Shoot free throws after conditioning drills to simulate fatigue.

Three-Point Shot

- ◆ Description: A jump shot taken from beyond the three-point arc
- ◆ When to Use: To stretch the defense or when open beyond the arc. Use when players have the strength to shoot from a distance with proper form
- ◆ Key Points:
 - Use legs for power, not just arms
 - Maintain shooting form despite distance
 - Quick release under pressure
- ◆ Drills:
 - Catch-and-Shoot Drill: Receive passes and shoot from different spots beyond the arc
 - Around the World: Shoot from multiple three-point spots in sequence

Hook Shot

- ◆ Description: A one-handed shot where the shooter swings the arm in a hook motion
- ◆ When to Use: In the post against taller defenders
- ◆ Key Points:
 - Use the body to shield the ball
 - Extend arm fully for high release
 - Aim for soft touch off the rim or backboard

♦ Drills:

- Mikan Hook Drill: Practice alternating hook shots from both sides of the basket. Don't let the ball hit the floor as it comes out of the basket
- Post Position Drill: Catch in the post, pivot, and shoot a hook over a defender

Floater (Runner)

- ♦ Description: A high-arching shot taken off one foot or two, usually in the lane to avoid shot blockers
- ♦ When to Use: Against taller defenders when driving into the paint

♦ Key Points:

- Soft touch and high arc
- Release quickly before the defender contests
- Use body control to maintain balance

♦ Drills:

- Cone Floater Drill: Dribble around cones, finish with a floater over a pad or defender
- Floater Ladder: Start close, shoot floaters, then move back step by step

Step-Back Jumper

- ◆ Description: A jump shot created by stepping back from the defender to create space
- ◆ When to Use: When closely guarded and needing separation
- ◆ Key Points:
 - Strong plant foot for balance
 - Quick step back and controlled landing
 - Maintain shooting form despite movement
- ◆ Drills:
 - Step-Back Isolation Drill: Practice step-back after one or two dribbles
 - Combo Move Drill: Combine crossover and step-back for game-like action. Progress to add a defender

Fadeaway

- ◆ Description: A jump shot taken while leaning away from the defender
- ◆ When to Use: In the post or mid-range when the defender is tight
- ◆ Key Points:
 - Create space by leaning back
 - High release point
 - Maintain core strength for balance

♦ Drills:

- Chair Fadeaway Drill: Use a chair as a defender, pivot, and shoot fadeaways
- Post Fade Drill: Catch in the post, turn, and fade away over a defender

Euro Step Finish

- ♦ Description: A two-step move to evade defenders, often ending in a layup or floater

- ♦ When to Use: Driving to the basket against help defense

♦ Key Points:

- Long first step, quick second step in the opposite direction
- Keep the ball protected during steps
- Finish strong with a layup or floater

♦ Drills:

- Euro Step Cone Drill: Zig-zag around cones, finish with a layup
- Live Defender Euro Drill: Practice against a defender for timing and control

Two-Line Shooting Drills (one or two basketball 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.

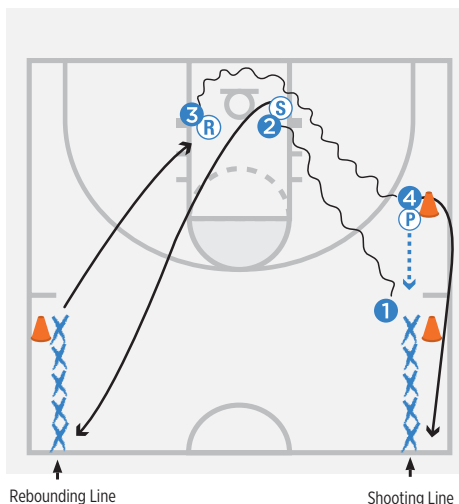
- ◆ Players form two lines opposite the goal in each corner of practice area: a shooting line and a rebounding line (use cones or chairs to mark a starting point)

- ◆ Shooting line: Assume the triple threat position, showing ready hands to receive a pass.

- ◆ Rebounding line: Players should block out an imaginary defender and rebound the ball above their head.

- ◆ The player from the rebounding line secures the rebound and dribbles to a designated cone, makes a good jump stop landing in the triple threat position, and uses proper passing techniques when passing to the next shooter in line.

- ◆ Shooter receives the basketball and performs the drill as instructed by a coach.



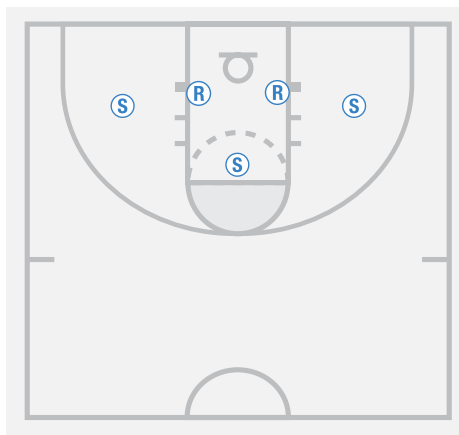
Rotate the following two-line shooting drills:

- ◆ 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)

Three Shooters (three basketball 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.

- ◆ Shooters will be positioned anywhere inside the three-point line at three specific areas.
- ◆ Shooters will have two minutes to shoot while the two rebounders will rebound and pass back to the shooters.
- ◆ Shot locations can be changed, time can be adjusted, and shooters and rebounders rotate.



Rebounding

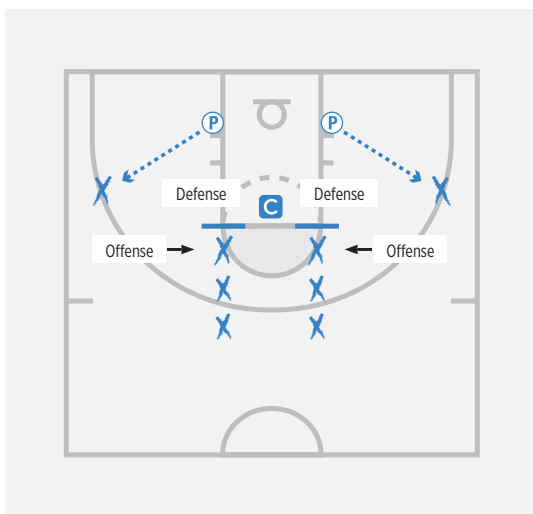
When discussing offensive rebounding, remind players that second chance points (put-backs) can be a big contributor to a team's offensive production.

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" and be aggressive to the basketball
- ♦ Secure the basketball with both hands. Be strong retaining the ball at chin level with elbows out

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 below 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)

- ◆ Facing the basket, players form two lines: one at each corner of the free-throw line
- ◆ Place one player at each wing area to serve as an outlet receiver
- ◆ 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)
- ◆ When the coach shoots the basketball, the defensive players will yell “shot” and pivot into the offensive players to obtain a good “block out”
- ◆ Offensive players cannot move
- ◆ Once a defender secures the basketball, pivot and throw a crisp overhead outlet pass to an outlet receiver
- ◆ Players rotate drill positions

Variations: You can use one line instead of two. For an additional variation, when the ball is shot, the offense can move and try to score off a missed shot

Defense

Teaching points for guarding a player with the ball

Objective: Disrupt the player with the ball to create bad passes and shots

- ♦ Stance & Balance - Stay low, knees bent, weight on the balls of your feet. Feet slightly wider than shoulder-width for lateral quickness. Keep your arms out and hands up facing the player you are guarding.
- ♦ Positioning - Stay between your man and the basket. Maintain an arm's length distance so you are close enough to contest, far enough to react.
- ♦ Active Hands - One hand up to contest shots, one hand low to disrupt dribbles. Avoid reaching your arms and hands recklessly, and move your feet first.
- ♦ Force to Weakness - Shade the offensive player to force them to dribble with their weak hand or toward help defense.
- ♦ Closeouts - Sprint halfway, then chop steps to control speed. High hand to contest, low stance to prevent drive.
- ♦ During contact - Keep your chest up and toward the dribbler with your arms and hands back to avoid fouls.

Teaching points for guarding a player without the ball

Objective: Deny easy passes to your player, prevent cuts to the basket, and stay ready for help defense

- ♦ See Ball & Man - Use “ball-you-man” positioning (open stance). Always know where both are and be able to point at both. Avoid turning your back toward the player you are guarding or the ball. Adjust your position on the court to see both.
- ♦ Deny Position - If your player is one pass away, stay in the passing lane with a hand out. If two passes away, sag toward the paint for help depending on the rule level.
- ♦ Anticipate Cuts - Beat the offensive player to the spot they are trying to get to on the court. Use quick slides and body positioning, not grabbing at the player you are guarding.
- ♦ Help & Recover - Be ready to help on drives, then recover quickly to your man.

Defensive Slides Drill (no basketball required)

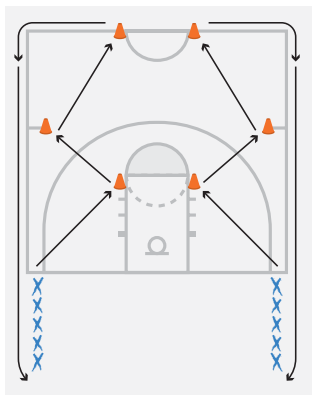
Focus on players' feet sliding (rather than hopping or skipping) and players maintaining a proper defensive stance. Have fun with this drill! Allow players to express enthusiasm and desire by slapping the playing floor and yelling "DEFENSE" on command. Drill should last 20-30 seconds. Allow a short rest and repeat as desired.

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

Zigzag Drill (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.

- ◆ Form a line of players at one end of your practice area
- ◆ Set-up cones or chairs in a zigzag pattern, spaced 10-12 feet apart (minimum 3 spots)
- ◆ 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



- ◆ The next player in line starts as the preceding player leaves first spot
- ◆ As each player reaches the final spot, he or she should sprint back to the end of the line

➔ 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.

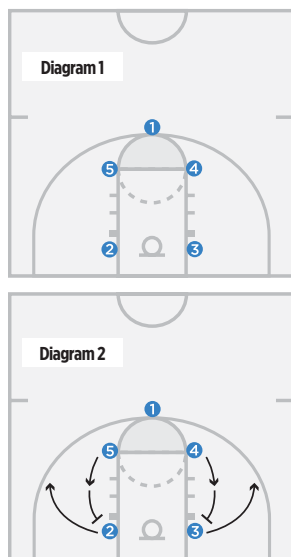
Reminder: View the Skills and Drills videos on the coach section of MyUpward.org for live demonstrations of the following offensive plays.

Half-Court Sets

Box Set - Motion

Scoring Options

- ◆ Player 5 posting up on ball-side block
- ◆ Player 4 coming off of low screen
- ◆ 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 passing)
 - Players 4 and 5, who are standing outside the lane area at the free-throw line extended areas, will screen down for players 2 and 3 (diagram 2)

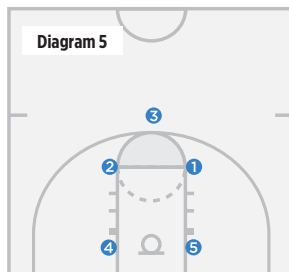
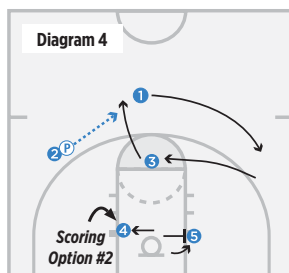
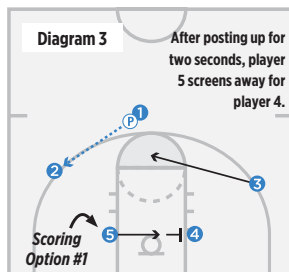


(Continued on next page)

- 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)

Procedure

- ♦ 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

- ◆ Player 3 coming off of low screen
- ◆ Player 2 coming off the double screen

Procedure

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

Horns Set Offense

Overview

- ♦ The horns set formation is used to create scoring opportunities specifically for big men while also allowing for perimeter options. In this formation, two players set screens at the top of the key, forming an “H” shape with the basket.

Procedure

- ♦ Formation Setup
 - The offense is set up with two players (usually forward #4 right and center #5 left) positioned at the elbows (the area just above the free throw line) and two guards on the wings #2 on the right and #3 on the left
- ♦ Initial Movement
 - The ball handler #1 dribbles toward the high wing area for a short pass to the player at the elbow #5 on the same side, then goes to set a screen for the player on the wing #3 on the same side
 - Off the screen, the wing #3 initiates movement by cutting towards the top of the key to receive the ball from #5, positioned at the elbow, who has the ball. This can also be a dribble handoff

♦ Screening Action

- As the wing #3 receives the ball, the options are:

Option 1 - Take the handoff from a tight curl around #5 and drive the lane

Option 2 - The opposite elbow player, #4, sets a screen for either the ball handler #3 or the other wing player, #2. The ball handler can drive the lane, throw to the wing #2, or have the player at the elbow #4 roll to the basket to receive a pass

Option 3 - The opposite elbow player, #4, sets a screen for the ball handler #3 and then rolls to the basket. Player #3 can pass to the wing, who then passes to the roller #4 or passes directly to #4

♦ Pop Out Action

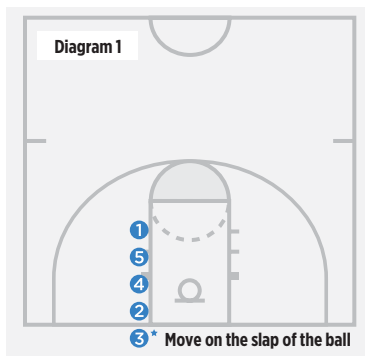
- Player #5 can step back to receive a pass and shoot from the outside

Baseline Out of Bounds Plays

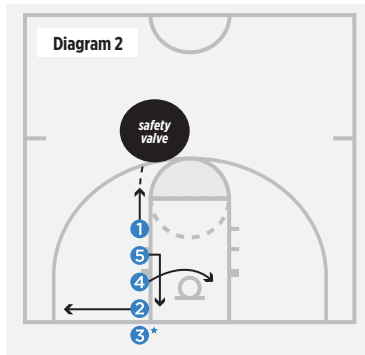
Players should use fakes and jab steps to set up their defenders and get open. Encourage players coming off a screen to rub shoulders with the screener. As the person throwing in the basketball can pass to any teammate, encourage ready hands.

Stack - Baseline

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



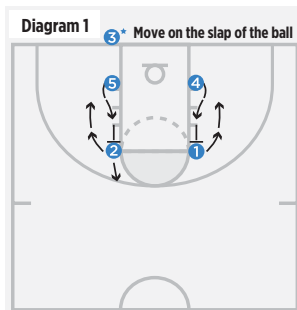
- First player in line breaks to ball-side corner
- Second player in line cuts to opposite block
- Third player in line moves straight down to block area toward the ball
- Fourth player in line takes two to three steps back, serving as a safety valve



Reminder: This play can also be used on the sideline, with players moving in the same pattern as above.

Box - Baseline

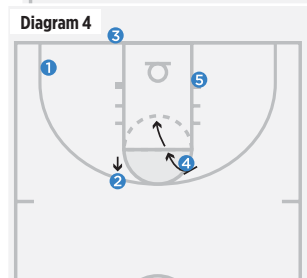
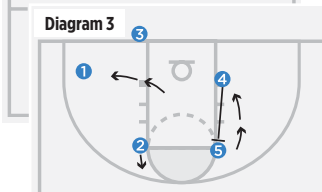
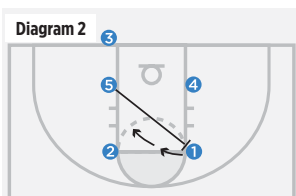
- ◆ Each player takes a spot outside the lane area, with the post players (Players 4 and 5) at the block areas and the perimeter players (Players 1 and 2) at the free-throw line extended areas. Player 3 will throw in the basketball (diagram 1).



- ◆ When the passer slaps the basketball or yells “break,” the players move as follows:

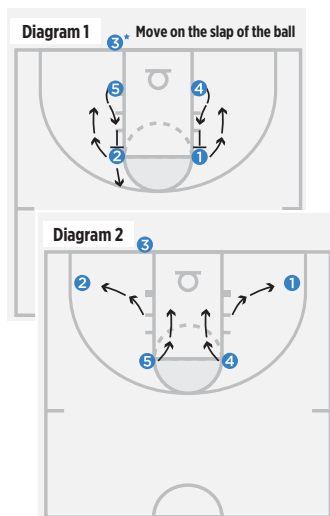
Box Option #1

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



Box Option #2

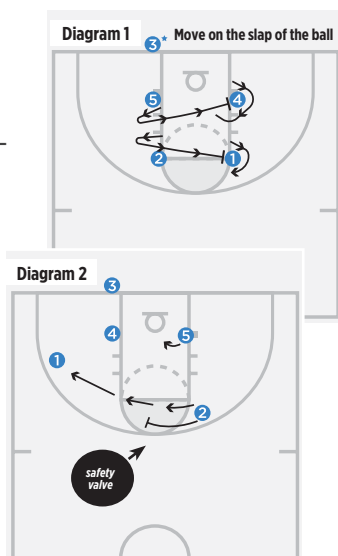
- ◆ Players 4 and 5 screen up for Players 1 and 2 (diagram 1)
- ◆ If a pass cannot be made to either 1 or 2, they each move to the closest corner (diagram 2)
- ◆ After setting the screens, Players 4 and 5 should roll back toward the ball (diagram 2)



Box Option #3

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

- ◆ Players 5 and 2 will both cross-screen for Players 4 and 1 on the weak-side (diagram 1)
- ◆ After setting a screen, Player 5 will turn around with ready hands (diagram 2)
- ◆ Player 2 will roll back to ball-side, free-throw line extended area to serve as a safety valve (diagram 2)



SECTION 3

PRACTICE DEVOTIONS

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➔ Devotions

As an Upward coach, you are not only teaching skills for the sport but also values for life. The devotion time in each practice allows you to teach the character of Christ through biblical virtues. Before each devotion, there is a Scouting Report with background information to help you prepare to teach each lesson. Use the chart below to organize and plan for your devotions. It includes the devotion title and key verse for each practice.

PRACTICE NUMBER	DEVOTION TITLE	KEY VERSE
Practice 1	<i>Peace</i>	No Key Verse This Week
Practice 2	<i>Peace</i>	Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it. Psalm 34:14 (NLT)
Practice 3	<i>Peace</i>	Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it. Psalm 34:14 (NLT)
Practice 4	<i>Peace</i>	Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it. Psalm 34:14 (NLT)
Practice 5	<i>Contentment</i>	I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. Philippians 4:11b (NLT)

PRACTICE NUMBER	DEVOTION TITLE	KEY VERSE
Practice 6	<i>Contentment</i>	I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. Philippians 4:11b (NLT)
Practice 7	<i>Contentment</i>	I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. Philippians 4:11b (NLT)
Practice 8	<i>Good News</i>	Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. Romans 5:1 (NLT)
Practice 9	<i>Joy</i>	I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Romans 15:13a (NLT)
Practice 10	<i>Joy</i>	I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Romans 15:13a (NLT)
Practice 11	<i>Joy</i>	I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Romans 15:13a (NLT)



Practice 1 — Peace

Scouting Report | Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion

BACKGROUND

This season, our devotions will focus on three virtues—peace, contentment, and joy—with peace being the overall theme. These characteristics can point us toward lives of goodness and well-being, helping us focus on what truly matters instead of being distracted by the chaos and disorder of a difficult world.

The theme of peace is prevalent throughout the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. God is a God of peace (Judges 6:24), and Jesus says He came to give us peace (John 16:33). The Hebrew word for peace, *shalom*, conveys the idea of wholeness, completeness, and well-being. In a broken world, we all desire peace at heart. Meanwhile, contentment helps us find peace, and joy helps us maintain it.

BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read John 16:31-33; John 20:19-23; Isaiah 9:6-7. *If you don't own a Bible, you can download the YouVersion Bible App for free.*



For a helpful overview of the biblical concept of peace, watch The Bible Project's video, "Shalom / Peace," at bibleproject.com/videos/shalom-peace

ENCOURAGEMENT

"[*Shalom*] is well-being that exists in the very midst of threats—from sword and drought and wild animals. It is well-being of a material, physical, historical kind, not idyllic 'pie in the sky,' but 'salvation' in the midst of trees and crops and enemies—in the very places where people always have to cope with anxiety, to struggle for survival, and to deal with temptation."

Walter Brueggemann,
Understanding Biblical Themes: Peace

COACH'S QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

What comes to mind when I think about peace?

Bible Translation Note: All Scripture quotations in this devotion track are taken from the New Living Translation (NLT) of the Bible unless otherwise indicated.

BOTTOM LINE

I want to have peace.

ASK (All Ages): What are some different ways we say hello to other people? Let's see how many we can name. (Be ready with a few examples: *hello, good morning, nice to see you, etc.*)

Have you ever heard someone say hello by saying, "Peace be with you"? This was a common greeting back in Jesus' time, and it is still used in some communities today.

ASK (All Ages): What comes to mind when I say the word "peace"?

Peace can be a little tricky to explain, but we know it when we see it or experience it. The word *peace* can mean people are getting along without fighting—the opposite of war and violence. It can also mean peace within ourselves. When you are able to work through or let go of difficult thoughts and emotions like fear, worry, and anger, the rest you feel in your mind and heart is called peace.

Peace is truly a wonderful thing. Sadly, peace can be hard to find sometimes. We might be surrounded by classmates who are being disrespectful at school. We might hear about terrible things happening in the world. We might get stressed out about things like grades or

friendships. The truth is, as we go through life, we could all use some more peace.

ASK (7th Grade and up): Do you think wishing someone peace is a good way to greet them? Why or why not?

If we think back to the greeting “Peace be with you” and think about what peace really looks like, that’s actually a pretty cool thing to say to someone when you first see them, isn’t it? You are expressing that you hope that person experiences peace in their life. You want them not to be held down by troubles, but to be free to live the good life that God wants to give them.

ASK (All Ages): Why is it nice to have peace in your life?

This season, we’re going to be learning a lot about peace. We’ll also talk about contentment and joy, which are important things that go along with a life of peace. We can learn about peace, contentment, and joy from reading the Bible, which is God’s message to us. It is a collection of books written by many different authors over hundreds of years. The Bible was written thousands of years ago, but it still has so much to teach us today. Because, just like the people who lived in the times of the Bible, we still need peace.

The New Testament of the Bible tells us about Jesus, the Son of God. Among other things, Jesus was a great teacher. He once said, “I have told you all this so that

you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

If we want peace for ourselves and for others, Jesus tells exactly who to turn to—Him! It can be hard to find peace in this world, but Jesus wants to help us find it.

LET’S PRAY

God, thank You for bringing us together as a team this season. I know not all of our lives are peaceful right now, but that’s okay. Help us to turn to You to help us find peace as we learn about peace, contentment, and joy this season. We love You, Lord. Amen.

GREEN PRACTICE STAR REMINDER

If your league uses green practice stars, remember to distribute one to every athlete at the end of practice.



Practice 2 — Peace

Scouting Report | Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion

BACKGROUND

Medieval monk Thomas à Kempis wrote, “First, keep the peace within yourself. Then you can also bring peace to others.” Often, being at peace within ourselves is just as (or more!) challenging as being at peace with others. And what stands in the way of our inner peace? Things we are all very familiar with: worry, insecurity, and stress.

Jesus addresses the topic of worry during His famous Sermon on the Mount, saying that because God cares and provides for the birds of the air and the flowers in the fields, we can be assured that He will care and provide for us, for we are all the more valuable to Him. We will always have responsibilities and problems, but we don't have to be overwhelmed by those things. We can trust that God is with us and cares for us.

Meanwhile, in Philippians, the apostle Paul similarly encourages us to pray and trust God with our concerns, assuring us we can find peace in Him. Paul goes on to advise meditating on the good and lovely things in life, to help our minds focus on the things that can lift us up rather than weigh us down.

BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read Matthew 6:19-34; Philippians 4:6-9.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Listen to The Bible Project's podcast episode about this section of The Sermon on the Mount at **bibleproject.com/podcasts/what-does-jesus-say-about-anxiety** and take note of any new insights or understanding you gain from this conversation.



COACH'S QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

What worries have been on my mind lately? How can I shift my focus?

VIRTUE

PEACE is trusting God to help you stay calm in your heart and with people.

KEY VERSE

Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it.

Psalm 34:14 (NLT)

BOTTOM LINE

When I am worried, I can trust in God.

ASK (All Ages): What is something you were worried about recently? Why did it make you worry?

We all worry sometimes. We all have things that stress us out, or things that we aren't sure how they will work out. Hopefully, as a kid, you don't have too many worries. Often the way it works out is, the older you get, the more you have to worry about! But no matter how old we are, we all have times when we worry.

Last time, we started talking a little about peace. Peace is trusting God to help you stay calm in your heart and with other people. It's hard to have peace when you can't stop worrying.

The Bible tells us that Jesus, God's Son, taught about worry. He said, "Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are? Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?" (Matthew 6:26-27)

ASK (3rd Grade and up): What reason did Jesus give for not worrying?

Jesus talked about how valuable we are to God. If God takes care of the birds and provides what they need, then we can trust Him to take care of us, too! Jesus went on to say, “So don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today’s trouble is enough for today.” (Matthew 6:34)

Worry can become a distraction. It can get in the way of really living your life the way God wants you to. It can keep you focused on everything that did or could go wrong instead of focusing on what’s happening in the moment.

ASK (All Ages): Is it easy not to worry? Why or why not?

It’s not always easy not to worry. But another passage in the Bible gives us some helpful advice for how to find peace instead of worrying too much. It says, “Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6-7)

When you are worried, pray to God. Talk to Him about what you’re worried about. Ask Him for help. Thank Him for the good things in your life. He wants to give you peace! He wants you to know that you are not alone, and He will be with you through whatever you are going through.

ASK (All Ages): Has prayer ever helped you when you were feeling worried? How did it help?

The Bible also tells us that instead of focusing on our worry, we should focus on things that will bring peace. It says, “Fix

your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.” (Philippians 4:8)

This doesn’t mean that our problems will all go away, or that we shouldn’t follow through on our responsibilities. We will have problems to solve and responsibilities to take care of in our lives. But instead of being overwhelmed with worry and always focusing on the negative and what could go wrong, God wants us to focus on the positive things in life. He wants us to look for the good. This will change our perspective and help us find peace.

ASK (All Ages): Is there anything you’re worried about that you’d like for us to pray for today? (Be sure to add any specific requests to your prayer below.)

LET’S PRAY

God, I ask You to be with every player on this team. Please be with all the things that are on our minds right now. Help us not to be overwhelmed, but to focus on the good and trust that You care about us and will be with us. Help us find solutions, to ask for help when we need it, and to let go of the things we cannot control. Thank You for hearing us, Lord. Amen.

GREEN PRACTICE STAR REMINDER

If your league uses green practice stars, remember to distribute one to every athlete at the end of practice.

PRACTICE CARD REMINDER

If your league uses practice cards, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled “Practice 2” at the end of practice.



Practice 3 — Peace

Scouting Report | Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion

BACKGROUND

When we think of the word *peace*, the definition that first comes to mind is probably the absence of external conflict. We all face moments or seasons of conflict with others. And the Bible makes it clear that God wants us to seek both inner and outward peace in our lives.

In this devotion, we'll use the biblical narrative of Jacob and Esau to illustrate what it looks like to choose peace instead of conflict. There is quite a bit of family history at play here. The scene is twin brothers—one who deceived and stole from the other and one who lashed out in murderous threats—coming back together after twenty years apart. Jacob, the original offender, doesn't know how Esau will react. Even after all this time, he could still be angry. Jacob stole his inheritance and his position in the family. So, even though Jacob is returning to his homeland at God's command, he is still afraid of what Esau might do.

Before meeting Esau, Jacob prays and spends the night famously wrestling with God. But he also prepares—sending generous gifts, organizing his camp to make it easiest for those he cares about most to escape, and using subordinate language when sending messages to Esau and when he finally speaks to Esau again for the

first time. He bows down to Esau seven times, treating Esau as superior even though Jacob now holds his father's blessing. Jacob shows contrition, and to his surprise, Esau shows forgiveness and acceptance.

BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read Genesis 25:19-34; Genesis 27:1-28:5; Genesis 32-33; Romans 12:9-21.

ENCOURAGEMENT

In this story, we see several keys to how we can achieve peace with others, even when there is a troubled history and real tension. People can change, and time can heal. We see the power of repentance and apology. We see the strength in seeking reconciliation rather than revenge. Peace is not always easy, but it is achievable even in the most unlikely circumstances.

COACH'S QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

How can I choose peace over conflict in my relationships with others?

VIRTUE

PEACE is trusting God to help you stay calm
in your heart and with people.

KEY VERSE

Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace,
and work to maintain it.

Psalm 34:14 (NLT)

BOTTOM LINE

I can choose peace instead of hurting someone else.

ASK (All Ages): Has anyone ever surprised you by acting calm when you thought they would get angry and lose their temper?

It's easy to overreact when something makes us angry—when someone pushes our buttons or does something really mean. Sometimes, it can take a lot of patience not to lose your temper. But the Bible says this is what God wants us to try to do. He wants us not just to have peace on the inside with how we handle our problems, but He also wants us to have peace on the outside when we face problems with other people.

There's a story in the Old Testament of the Bible that shows a good example of this. There were two brothers named Jacob and Esau. They were twins, but Esau was just barely older than Jacob. In their culture, that meant Esau would inherit most of their family's wealth when their father died. As the oldest son, Esau would become the leader of the family. But in a really bad moment for both brothers, Esau traded his birthright to Jacob for a cup

of stew! Esau made a really terrible mistake, but Jacob shouldn't have tried to take his brother's birthright in the first place.

Then, Jacob took it a step further and tricked their dad into giving Jacob his blessing. Now, everything that should have been Esau's would go to Jacob. Esau was furious! He threatened to kill Jacob, and Jacob ran away.

ASK (All Ages): Were Esau and Jacob very peaceful with one another? Why or why not?

Jacob had done something really awful to Esau, but Esau's reaction made things even worse. This was not how the brothers should have treated each other! Thankfully, the Bible goes on to tell us what happened when the brothers met again many years later.

Jacob was traveling back home and realized he was near where Esau lived. He sent a message to Esau, hoping his brother would be friendly to him. When the messengers returned, they told Jacob, "We met your brother, Esau, and he is already on his way to meet you—with an army of 400 men!" (Genesis 32:6)

ASK (All Ages): How do you think Jacob felt when he heard this?

Jacob was terrified! He thought Esau could be on his way to kill him. By this time, Jacob had a huge family, many people who worked for him, and large flocks of animals. He divided everyone into two groups, hoping that if Esau attacked one first, the other group could escape. He sent herdsmen with goats, sheep, camels, and other animals ahead of them as gifts for Esau, hoping to make Esau less angry at him! Jacob also prayed, asking God to rescue him if Esau attacked.

When Esau and his army got closer, Jacob went ahead of his family and bowed down before Esau seven times. He was still scared of what his brother would do. But then Esau did something surprising. He ran up to Jacob and hugged him! Both brothers broke down crying.

Esau had clearly forgiven Jacob and was so glad to see his brother after many years! He chose peace over violence and revenge. He had made bad choices all those years ago, but now he made the right choice.

ASK (All Ages): Why is it better to choose peace instead of hurting someone else?

God created all of us. Every person you will ever meet is valuable to God, including you! God wants us to treat each other well. He wants to try to have peace rather than hurting other people. The New Testament says, “Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.” (Romans 12:17-18)

LET’S PRAY

God, we all get angry sometimes. We all have moments when it would be easy to lose our tempers and react to someone else in a hurtful way. Please teach us how to choose peace instead. Help us to learn, like Jacob and Esau did, to be good to each other instead of hurting each other. Amen.

GREEN PRACTICE STAR REMINDER

If your league uses green practice stars, remember to distribute one to every athlete at the end of practice.



Practice 4 — Peace

Scouting Report | Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion

BACKGROUND

As we have seen so far this season, peace is both an inward and outward characteristic. And someone who lives with both inward and outward peace is someone who would make a great peacemaker. A peacemaker doesn't just seek peace as far as it concerns them personally; a peacemaker cares about seeking peace within their community or sphere of influence. We see examples of peacemakers throughout the Bible, including Jonathan, Esther, Barnabas, and of course, Jesus. These people stepped up to bring peace to others even when they didn't have to.

Jesus mentions peacemakers in His blessings or "beatitudes" at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, saying peacemakers will be identified as children of God. "Those who work for *shalom* (wholeness and harmony rather than strife and discord in all aspects of life) and who reconcile others to God and each other will 'be called sons of God.' Others will identify them as God's true ambassadors, as those who are being conformed to his likeness." (Craig L. Blomberg, *The New American Commentary: Matthew*)

BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read Matthew 5:1-12; Romans 14:17-19; Psalm 34:14.

ENCOURAGEMENT

“But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.”

James 3:17-18

COACH'S QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

What opportunities do I have to be a peacemaker in my daily life?

VIRTUE

PEACE is trusting God to help you stay calm
in your heart and with people.

KEY VERSE

Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace,
and work to maintain it.

Psalm 34:14 (NLT)

BOTTOM LINE

I can be a peacemaker.

ASK (All Ages): What have you learned about peace so far this season?

Remember, peace is trusting God to help you stay calm in your heart and with people. Peace helps us not to be driven by worry, fear, or anger. God wants us to have peace in our hearts and peace with one another. Today, I want to tell you about how you can not only be someone who is full of peace, you can also be someone who makes peace. You can be a peacemaker.

ASK (3rd Grade and up): What is a peacemaker?

A peacemaker is someone who steps up to make peace between others. They're someone who brings calm and peace to a tense situation. A peacemaker looks out for everybody's best interests.

ASK (All Ages): Imagine two players on different teams get into an argument during a game. This can happen sometimes! In this situation, who might the peacemakers be?

The first peacemaker in a tense game situation is probably the referee. One of their jobs is to keep the peace in a competitive game. But you might also see the coaches being peacemakers, talking to their players and encouraging them not to overreact. You might sometimes even see the players' teammates being peacemakers, helping them stay calm when they are frustrated.

These peacemakers step up because they want to stop something worse from happening, and they want the game to continue in a way that is fair and fun for everyone. This is the kind of thing a peacemaker does.

ASK (All Ages): What are some examples of times when you could be a peacemaker at school? What about with your friends? Any other ideas?

Being a peacemaker will look different in different situations. It might mean helping your friends communicate better with one another. It might mean getting the rest of the class to calm down when your teacher is having a tough day. It might mean telling an adult when someone's doing something dangerous. But the more you step up to be a peacemaker, the better you'll get at knowing how to handle different situations.

Jesus talked about peacemakers when He said, “God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.” (Matthew 5:9)

Jesus says that God will bless the peacemakers, and that they will be called the children of God because they follow His example of working for peace. Jesus was the greatest peacemaker. He taught people how to live in a way that would bring peace in their hearts and between each other. He showed what it was like to live in this way. And later this season, we'll talk about how He made peace between us and God, so that we wouldn't have to be separated from Him by our sin.

Think about how you can follow what Jesus taught and be a peacemaker this week.

LET'S PRAY

God, help us all learn to be peacemakers. Please give us the courage and the wisdom to step up when peace is needed. Show us what to do and what to say. Help us follow Jesus' example of peacemaking. Amen.

Note for Next Week: Bring in a container of bubbles and at least one bubble wand.

GREEN PRACTICE STAR REMINDER

If your league uses green practice stars, remember to distribute one to every athlete at the end of practice.



Practice 5 — Contentment

Scouting Report | Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion

BACKGROUND

The next virtue we will focus on this season is contentment. Contentment is key to inner peace, but it can also help prevent conflict with others. A content person isn't going to let insecurity drive their interactions. As we'll discuss in this devotion, contentment is grounded in the idea that we shouldn't let temporary things like what we own or what circumstances we're in determine our attitude toward life. True satisfaction doesn't come from these things, but from knowing God.

In Philippians 4, the apostle Paul brings up contentment while thanking the Philippian Christians for sending him financial aid during his imprisonment (likely while he was under house arrest in Rome). While their gifts clearly meant a great deal to him, he had learned the secret to contentment was the spiritual richness found in his relationship with Jesus. He could face anything with Christ by his side. While Paul was thankful for what they had sent, he was even more thankful that their gifts showed their genuine care for him and an uncommon generosity—likely a result of God's work in their hearts.

BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read Philippians 4:10-19; Hebrews 13:5-6.

ENCOURAGEMENT

“Lasting contentment can only be found in a relationship with God. He created us, loves us, and knows what is best for us. Thus, the ultimate cause of contentment is pursuing God as our source of joy and meaning in life, and the ultimate cause of discontentment is failing to do so.”

Scott LaPierre,
Being Content God's Way

COACH'S QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

Am I generally content or discontent? Why is that?

VIRTUE

CONTENTMENT is being satisfied with who you are and what you have.

KEY VERSE

I have learned how to be content with whatever I have.
Philippians 4:11b (NLT)

BOTTOM LINE

I can be content.

Note: Bring in a container of bubbles and at least one bubble wand. Pick a volunteer (or volunteers) to blow bubbles for the group. Ask the team to watch for which bubble takes the longest to pop.

Bubbles are fun, but they don't last very long, do they? They're here one second and gone the next. The truth is, a lot of things in life are like that. Cotton candy. Sunsets. A basketball game. Most things in life don't last forever.

We've talked a lot about peace this season, and something that can help us have peace is contentment. Contentment means being satisfied with who you are and what you have. When you realize that most of the things you want in life don't really last as long as you think, that can help you learn to be content with what you have and where you are in life.

ASK (All Ages): Have you ever wanted something so badly that you weren't happy until you got it? How did you feel when you finally got what you wanted?

There are a lot of things we want in life. From big things, like getting your dream job when you grow up, to little things, like eating at your favorite restaurant. Maybe you really want to be popular. Or you really want to be a great athlete. Or you really want the latest gaming system.

Being content or having contentment means understanding that we don't always get everything we want in life when we want it—or sometimes even at all—and being okay with that.

One of the books in the New Testament, Philippians, was written by a man named Paul when he was imprisoned for telling people about Jesus. Paul wrote about being content, even in jail, because God gave him the strength to be satisfied in all circumstances. Paul wrote, “For I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.” (Philippians 4:11-13)

ASK (All Ages): Why is it good to be content no matter what situation you're in? How can being content help you?

Like Paul, God wants us to learn how to be content with whatever we have. He wants us to trust in Him in all situations, and be thankful for the good things we have for the time we have them, instead of worrying so much about the things or the life we wish we had.

ASK (All Ages): How can you practice contentment this week?

ASK (7th Grade and up): Does being content mean you shouldn't work hard to achieve goals in life? Why or why not?

LET'S PRAY

God, help us learn to be content in all situations. Help us to find strength in You and to remember that You are with us. Remind us of the good things in our lives when we are struggling to be content. Amen.

GREEN PRACTICE STAR REMINDER

If your league uses green practice stars, remember to distribute one to every athlete at the end of practice.

PRACTICE CARD REMINDER

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



Practice 6 — Contentment

Scouting Report | Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion

BACKGROUND

In *Being Content God's Way*, author Scott LaPierre writes that covetousness is the opposite of contentment. In this devotion, we'll explore a similar concept that kids are a lot more familiar with than covetousness: jealousy. To be content, all the vices in this category—jealousy, covetousness, envy—are things we need to avoid. Of course, this is easier said than done. It can be difficult not to focus on what others have that we want. It starts for us as early as two babies fighting over the same toy. But as we grow up, and especially as the Holy Spirit helps us grow to be more like Jesus if we believe in Him, we can choose a better way.

Both James in James 3:13-18 and Paul in Romans 13:8-10 present similar advice for combatting jealousy. Paul quotes the commands against murder, stealing, and covetousness from the Ten Commandments—all often triggered by jealousy—and points to what Jesus said was one of the greatest commandments: loving your neighbor as yourself. Meanwhile, James breaks down what loving your neighbor might look like: peace,

gentleness, humility, mercy, etc. This is the antidote to jealousy. When you choose to love others the way you love yourself, you can become jealous *for* them rather than jealous *of* them, wanting and working for good in their lives, rather than dwelling on what they have that you don't.

BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read James 3:13-18; Romans 13:8-10.

ENCOURAGEMENT

"Contentment is like love; we think it is a feeling that comes and goes based on our experiences. However, the Bible also presents contentment as a choice. We can choose to be content regardless of what we are experiencing."

Scott LaPierre,
Being Content God's Way

COACH'S QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

How do I typically respond when I feel jealous? How can I be more focused on loving my neighbor as myself?

VIRTUE

CONTENTMENT is being satisfied with who you are and what you have.

KEY VERSE

I have learned how to be content with whatever I have.
Philippians 4:11b (NLT)

BOTTOM LINE

I can practice contentment instead of jealousy.

ASK (All Ages): What is jealousy? Have you ever been jealous before?

Jealousy is when you want what someone else has. Now, we can't always help it when we want something. If I smell someone grilling hamburgers while I'm hungry, I might want a hamburger. If you hear about the release of a new video game you're excited about, you might want that video game.

Jealousy comes into play when you start being driven by wanting something someone else has. And it can easily make you slip into making bad decisions. What if you heard someone at school had the new video game you wanted, so you made fun of them because you were upset you didn't have the game? What if a teammate got to play the position you wanted to play, so you complained about them to your coach? These are the kinds of things that happen when people get jealous.

ASK (3rd Grade and up): Have you ever made a bad decision because you were jealous of someone else? How did you feel afterward?

The Bible teaches that jealousy is wrong. It often leads us to make decisions that hurt other people. It can make us selfish, angry, and bitter. There's a verse that says, "For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind." (James 3:16)

Last time, we talked about contentment. Contentment is being satisfied with who you are and what you have. You can't be jealous and content at the same time. God wants us to turn away from jealousy and instead try to find contentment in our lives through Him.

ASK (All Ages): What should you do when you start feeling jealous?

Well, the verse right after the one I just read about jealousy goes on to say, "But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere." (James 3:17)

This is good advice for standing strong against jealousy. When you start to be jealous of who someone else is or what someone else has, try to think of yourself less and that person more. Think about how you can be loving

toward them instead of jealous. Remind yourself that God loves and values them, and thank Him for how He has blessed them. God gives us all gifts, but He doesn't always give us what we want right when we want it—or at all. Think about the gifts you do have instead of what you don't have—and thank God for those things.

You can also take the energy you might use for being jealous and instead do something kind for someone else. Or tell someone else you trust what you are struggling with. As you go on, you might end up getting what you want, or you might find that what you wanted wasn't what you needed after all.

LET'S PRAY

God, thank You for all that You have given us. You bless us with many good things. Please forgive us for the times when we get jealous and make bad decisions. Help us to change our perspective and seek contentment instead. Amen.

GREEN PRACTICE STAR REMINDER

If your league uses green practice stars, remember to distribute one to every athlete at the end of practice.



Practice 7 — Contentment

Scouting Report | Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion

BACKGROUND

It's often tempting to look at our lives from a “glass half empty” perspective, focusing on what we don't have or what we wish was different about our circumstances. Though the details may be different, kids and adults alike can struggle to find contentment because of this.

The Bible encourages us to see things from God's perspective, based on His value system rather than our own. When we struggle to be content in our identity, He wants us to find our identity in being His valued creation, His beloved child. When we struggle to be content in our circumstances, He wants us to focus on what truly matters—“Seeking heavenly *treasure* means serving others and honoring God by doing so.” (*NET Bible Notes on Matthew 6*) When we struggle to be content in what we own, He wants us to see that what we acquire here on earth is just temporary and is much less important than other things.

BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read 1 Samuel 16:1-13; 1 Timothy 6:6-11; Matthew 6:19-21.

ENCOURAGEMENT

“Don’t love money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, ‘I will never fail you. I will never abandon you.’ So we can say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my helper, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me?’”

Hebrews 13:5-6

COACH’S QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

Do I tend to have a “glass half empty” or “glass half full” perspective on life?

VIRTUE

CONTENTMENT is being satisfied with who you are and what you have.

KEY VERSE

I have learned how to be content with whatever I have.
Philippians 4:11b (NLT)

BOTTOM LINE

I can be content with who I am and what I have.

ASK (All Ages): Have you ever seen someone playing a sport, performing music, or doing a really cool job and wished you could be like them? Who was it and what made you want to be like them?

In the 1960s, there was a young man named Frank who really wanted to pretend to be someone he wasn't. Frank impersonated an airline pilot, a police officer, a social worker, and possibly even a doctor, lawyer, and professor. But even though Frank dressed up like a pilot, he had never taken any flight lessons and couldn't have flown a plane. What Frank could do was steal money. He made fake checks and cashed them at banks to get lots of money that wasn't his.

Frank was a con man. He pretended to have all kinds of different lives that weren't his. He took a whole bunch of money that wasn't his. He would go to jail several times for his different crimes, before eventually settling down and putting his life of crime behind him. But when he

was young, Frank was the opposite of content.

Remember, contentment is being satisfied with who you are and what you have. Now, we won't all go as far as Frank, but we all have moments when we aren't satisfied with our lives. We have times when we wish we looked different, or that we were better at something, or that we had more friends.

When you feel this way, remember this: God created you and loves you. He knows you better than anyone else could and cares about you just the way you are. The Bible says, "The Lord doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7)

ASK (All Ages): How could knowing God loves you just the way you are help you when you are wishing your life was different somehow?

We also all have moments when we aren't satisfied with what we have. Adults might wish they had a different house or a different car. They might wish they had a lot more money in their bank account. Someone your age might wish you had different clothes or different shoes. You might wish you had the latest phone or game.

But the Bible says, "True godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can't take anything with us when we leave it." (1 Timothy 6:6-7) And Jesus said, "Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and

where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.” (Matthew 6:19-21)

While we can certainly enjoy the good things that God has made on earth, the Bible makes it clear that there are more important things than what we own or how much money we have. It says that following God’s way and being content with what you have are actually worth more than your stuff or your bank account. The stuff we have on earth is temporary. But how you honor God with your life will last forever.

ASK (All Ages): How could being focused on following God help you be content with what you have instead of always wanting more?

ASK (7th Grade and up): How do you think the Bible’s message about contentment is different from what the world teaches us about who we are and what we have?

LET’S PRAY

God, we see and hear a lot every day about who we ought to be and what we ought to want. Help us learn to see our lives from Your perspective and focus on who You want us to be instead. Amen.

GREEN PRACTICE STAR REMINDER

If your league uses green practice stars, remember to distribute one to every athlete at the end of practice.



Practice 8 — Good News — This devotion includes a gospel presentation.

Scouting Report | Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion

BACKGROUND

A study of peace in the Bible would not be complete without focusing on Jesus. He was prophesied to be the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6) and angels proclaimed peace to the world at His birth (Luke 2:14). Though His teaching brought division between those who believed He was from God and those who did not (Luke 12:51), He embodied peace with how He treated others, how He resolved conflict (Luke 22:47-51), and even how He dealt with His own anxieties (Matthew 26:36-46). He told His disciples that He would leave them with peace of mind and peace of heart, but that it would be a different kind of peace than the world gives (John 14:27). It would be a whole peace—eternal and built on His sacrificial actions as the ultimate peacemaker.

Jesus' work of making peace between us and God is known as reconciliation. It points to how we are brought back together with our Creator through Jesus. He makes a way. He restores the relationship. He brings peace. This, in turn, reminds us why peace is such an important aspect of how He wants us to live. It is a fruit of God's Spirit at work in our lives. "Because God loves

us, God justifies; because God justifies, we have peace with God; because we have peace with God, we have peace with one another.” (Scot McKnight, *Romans: Experiencing Peace Together in a Chaotic World*)

BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read Romans 5:1-11; Romans 3:20-26; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21; John 19-20.

ENCOURAGEMENT

“For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ’s blood on the cross. This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.”

Colossians 1:19-22

COACH’S QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

Does having peace with God matter to me? Why or why not?

VIRTUE

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

KEY VERSE

Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.

Romans 5:1 (NLT)

BOTTOM LINE

I can have peace with God through Jesus.

We started this season by talking about peace. We said that peace is trusting God to help you stay calm in your heart and with people. If you think about it, peace is about having good relationships—with yourself and with others. But we also want to have a good relationship with God.

The Bible tells us that God created each of us. He cares about us and wants to have a good relationship with us. Unfortunately, there is something that gets in the way of our relationship with God: sin. Sin is anything we think, do, or say that is disobedient to God. It's when we choose our way instead of God's way. Sin includes things like stealing, lying, or hurting someone else on purpose. Sin gets in the way of our relationship with God because it is the opposite of who God is. It goes against His perfect character.

The Bible says, "For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard." (Romans 3:23) We all sin. We all choose our way over God's way. And this separates us from God.

ASK (All Ages): Why is sin such a big deal?

We know God wants us to find peace in our lives, and most of all, He wants us to find peace with Him. He wants to bridge the gap

between us caused by sin. So, God did something amazing. He sent His Son, Jesus, to earth.

Jesus grew up in an ordinary family in an ordinary village on the other side of the world, 2,000 years ago. And when He was 30 years old, Jesus began traveling around teaching people about God. He showed them the right way to live—God’s way. He helped people and included people from all walks of life. And through the power of God, Jesus performed many incredible miracles. He healed people, walked on water, and fed thousands of people with just one boy’s lunch.

ASK (All Ages): What do you think it would have been like to meet Jesus in person?

But one thing Jesus didn’t do was sin. He always followed God’s way. He always chose to do what was right, and He did that all the way to the cross. You see, some people didn’t like Jesus. They wanted Him out of the picture. So, they had Him arrested, put on trial, and falsely accused. He was sentenced to die. Jesus, the Son of God, died on a wooden cross. He could have called down God’s angels and saved Himself, but He didn’t. Jesus knew this was God’s plan to make peace between God and all of us. He went through all of this for us.

You see, when Jesus died on the cross, He took our place. The consequences of sin are death and separation from God. Jesus took the punishment for our sin. The Bible says, “For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)

But that’s not the end of the story. Three days after Jesus died and was buried, God brought Him back to life! He appeared to many of His friends and spent time with them over about 40 days, before returning to heaven, where He is still alive today!

Jesus didn’t just pay the price for our sin—He defeated death! Now, when we trust in Him and ask God to forgive us for our sins because what Jesus has done, He will forgive us and make us part of His family. We can have peace in our relationship with God. All because of what Jesus has done! The Bible says, “Therefore, since we have been made right in God’s sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.” (Romans 5:1)

ASK (3rd Grade and up): Why do you think it's important to have peace with God?

ASK (All Ages): How does it make you feel to think about what Jesus did for you?

Having peace with God means that when we die, we won't be separated from Him—we will live with Him forever. But it also means that we have a new relationship with God here and now. When we trust in Jesus to save us, God sends His Spirit to live in us and help us live as people of peace. The Spirit helps us grow more and more like Jesus.

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

LET'S PRAY

God, thank You so much for sending Jesus to make a way for us to have peace with You through Him. Forgive us for choosing our way instead of Your way. Help everyone here to trust in Jesus and become part of your family through Him. 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. 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.

GREEN PRACTICE STAR REMINDER

If your league uses green practice stars, remember to distribute one to every athlete at the end of practice.

PRACTICE CARD REMINDER

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



Practice 9 — Joy

Scouting Report | Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion

BACKGROUND

The final virtue we will focus on this season is joy. Joy goes hand-in-hand with peace and contentment. These three virtues help form a foundational attitude and perspective of goodness and godliness that help other characteristics of Christlikeness grow in us. And they make life a whole lot sweeter.

Your team will be very familiar with the concept of happiness, but the main takeaway of this lesson is to help them understand that joy is different from happiness. Instead of being based on temporary circumstances, joy is based on the permanent character and will of God. Joy goes far beyond happiness.

In John 15, Jesus describes Himself as the vine and His followers as the branches. When we draw on Him as the source of our spiritual life, we will produce good fruit—like joy, peace, and love. In the midst of this teaching, Jesus says, “I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!” (John 15:11) Joy is the result of a life rooted in Him. “Wherever we go, joy should be the banner flown over

us to indicate to all that Christ the King is living within our hearts.” (Jonathan Landry Cruse, *The Character of Christ*)

BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read Romans 8:31-39; Romans 15:1-13; John 15:1-17.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Watch the Bible Project video about the biblical concept of joy at **bibleproject.com/videos/chara-joy**. It ends by saying, “Christian joy is a profound decision of faith and hope in the power of Jesus’ own life and love.” Take some time to reflect on this video and statement. How is joy a decision? And what does it have to do with faith and hope? How are Jesus’ life and love able to empower my joy?



COACH'S QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

Am I a joyful person? Why or why not?

VIRTUE

JOY is gladness that isn't based on what's happening around you or to you.

KEY VERSE

I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him.
Romans 15:13a (NLT)

BOTTOM LINE

I can be joyful because of who God is and what He has done.

So far this season, we've talked about peace and contentment. Last time, we also talked about how Jesus made a way for us to have peace with God through Him. Today, I want to talk about something that goes along with peace and contentment: joy!

ASK (All Ages): What is joy?

We might think joy is just another word for happiness, but joy is actually a little different. Happiness is based on what is happening in your life. You might be happy when you win a game or while you're eating your favorite food. And while it's great to feel happy about those things, that happiness only lasts so long.

Joy is different. Joy is gladness that isn't based on what's happening around you or to you. You can be joyful even when you lose a game or when you have to eat something

gross. That's because joy doesn't come and go. It stays with you because you always have something to be glad about. And the Bible tells us that real joy is based on God.

ASK (All Ages): How can knowing God bring you joy?

Think about what we talked about last time. God created you, loves you, and sent His Son, Jesus, to pay the price for your sin and mine so that we could have a relationship with Him. The Bible says, "No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:39)

God is perfect, and so is His love for us. There's nothing we could ever do to make Him love us any more or any less. He is always with us. Every new day is a gift from Him. And when we have peace with Him through Jesus, He makes us part of His family, and His love lives in us through His Spirit. In a world where we often feel hurt or alone, God's great love for us should give us greater joy than anything we could ever imagine.

ASK (All Ages): How can you have joy even when you don't feel happy?

Being a joyful person doesn't mean that you'll always *feel* happy. There might even be times when you forget what brings you joy. But being joyful means that, deep down, you are trusting in God's love for you. Being joyful means finding the good in difficult times. It means being thankful

even when you could complain. It means having hope even when things look dark or uncertain.

ASK (3rd Grade and up): Do you know someone who is joyful? What makes you know they have joy?

There's a prayer in the Bible that a man named Paul wrote for some other Christians. It says: "I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13)

That is a prayer I have for our whole team this season.

LET'S PRAY

God, You are the source of our hope. Please fill these young athletes completely with joy and peace because they trust in You. Help them be very confident in their hope because of the power of Your Spirit in their lives. Amen.

GREEN PRACTICE STAR REMINDER

If your league uses green practice stars, remember to distribute one to every athlete at the end of practice.

PRACTICE CARD REMINDER

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



Practice 10 — Joy

Scouting Report | Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion

BACKGROUND

The testimony of the early church shows how we can have joy in all circumstances, even when times are tough. The verses from Acts quoted in this devotion are just a few of the many instances in the book where the believers' joy is mentioned specifically. Even though Jesus was no longer with them in person, even though many people around them could not understand their newfound faith, even though the authorities sought to stifle them through persecution—these early Christians continued to find joy everywhere they looked.

Many of them had seen the incredible things Jesus had done. Some hadn't seen but still believed in the beautiful stories passed on to them by others. They were all witnessing God at work in their midst, adding people to their number and helping them learn to live in community together, guided by the teachings of Jesus. This is the same joy that God wants to bless us with, if only we will seek it out.

BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read Acts 2:42-47; Acts 11:19-24; Acts 15:1-33; James 1:2-4.

ENCOURAGEMENT

“What the Holy Spirit is producing in our hearts is the joy of the Saviour, which is a *serious* joy. A joy that can face the seriousness of life head-on and still come out on top. Nothing can overwhelm a joy that is rooted in God.”

Jonathan Landry Cruse,
The Character of Christ

COACH'S QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

What circumstances test my joy? How can I stay grounded in God's love in these situations?

VIRTUE

JOY is gladness that isn't based on what's happening around you or to you.

KEY VERSE

I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him.
Romans 15:13a (NLT)

BOTTOM LINE

I can have joy in all circumstances.

I'm going to read you some Bible verses that all come from the book of Acts in the New Testament. And I want you to listen very carefully for something that all these verses have in common, okay? Here we go.

"They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great **joy** and generosity." (Acts 2:46)

"When he arrived and saw this evidence of God's blessing, he was filled with **joy**, and he encouraged the believers to stay true to the Lord." (Acts 11:23)

"And there was great **joy** throughout the church that day as they read this encouraging message." (Acts 15:31)

ASK (All Ages): What did all of those verses have in

common? (Give them a hint if they need it: “They all share one word that starts with J.”)

All these verses talk about joy! Joy is gladness that isn’t based on what’s happening around you or to you. While being happy is based on your circumstances, being joyful is based on knowing who God is.

The book of Acts, which all these verses I read are from, tells about the time right after Jesus died, came back to life, and returned to heaven. It tells about the people who first believed in Him and followed Him, who we call the first Christians or the early church.

These followers of Jesus didn’t have it easy. Some of the same people who had killed Jesus didn’t like that they were telling other people about Him. It was often dangerous, and some of them were thrown in prison or even killed. But they wouldn’t give up on spreading the good news about Jesus, because it had changed their lives and they wanted everyone to know how Jesus could give them peace with God, too.

ASK (All Ages): Do you think it was easy for the first Christians to stay joyful while this was all going on?

It would be easy for them to give up, or just be scared and sad all the time. But the first Christians didn’t base their gladness on what was going on around them. They were glad no matter what—because they knew who Jesus was and what He had done. They believed that the God who sent His Son to teach them, die for them,

and come back from the grave for them, loved them more than they could imagine and would be with them no matter what they faced.

So, the early church lived with joy. They were glad to all be together, people from different backgrounds and walks of life, uniting their lives around Jesus. They looked around and were thankful for all the good things God was doing even in the midst of the hard times they were facing. They welcomed many new people into their community as more and more people believed in Jesus. And the Bible tells us that they rejoiced—or expressed their joy—over and over again!

ASK (All Ages): Why were the first Christians able to keep expressing their joy no matter what was going on around them?

ASK (All Ages): How do you think trusting in God helps you have joy?

LET'S PRAY

God, hearing about the joy of the early church can bring us a lot of joy, too. It's cool to see how they trusted in You and expressed their gladness in You no matter what they faced. Help us to have that same attitude in our lives. Amen.

GREEN PRACTICE STAR REMINDER

If your league uses green practice stars, remember to distribute one to every athlete at the end of practice.



Practice 11 — Joy

Scouting Report | Coaches, here's an inside look at this week's devotion

BACKGROUND

Joy is not something we ought to keep to ourselves. If we have joy in God, it is bound to overflow. We can express our joy in many ways—but the important thing is that we do share it!

In the Old Testament, King David danced before the Lord “with all his might” as the Ark of the Covenant, which symbolized the presence of God, was finally returned to Israel. His wife Michal was embarrassed and told him he looked undignified—not like a king. But David replied, “I was dancing before the Lord . . . He appointed me as the leader of Israel, the people of the Lord, so I celebrate before the Lord. Yes, and I am willing to look even more foolish than this, even to be humiliated in my own eyes!” (2 Samuel 6:21-22)

We don't need to be embarrassed to express our joy, and we don't need to always be serious about the things of God. King David and other psalmists wrote many songs and poems that praised God—with rich language, creativity, and passion. In the New Testament, Jesus

came to “bring joy to all people,” and sure enough, as we saw last practice, those who believed in Him rejoiced often! This devotion will hopefully help your team start thinking about how they can express their joy in God.

BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read Psalm 100; Psalm 150; Philippians 4:4.

ENCOURAGEMENT

“I am overwhelmed with joy in the Lord my God! For he has dressed me with the clothing of salvation and draped me in a robe of righteousness. I am like a bridegroom dressed for his wedding or a bride with her jewels. The Sovereign Lord will show his justice to the nations of the world. Everyone will praise him! His righteousness will be like a garden in early spring, with plants springing up everywhere.”

Isaiah 61:10-11

COACH'S QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

How can I be more expressive of my joy in God?

VIRTUE

JOY is gladness that isn't based on what's happening around you or to you.

KEY VERSE

I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him.
Romans 15:13a (NLT)

BOTTOM LINE

I can share my joy.

ASK (All Ages): What are some ways people show they're excited about something? If I told you the best news you'd ever heard right now, what do you think you'd do?

There are lots of ways people show their excitement and happiness. When a team wins a championship, their fans cheer at the top of their lungs, throw their hands in the air, and have a big party! Someone who is excited might run around or dance or sing or hug someone. The list goes on. When something makes us truly happy, we can't help but show it!

You see, there is something about the way God made humans where, when our hearts are filled with gladness, we don't want to hold it in! Even though joy is different from happiness, it's also something we can express. If you're truly joyful, you'll want to share that joy with others!

One of the biggest books in the whole Bible is the book of Psalms. Psalms is a collection of poems and songs written by people who loved God. And many of these songs are all about sharing the joy we can find in God. For example, Psalm 100 says this:

“Shout with joy to the Lord, all the earth! Worship the Lord with gladness. Come before him, singing with joy. Acknowledge that the Lord is God! He made us, and we are his. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation.”

ASK (All Ages): Why do you think the person who wrote this wanted to share their joy about God?

This author was joyful because God made us and we belong to Him. This person thanked God and praised God for His goodness and love, which go on forever. The author was so filled with joy that they wrote a beautiful song that we are reading thousands of years later! If, like this ancient author, we truly realize who God is, how He loves us, and what He has done for us, we won't be able to help sharing our joy about Him.

ASK (All Ages): What are some other ways people might express their joy about God?

One way we can share our joy about God is by

gathering together with other Christians. At a church service, people often sing about God together and praise Him in many other ways, too.

But you don't have to be at church to show your joy. You can sing and dance and praise God by yourself or with your family and friends. You can pray and thank God for all the good things in Your life. You can let your joy motivate You to follow Him and do good for others. You can express your joy about God by telling other people about Him and sharing how He is working in your life. You can teach others about what Jesus did for us.

When it comes down to it, sharing joy is one of the most important missions God has for us as His followers. And it's a lot of fun, too!

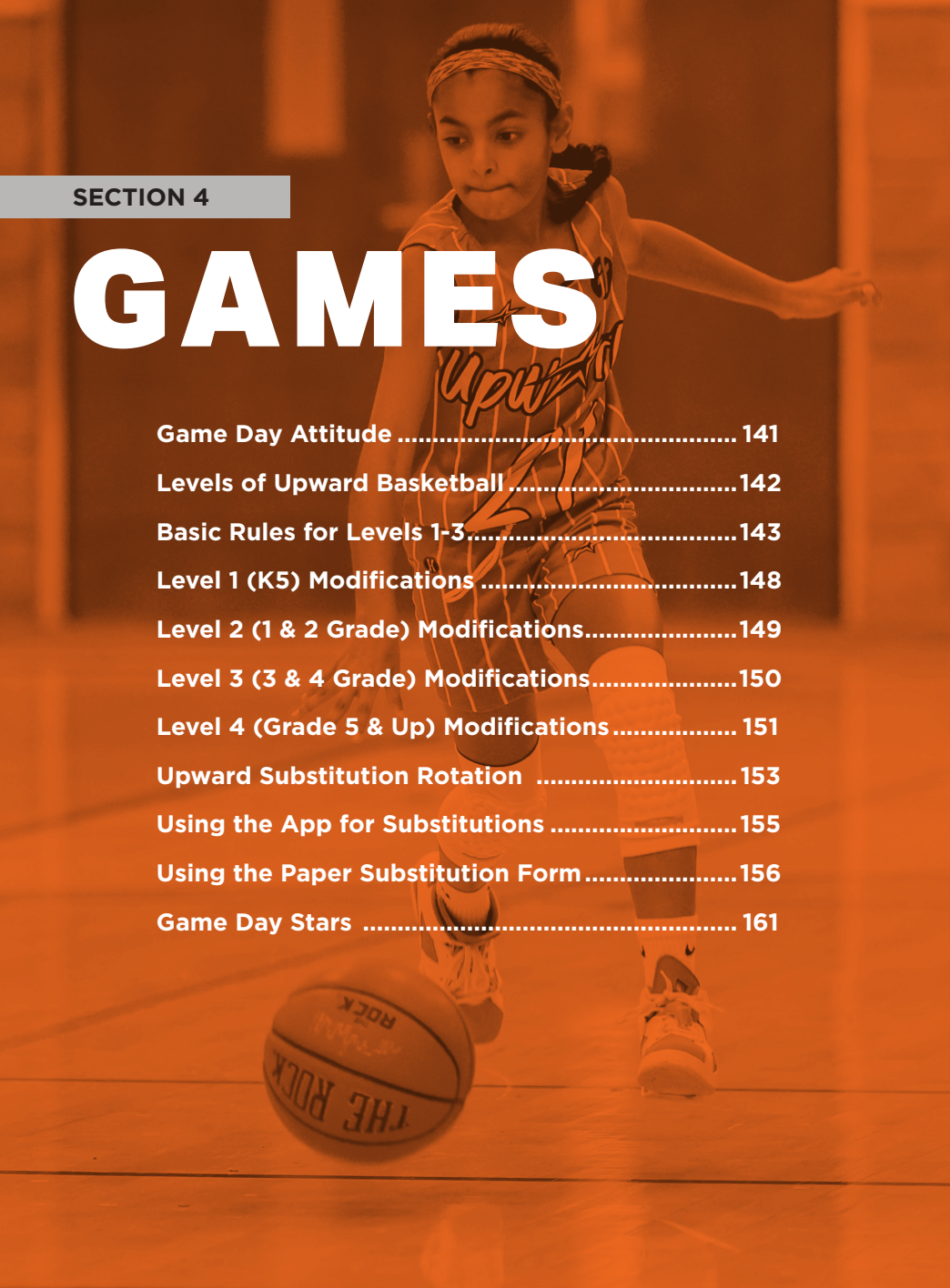
ASK (All Ages): What are some ways you can share your joy about God this week?

LET'S PRAY

God, thank You for an awesome season. We rejoice at all You have done. Help us all find peace, contentment, and joy in our lives through You. And help us share the joy we have in You all the time! We love You, Lord. Amen.

GREEN PRACTICE STAR REMINDER

If your league uses green practice stars, remember to distribute one to every athlete at the end of practice.



SECTION 4

GAMES

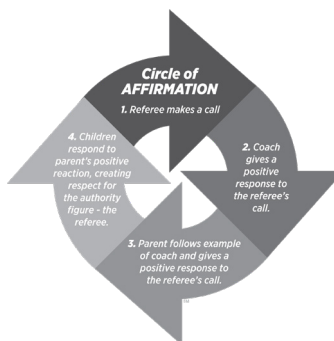
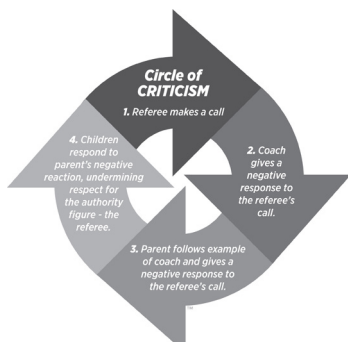
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Game days are fun and exciting and are an opportunity for players to demonstrate what they have learned.

Circle of Affirmation

Choosing the right game day attitude is key to being an effective Upward Coach. Actions and reactions during games 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.

Coaches and referees work together as a unified team for everyone to have a great experience. Coaches stop the Circle of Criticism by starting the Circle of Affirmation.



The example set between coaches and referees using the Circle of Affirmation demonstrates to everyone how to value others, enjoy healthy competition, and create a positive environment for spectators and players to follow.

Practicing the Circle of Affirmation makes the game day experience better 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.
- ◆ 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. Referees can remind players to "stay with your wristband color" during play to help them avoid a violation. If the defense gains an unfair advantage during play, issue a warning for illegal defense and have the offensive player with possession step back and establish their dribble at half court. If a violation occurs again, stop play for illegal defense and award the offense a free throw and possession of the ball for a throw-in.
- ◆ 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 they are guarding is within arm's reach, the defender may provide help defense against another player who is also inside the lane area. 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 in-bounded from either the baseline or sideline. All shooting fouls will result in two free throws.
- ◆ 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.

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 optional	It is optional to keep score, but the primary focus at this age is to learn the fundamentals of the game, with less focus on 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. Errant passes can be picked up by any player.
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.

Level 2 (1st & 2nd Grade) Modifications

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	It is optional to keep score, but the primary focus at this age is to learn the fundamentals of the game, with less focus on winning and losing.
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	

Level 3 (3rd & 4th Grade) Modifications

RULE	EXPLANATION/COMMENTS
Goal Height	9 feet
Ball Size	28.5"
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 kept	Young athletes at this age should learn how to handle winning and losing after competition. This translates into life lessons.
3-second violation is called and results in a turnover	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
One coach per team is allowed to stand in their coach box area 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.
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.	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
Free throws are awarded on all shooting fouls.	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.
Stealing the ball off a dribble or pass is allowed Double dribble violation is called in all circumstances Traveling violation is called in all circumstances Fast breaks are allowed in any transition situation	Players at this age should be taught and held to these basic basketball rules.

Level 4 (5th Grade & Up) Rules

*The following rules are exclusive to Level 4. They follow the NFHS rules for 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
Referees lead both team in prayer at center court before every game	This sets the tone and focus for the game
Goal Height	10 feet
Ball Size	28.5" (girls), 29.5" (boys)
Games consist of 4, six minute quarters	Follows middle school rules and allows game to begin and end within an hour timeframe
The clock stops at each whistle	Stoppage of play includes violations, fouls, out-of-bounds play, timeouts, and injury
Overtimes are 2 minutes in length (regulation clock)	Gives both teams the opportunity to win the game with reasonably extended time. If the game is still tied at the end of the first overtime period, you have three options: ◆ The game ends in a tie ◆ First team to score a basket wins the game (no extra time needed) ◆ Play additional two-minute periods until a winner is determined.
Teams are allowed one 30-second timeout per half (1 per team per half)	This allows a coach to meet with players and adjust strategy during a game
All games are played on a full-sized regulation court (no cross court)	This is appropriate floor size for players at this level
A jump ball is used to start the game and overtime period	Athletes at this age have the physical ability to jump for the ball to obtain possession. It also follows the NFHS rules for starting a game or overtime
Zone and man defenses are allowed (both may be used throughout the season)	Players at this level possess the ability to defend and attack both zone and man principles. Zone and man defenses are a part of the game of basketball and should be understood by players as they prepare for the next level.
Press defense is allowed in the backcourt at all times except if a team has a 15-point advantage	To promote fairness and integrity of the game, teams with a 15-point advantage should drop into a basic half-court defense.

(cont.)

Level 4 (5th Grade & Up) Rules (cont.)

RULE	EXPLANATION / COMMENTS
All players are allowed five fouls each game. After the 5th foul is committed, the player is out for the remainder of the game ----- Beginning with the fifth team foul in each quarter, bonus free throws are awarded to the fouled team (2 shots). The number of fouls counting towards the bonus resets at the end of each quarter, so the bonus free throws do not carry over from quarter to quarter.	This rule follows traditional middle school rules format
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 ¼ of each game ◆ Each athlete must play in both halves of each game	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 tournaments are encouraged for Level 4	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 ONLY applies to 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, 2, and 3 games consist of 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 helps all players have an opportunity to play and have fun.
- ◆ 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 every game allowing every player to be in the starting lineup. This gives all players a time to be on the field first.

- ◆ Coaches are not open to being accused of making unfair substitutions by using a set substitution system. A coach can simply point to the substitution system as setting the playing rotation.
- ◆ 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 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.

Reminder: 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.

USING THE APP FOR SUBSTITUTIONS

Select the Game Day tab and your game number.

The screenshot shows the 'Game' screen in the Upward Unlimited app. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Home / Games / Game'. Below it, the screen is titled 'First Half' with 'current segment: 1'. On the left, a list of players is shown with their names and jersey numbers: Q Hearne #2, C Flaughter #4, S Flaughter #3, R Miller #31, and C Wheeler #10. Each player has a star icon next to their name. On the right, there's a substitution table with columns for Position, Player Name, and a control icon. The table lists positions 5SF, 2SG, 1PG, 3SG, and 4PF, each with a corresponding player name and a control icon. The control icons are: a star for Q Hearne #2, a square for C Flaughter #4, a square for S Flaughter #3, a square for R Miller #31, and a circle with a minus sign for C Wheeler #10. Arrows point from text labels to these icons: 'Star Symbol' points to the star icon, 'Square' points to the square icon, 'Three Dots' points to the three dots icon, and 'Circle with Minus Symbol' points to the circle with minus icon.

Star Symbol
Assign a game day star and include specific notes

Square
Enter a player's position

Three Dots
Reactivate a player who was removed from lineup

Circle with Minus Symbol
Remove a player from the lineup

➔ Filling Out the Substitution Form (Paper Version)

If you are not using the app, you may use the paper copy of the substitution forms in the back of this book.

Step 1

Rank players according to skill level starting with letter "A." This ranking is based on evaluation score and what you observe at pre-season practices.

Step 2

For Week 1, begin with Player "A" and work down the first column (A-E). These are your starting five.

Step 3

Begin the rotation where you left off in the previous segment. If you are at the bottom of your list, be sure to go back to the top until you have five players in the segment.

Week 1

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

Step 4

Continue this process for the remainder of the segments.

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 lineup for Week Three.

Week 3		FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF		
PLAYER NAME		18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min
A	Beth	X					
B	Ann						
C	Susan	X					
D	Kim	X					
E	Mary	---					
F	Karen	X					
G	Amy	X					
H							
I							
J							

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

PLAYER NAME	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF		
	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						
I						
J						

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, give these multi-colored stickers to each player at the end of every game. Star presentation should be an exciting time. Encourage parents to cheer as stars are distributed. 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 jersey for iron-on stars or posters for sticker stars. Here is a list of the Game Day Stars and what they represent.



***EFFORT** (blue star) means giving your best at all times, regardless of the circumstances. Look for a player who always gives their maximum effort, no matter what.*



***DEFENSE** (red star) is for a player who can slow down or stop an opponent from making a play on the field. Defense requires an awareness of being in the correct position, hustle, and hard work.*



***SPORTSMANSHIP** (gold star) is a player who treats teammates and opponents the way you want to be treated. They show respect for themselves, teammates, opponents, referees, coaches, and the game by demonstrating sportsmanship.*



***CHRISTLIKENESS** (white star) is someone who is doing their best to imitate Jesus through your words, actions, and attitudes. Examples include sacrificing for the team, unselfish, being a leader, encouraging others, and playing tough.*



***OFFENSE** (gray star) is someone who puts their team in a favorable position that leads to a scoring opportunity. Offense requires being aware of your teammates and their opportunities and using your skills to advance your team's goals. This could be finding an open teammate with a pass, good ball control, and taking a good shot.*

SECTION 5

FORMS

Substitution Form165

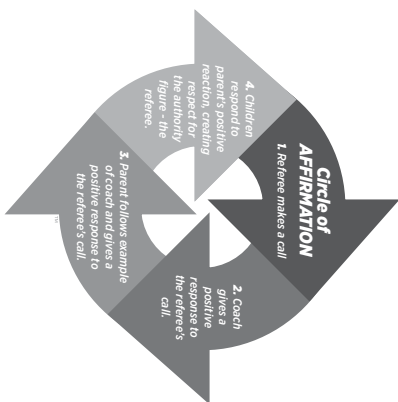
Star Distribution Form177

Game - Sub. Form

	Player's Name	FIRST HALF				SECOND HALF				POST GAME
		18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	
A										Notes / Stars
B										
C										
D										
E										
F										
G										
H										
I										
J										

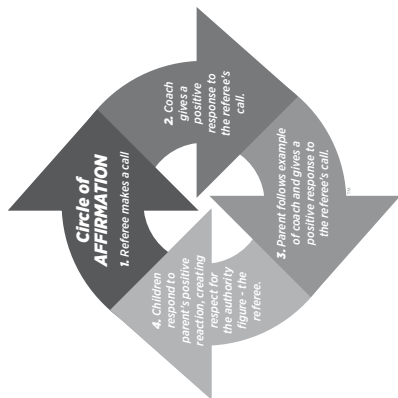
NOTES FOR NEXT PRACTICE:

SCORE: _____



Game - Sub. Form

Player's Name	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF			POST GAME
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min	Notes / Stars
A							
B							
C							
D							
E							
F							
G							
H							
I							
J							



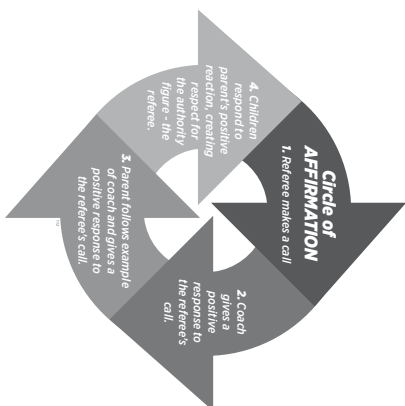
NOTES FOR NEXT PRACTICE:

SCORE: _____

Game - Sub. Form

Player's Name	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF			Notes / Stars
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min	
A							
B							
C							
D							
E							
F							
G							
H							
I							
J							

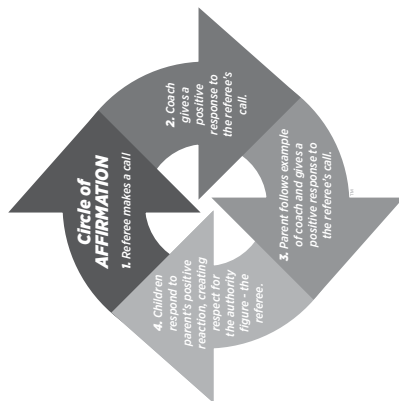
NOTES FOR NEXT PRACTICE:



SCORE: _____

Game - Sub. Form

Player's Name	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF			POST GAME
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min	
A							Notes / Stars
B							
C							
D							
E							
F							
G							
H							
I							
J							



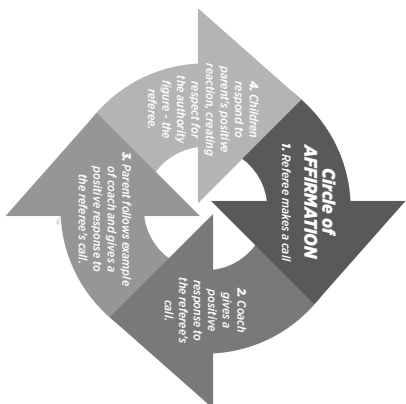
NOTES FOR NEXT PRACTICE:

SCORE: -

Game - Sub. Form

Player's Name	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF			Notes / Stars
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min	
A							
B							
C							
D							
E							
F							
G							
H							
I							
J							

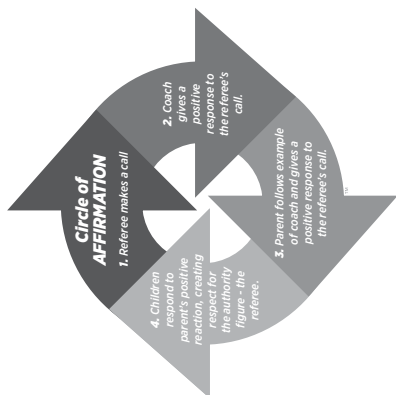
NOTES FOR NEXT PRACTICE:



SCORE: _____

Game - Sub. Form

<i>Game - Sub. Form</i>								
Player's Name	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF			POST GAME	
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min	Notes / Stars	
A								
B								
C								
D								
E								
F								
G								
H								
I								
J								

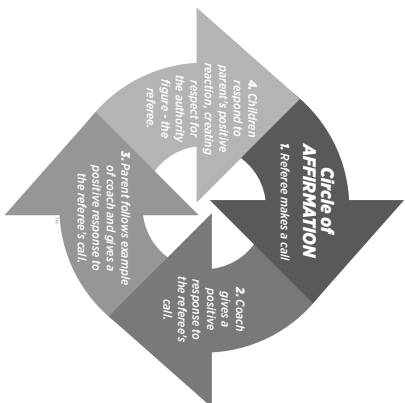


NOTES FOR NEXT PRACTICE:

Game - Sub. Form

Player's Name	FIRST HALF				SECOND HALF				Notes / Stars
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min			
A									
B									
C									
D									
E									
F									
G									
H									
I									
J									

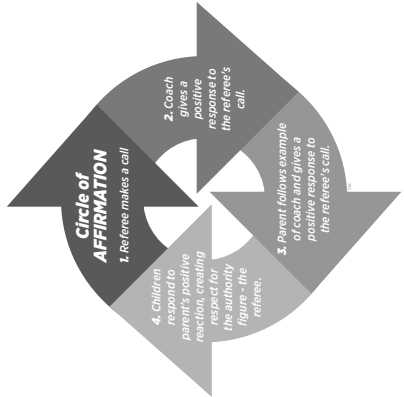
NOTES FOR NEXT PRACTICE:



SCORE: _____

Game - Sub. Form

Player's Name	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF			POST GAME
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min	Notes / Stars
A							
B							
C							
D							
E							
F							
G							
H							
I							
J							



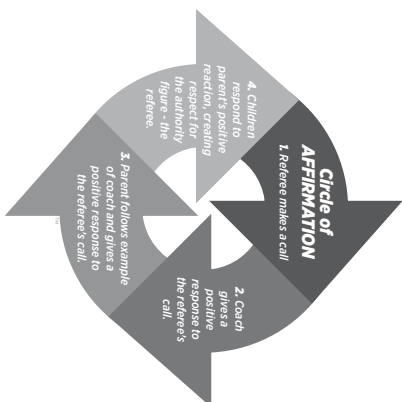
NOTES FOR NEXT PRACTICE:

SCORE: _____

Game - Sub. Form

Player's Name	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF			Notes / Stars
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min	
A							
B							
C							
D							
E							
F							
G							
H							
I							
J							

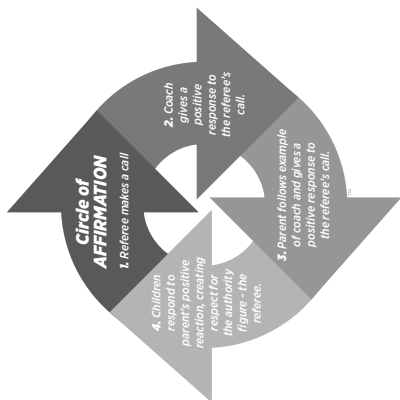
NOTES FOR NEXT PRACTICE:



SCORE: _____

Game - Sub. Form

Player's Name	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF			Notes / Stars
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min	
A							
B							
C							
D							
E							
F							
G							
H							
I							
J							



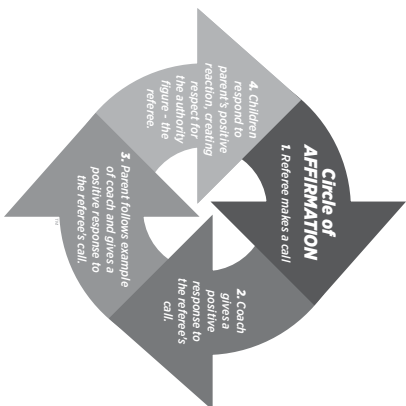
NOTES FOR NEXT PRACTICE:

SCORE: _____

Game - Sub. Form

Player's Name	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF			Notes / Stars
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min	
A							
B							
C							
D							
E							
F							
G							
H							
I							
J							

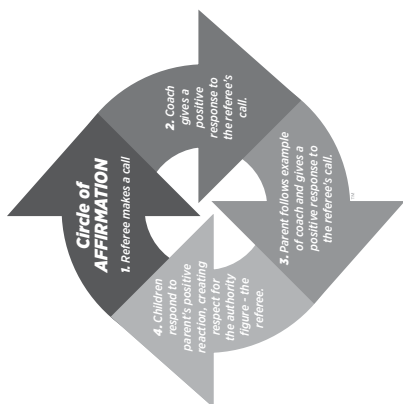
NOTES FOR NEXT PRACTICE:



SCORE: -

Game - Sub. Form

Player's Name	FIRST HALF			SECOND HALF			POST GAME
	18 min	12 min	6 min	18 min	12 min	6 min	
A							Notes / Stars
B							
C							
D							
E							
F							
G							
H							
I							
J							



NOTES FOR NEXT PRACTICE:

SCORE: -

Upward Basketball STAR DISTRIBUTION FORM

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

Player's Name	Game 1	Game 2	Game 3	Game 4	Game 5	Game 6	Game 7	Game 8	Game 9	Game 10	Game 11	Game 12

EFFORT (blue star) means giving your best at all times, regardless of the circumstances. Look for a player who always gives their maximum effort, no matter what.

DEFENSE (red star) is for a player who can slow down or stop an opponent from making a play on the field. Defense requires an awareness of being in the correct position, hustle, and hard work.

SPORTSMANSHIP (gold star) is a player who treats teammates and opponents the way you want to be treated. They show respect for themselves, teammates, opponents, referees, coaches, and the game by demonstrating sportsmanship.

CHRISTLIKENESS (white star) is someone who is doing their best to imitate Jesus through your words, actions, and attitudes. Examples include sacrificing for the team, unselfish play, being a leader, encouraging others, and playing tough.

OFFENSE (gray star) is someone who puts their team in a favorable position that leads to a scoring opportunity. Offense requires being aware of your teammates and their opportunities and using your skills to advance your team's goals. This could be finding an open teammate with a pass, good ball control, and taking a good shot.

NOTES

NOTES

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*

