

PLAY UPWARD SPORTS



COACH CHEERBOOK

Learn the Game ► Improve Skills ► Have Fun!



BASKETBALL CHEER COACH CHEERBOOK

©2025 Upward Unlimited. Upward[®] is a registered trademark of Upward Unlimited.
Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New
Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by
permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Table of Contents

Coaching Essentials

What You Do Matters	4
Your Role in Sports Ministry	4
Five Keys to Coaching	5
Key #1: Be Organized	5
Key #2: Lead the Practice Devotion	9
Key #3: Communicate with Parents, Players, Coaches, and Referees.....	10
Key #4: Teach the Sport	15
Key #5: Lead by Example.....	16
Create A Positive Culture	17
Circles of Affirmation and Criticism	19
Play with Purpose	20
Goals for the Season.....	25

Practice

Invest in the Team by Preparing	29
Practice Breakdown	29
Welcome and Games	33
Warm-Ups & Stretching	35
Cheerleading Fundamentals	39

Devotions - Biblical Virtues

Devotion Outline	104
PRACTICE 1: Peace	106

PRACTICE 2: Peace	111
PRACTICE 3: Peace	116
PRACTICE 4: Peace	121
PRACTICE 5: Contentment	126
PRACTICE 6: Contentment	131
PRACTICE 7: Contentment	136
PRACTICE 8: Good News	141
PRACTICE 9: Joy	146
PRACTICE 10: Joy	151
PRACTICE 11: Joy	156

Games

Game Day Attitude	159
Cheer Format	160
Game Day Stars	160
Cheer Competition & Showcase.....	162
Season Celebration.....	162
Game Day Format	163

FORMS

Substitution Forms	167
Star Distribution Form	176

SECTION 1

COACHING ESSENTIALS

What You Do Matters	4
Your Role in Sports Ministry	4
Five Keys to Coaching	5
Key #1: Be Organized	5
Key #2: Lead the Practice Devotion	9
Key #3: Communicate with Parents, Players, Coaches, and Referees	10
Key #4: Teach the Sport	15
Key #5: Lead by Example	16
Create A Positive Culture	17
Circles of Affirmation and Criticism	19
Play with Purpose	20
Goals for the Season.....	25

➔ 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

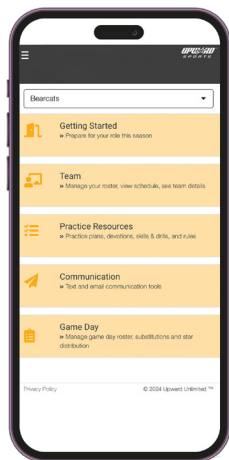
MyUpward is the primary tool for you as a coach. The league director will send you an invitation to access resources on MyUpward.org. After you accept the invitation and create a username and password, you should create an icon on the home screen of your mobile device for quick and easy access.

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.

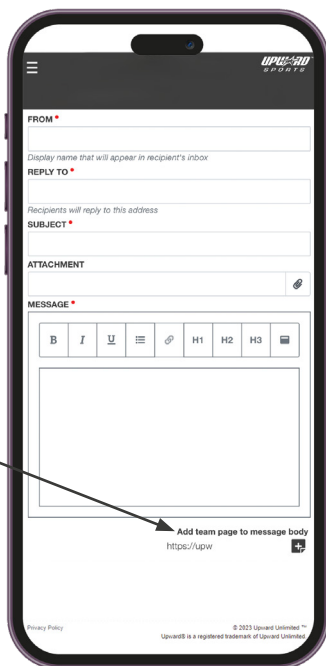
OTHER TOOLS

- ◆ **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 16:31-33, 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.

➔ **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.

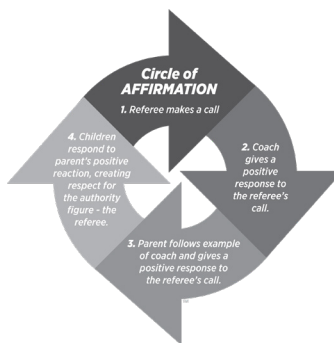
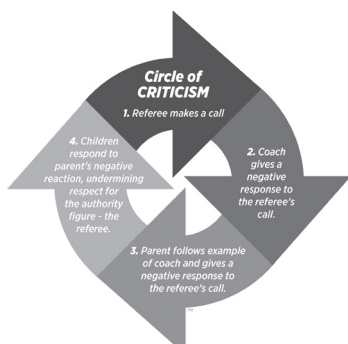
Next, have players look to the person on their right, use

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:

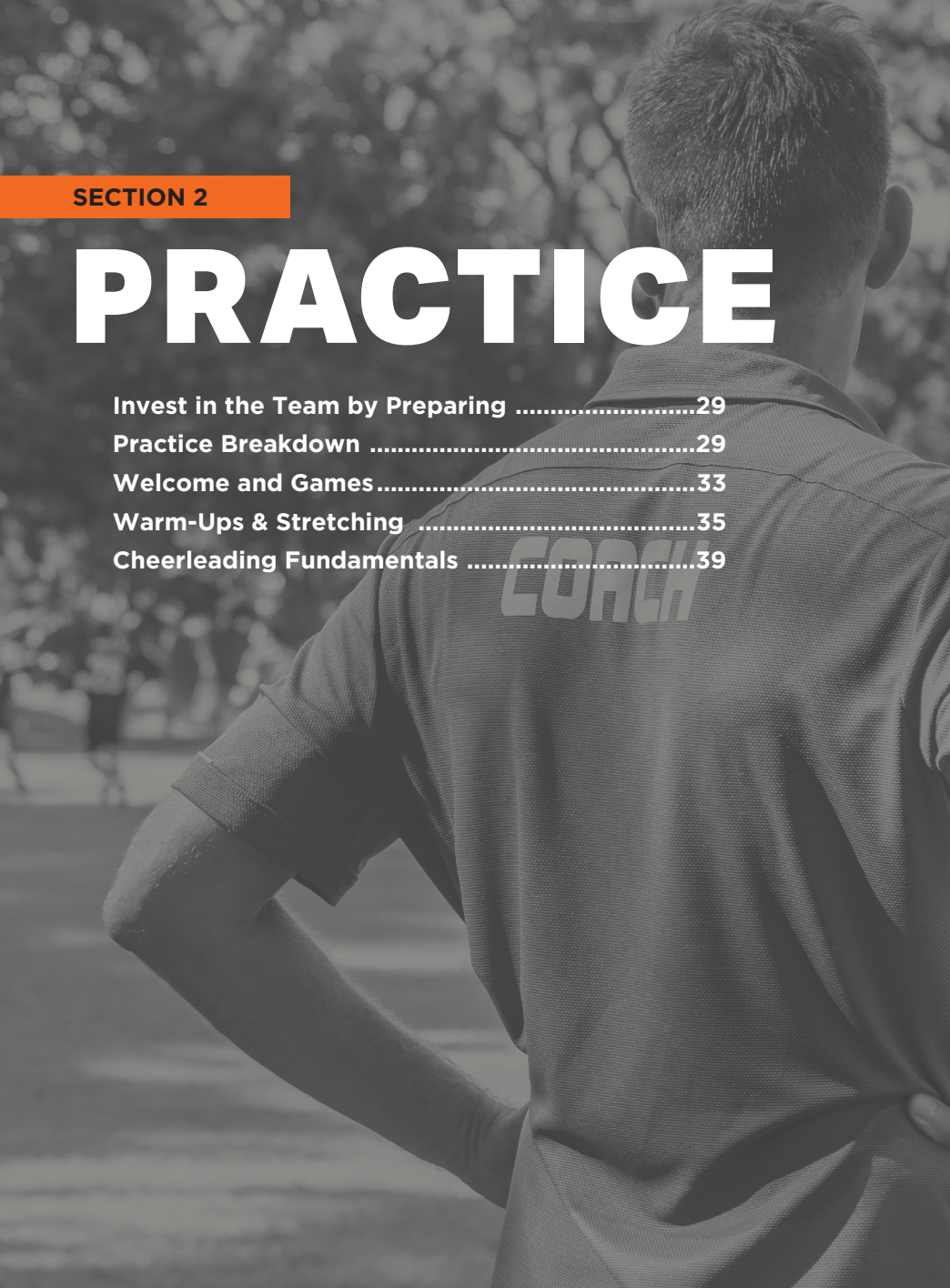
Success in our sports ministry is measured by:

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

Invest in the Team by Preparing	29
Practice Breakdown	29
Welcome and Games	33
Warm-Ups & Stretching	35
Cheerleading Fundamentals	39

➔ 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 including 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.

SKILLS REVIEW (20 minutes)

Focus on specific cheerleading skills. Use drills and repetition to 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.

NEW SKILLS

(20 minutes)

Introduce new material including chants, cheers, and dances.

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	Cheer Tips	Review & Skills
1	• Get to know each other • Teach the fundamentals of cheerleading	• Have the squad get to know each other by playing an icebreaker game	• Teach guidelines for performing motions properly	• Formations • Motions • Proper jump form • Chants
2	• Review cheerleading fundamentals • Teach cheer calling	• Reintroduce the squad by playing another icebreaker game	• Proper cheer/chant calling	• Motion drills • Jumps • Chants • Dance
3	• Reviewing all learned material • Ensure squad is ready for first game	• Getting ready for game day	• Showing spirit • Using cheer voice	• Cheerleader Simon Says • Jumps • Chants and Cheers
4 week of first game	• Understanding the game being cheered for • Reviewing learned material	• Go over the first game	• When to use an offense or defense chant • When to use sport-specific cheers	• Jumps • Chants
5	• Review all learned material	• Play an icebreaker game or talk about the game	• Review cheer tips learned and answer any questions cheerleaders have	• Chants • Cheers • Dance
6-11	• Continue skill development	• Discuss practice focus • Answer questions	• Continue to review cheer tips	• Continue to teach chants, cheers, and dances (included in practice plans)

➔ Welcome and Games

Always welcome your cheerleaders by name as they arrive. Prepare a fun warm-up routine where they move and do motions as they count to a beat. This is an activity you may need to lead so cheerleaders get the hang of your warm-up routine.

ICE BREAKERS

Use these activities as part of the welcome time at your first two or three practices as you get to know your squad.

- ◆ **Line Up** - Divide the squad into two groups which will compete against each other to complete the challenge. Challenges could be lining up according to birthdays, alphabetically by first name or last name, age, or other criteria. Then try the same challenges without talking.
- ◆ **Name Game (*Equipment needed: Five poms*)** - Have cheerleaders stand in a circle and tell everyone their name. Next have them create a pattern by throwing a pom. Each cheerleader has to say the name of the person to whom they are throwing the pom prior to throwing it. The pom must be thrown to every person in the circle one time. The last person to receive the pom will throw it back to whoever began the pattern. Once the pattern is established, try speeding it up and see how quickly you can complete the pattern while still saying the names prior to throwing the pom.

- ♦ **Shoe Game** - Have everyone take off their shoes and put them in a pile in the middle of the room. Mix the shoes up. Divide the cheerleaders into two groups. See which group can find their shoes and put them on first. When they have their shoes on, the team done first must quickly sit on the floor.

WARM-UPS AND STRETCHING

Warm-up exercises and stretching are necessary before any sports activity. Prior to each practice, use the following guidelines to lead your squad:

- ◆ Choose fun music from your coach's practice resources at MyUpward.org, or select a song of your choice and choreograph your own warm-up routine.
- ◆ Warm-up first and then follow with stretches.
- ◆ Play a fun game with commands and stay in motion. Have a cheerleader help you lead.
- ◆ As the season progresses, consider warming up with a jump circle. Have the squad form a large circle and have cheerleaders, one at a time, choose a jump for the squad to perform. Go around until each cheerleader has picked a jump. Jumps may be repeated.

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

- ◆ **Arm circles:** Hold arms out in a T-motion and circle them 10-20 times.
- ◆ **High Knees:** With hands in front and waist high, lift knees up and alternate between knees. Vary speed as desired. 10-20 times.
- ◆ **Hops:** These can be done in one spot or moving forward. They can be done on one foot or both feet 10-20 times.
- ◆ **Jumping jacks:** 20-30
- ◆ **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 and repeat 10-15 times.
- ◆ **Lunges:** From a standing position, large step forward while keeping the back foot in place without the knee touching the ground. 10-20 times.
- ◆ **Push-ups:** 5-15 allowing as needed for a modified version with knees on the ground.
- ◆ **Running:** One minute around the room. If you have limited space, run in place and change the pace.
- ◆ **Shoulder circles:** With arms by your side, lift your shoulders and take them back down, creating a circular motion 10-20 times.

- ◆ **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. Alternate sides. 10-20 times.
- ◆ **Trunk twists:** From a standing position, twist back and forth 10-20 times to loosen the back.

Stretching is a vital part of cheerleading because good flexibility helps prevent muscle injuries. Stretching should be done after warm-up activities and before every practice and game. Below are some stretches you can perform.

- ◆ **Neck Stretch:** Sit or stand with arms by your side. Tilt head to the right and hold for eight seconds, then tilt head to the left and hold for eight seconds.
- ◆ **Triceps Stretch:** Bring one arm up beside your head, bending it at the elbow while reaching across with the other arm and hold. Repeat using 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 opposite hand. Reverse.
- ◆ **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 other heel.
- ◆ **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 left knee across your body toward opposite shoulder. Reverse.
- ◆ **Pike Stretch:** Sitting with feet straight in front of you and together, put both hands straight up 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 your heel to the floor. Reverse and stretch other calf muscle.

➔ Cheerleading Fundamentals

Being prepared for practice is imperative. You will need to not only know what to teach, but how to teach it. In the following pages, you will find specific skills to aid you as you prepare. Refer to MyUpward.org for visual demonstrations of each of the items covered in this section.

FORMATIONS

Formation 1: This is the formation to use on game day. Cheerleaders should stand in two staggered lines. This allows each cheerleader to be seen whether they are in the front row or the back row. Extend each line as needed for the number of cheerleaders you have. When performing ripple chants or cheers, remind cheerleaders to remember which row they are in so they can recite the correct words and perform the correct motions.



Formation 2: This formation can be used during performances.



MOTIONS

Learning motions properly ensures that routines will be done precisely and accurately. Motions that are sharp, tight, and clean are essential for all cheerleaders. Use this section as a reference for routines.

When practicing motions, make sure your cheerleaders follow these guidelines:

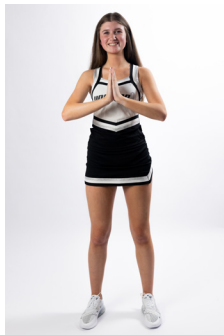
- ◆ Keep motions in front of you: If you hit a motion properly, you should be able to see your arms and fists in your peripheral vision while looking forward (with the exception of a Touchdown motion).
- ◆ Watch arm levels: Keep shoulders relaxed. A T-motion should be leveled and a High V or Low V should look like a “V”, with locked elbows and straight arms and no bent elbows.
- ◆ When making a fist, the thumb should always be on the outside of the fingers. Notice that when the index finger side of the fist is facing out, it looks like a big “O.” When turned the other way, with the pinky finger on the outside, there is a little “O.” When hitting a motion, ensure cheerleaders use proper fist direction. For a “High V,” you should be able to see the big “O” side of the fist.
- ◆ Keep wrists flat (avoid bent or cocked): Your wrists should be perfectly flat, as if they were extensions of your arms.
- ◆ Use proper hand placement for claps: Keep elbows in and clasped hands right below your chin.
- ◆ Maintain sharpness with motions by not bouncing, swinging, or inserting extra motions.

When your cheerleaders are learning a new routine, cheer, chant, or jump, have them practice sharp motions. The way they practice is the way they will perform on game day.



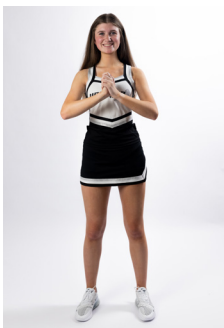
Ready Position

Feet are positioned shoulder-width apart while hands rest on hips. This is the position in which most chants and cheers are called.



Clap

Hands are flat against each other, just below the chin.



Clasp

The hands are cupped together, just below the chin. When clasping, keep your elbows tucked and do not have your hands further than shoulder-width apart. The clasp should be used in chants and cheers to create sound.



Clean

Stand with feet together and arms straight down at sides with palms facing in.



High V

Both arms are extended up at a 45-degree angle to create a V shape. Hands are in tight fists with the “big O” of the fist facing forward, and arms forward enough to be seen out of the corners of your eyes.



Low V

Both arms are extended down at a 45-degree angle to create a V shape. Hands are in tight fists with the “big O” of the fist facing forward, and arms forward enough to be seen out of the corners of your eyes.



High Touchdown

Extend both arms straight up by your ears. Hands are in tight fists with the “little O” of the fist facing forward.



Low Touchdown

Extend both arms straight down. Hands are in tight fists with the “big O” of the fist facing forward.



Left High V

Right arm rests on the hip. The left arm is extended up at a 45-degree angle to create half of a V shape. Both hands are in fists with the “big O” of the left fist facing forward.



Right High V

Left arm rests on the hip. The right arm is extended up at a 45-degree angle to create half of a V shape. Both hands are in fists with the “big O” of the right fist facing forward.



Left Low V

Right arm rests on the hip. The left arm is extended down at a 45-degree angle to create half of a V shape. Both hands are in fists with the “big O” of the left fist facing forward.



Right Low V

Left arm rests on the hip. The right arm is extended down at a 45-degree angle to create half of a V shape. Both hands are in fists with the “big O” of the right fist facing forward.



T

Extend both arms out to the side, parallel to the ground. Hands are in tight fists, with arms forward enough to be seen from the corners of your eyes.



Broken T

From a T motion, bend both elbows inward, fists to chest, and forearms facing up. It can be specific to either arm by using only half of the broken T and the other hand on the hip.



Bow and Arrow

*One arm is in a broken T while the other arm is in a T motion. This can be a **right bow and arrow** (pictured) or a **left bow and arrow**. The arm in the T position determines the direction.*



Daggers

*Bend both arms at the elbow. Hold arms parallel to each other and tight to the chest. A **left dagger** is when only the left arm is in the dagger position and the right arm is on the hip. A **right dagger** is when only the right arm is in the dagger position and the left arm is on the hip.*



Buckets

Both arms extend forward, parallel to each other and the floor. Hands in fists, facing down, and the back of the hands facing up, as if you were holding buckets.



Candlesticks

Arms are straight out, parallel to each other and to the floor. Fists should face inward as if you were holding a candlestick in each hand.



Punch

*One arm rests on the hip while the other extends straight up by the ear. Both arms are in fists with the “little O” of the extended arm facing out. This can be either a **right punch** (pictured) or a **left punch**. The extended arm determines if it is a right or left punch.*



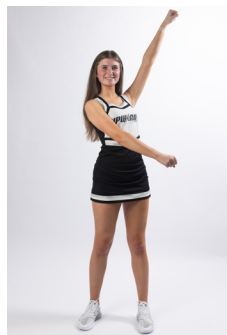
Punch Across Body

*One hand is on the hip, the other in a bucket position, punching across the body. A **right punch across body** (pictured) punches to the left side of the body with the right arm, while a **left punch across body** punches to the right side of the body with the left arm.*



O

*Hands over the head with the right hand grasping the left wrist. The left hand is in a fist, and fingers are facing out. It can be a **high O** (pictured) or a **low O**. For a **low O**, bring your arms down with your right hand and grasp your left wrist. The left hand is in a fist, and the fingers face the body.*



K

*One arm is extended into a high V position, while the other arm is a low punch across the body. This can be either a **left K** (pictured) or a **right K**. The extended arm determines the position.*



L

*One arm is extended up into a punch, and the other arm extends out to a T motion. This can be either a **left L** (pictured) or a **right L**. The direction is determined by the arm that is in the T motion.*



Low L

*One arm is extended down into a low touchdown, and the other arm extends out to a T motion. This can be either a **low left L** (pictured) or a **low right L**. The direction is determined by the arm that is in the T motion.*



Broken High V

*From a high V, bend elbows in with the “big O” of the fists facing chest. This can also be done as a **broken right high V** or a **broken left high V** by keeping one arm in the broken V position and the other hand on the hip. Whichever arm is in the broken high V position determines the motion direction.*



Broken Low V

*From a low V, bend elbows in with the “big O” of the fists facing chest. This can also be done as a **broken right low V** or as a **broken left low V** by keeping one arm in the broken V position and the other hand on the hip. Whichever arm is in the broken high V position determines the motion direction.*



Diagonal

*One arm is in a high V position while the other is in a low V position. It can be either a **right** or **left diagonal**. The raised arm determined the direction. Pictured is a **right diagonal**.*



Broken Diagonal

*From a broken T, keep fists at chest and raise one elbow up and the other elbow down. This can also be done as a **right broken diagonal** (pictured) or a **left broken diagonal**. The raised elbow determines the motion direction.*



High Clasp

Arms are straight above and slightly in front of the head in a clasp motion. It can also be a middle clasp with arms in a clasp motion extended in front of the body, parallel to the floor, or a low clasp with arms extended down in front of the body in a clasp position.



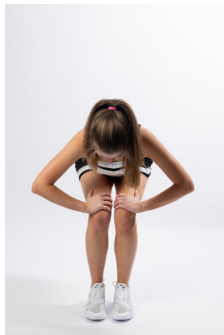
Hands Behind Head

Elbows bent with fists touching behind the head.



Squat Feet Apart

Feet wide in a squat position with hands on knees, elbows out, and head down.



Squat Feet Together

Feet together, high squat position with hands on knees, elbows out, and head down.



Lunge

Step forward with one leg and bend the knee. Keep the back leg straight and the back foot sideways.



Side Lunge

Your legs should be slightly more than shoulder-width apart. Bend one knee and turn that foot out away from your body. Keep the other leg straight.

➔ Cheer Drills

MOTION DRILLS

The purpose of these motion drills is to help cheerleaders put their knowledge of motions to counts and rhythms. Cheerleaders who know every motion often forget the placement and sharpness when performing. Encourage them to make the transition from one motion to the next look sharp, clean, quick, and simple.

Standing in ready position, start with a slow 8 count so that each motion is correctly performed with each count. Once cheerleaders get the hang of the motion, you can increase the speed of the count. Below are four 8-count drills that include a series of motions.

MOTION DRILL 1	MOTION DRILL 2	MOTION DRILL 3	MOTION DRILL 4
1. Clap	1. Left High V	1. Bow & Arrow	1. Punch Across Body
2. Clasp	2. Right High V	2. Buckets	2. Left Low V
3. High Touchdown	3. High O	3. High Clasp	3. Right Low V
4. Low Touchdown	4. Low O	4. Hands Behind Head	4. K Motion
5. High V	5. Candlesticks	5. Right Diagonal	5. Left Low L
6. Low V	6. Daggers	6. Left Diagonal	6. Right Low L
7. T Motion	7. Right Punch	7. Right L	7. Broken High V
8. Broken T	8. Left Punch	8. Left L	8. Broken Low V

A great way to introduce someone to cheer coaching is to find a high school or college cheerleader to assist you during practice with demonstrations and technique.

- ◆ **Cheerleader Says** - This game is played just like the traditional game of Simon Says except that the things to do are cheerleading related. For example, you could say “Cheerleader says, ‘Do a High V!’” or “Cheerleader says, ‘Do a toe touch!’” You could also let the cheerleaders take turns calling motions and jumps. This game encourages cheerleaders to practice fundamentals by playing a fun game.

KNOWLEDGE DRILL

- ◆ **Cheerleader Tic-Tac-Toe** - Set up nine chairs in three rows. Divide the squad into X’s and O’s. Just like in regular tic-tac-toe, the X’s and O’s alternate, except they sit in the chairs instead of drawing it out on paper. Ask questions about the rules of the sport you are cheering for. The cheerleaders must raise their hands to answer. If they answer correctly, they sit on one of the chairs. The first team to get three in a row diagonally, vertically, or horizontally wins.
- ◆ **Cheer Challenge Blocks** - Using a marker, write different motions and jumps on the wooden block pieces. You could also include the names of chants and cheers. Stack the blocks neatly in alternating rows of three to construct the tower. Have cheerleaders take turns choosing a block from anywhere below the top level. The cheerleader should read the challenge out loud and perform the action. If the action is completed correctly, stack the block on top of the tower. If the action is not completed correctly, try again or have a teammate help. When the tower falls, the game ends. You may then rebuild the tower and play again.

➔ Jumps

Jumps are another key element of cheerleading. Performing jumps will help build your stamina, endurance, and flexibility. The following drills will help your cheerleaders to improve the height and form of their jumps. Focus on one jump per practice and encourage your cheerleaders to perform jumps at games after a cheer, chant, or dance routine. As you teach, stress good form over height of the jumps. ***Visit MyUpward.org for video demonstrations of all jumps. Jumps should be done in the following manner with appropriate counts:***

Cheerleading Counts (Basic)

1. *To begin the jump, stand in a clean position. Your feet should be together with your arms at your sides.*
2. *While in this position, you will count “5,6,7,8”*
3. *Next, on count “1,” bring arms into a High V as pictured. Hold the High V on count “2”*
4. *On count “3,” you will prepare to jump by swinging your arms down. As you bring your arms down, your knees should bend and your arms cross.*
5. *Count “4” is when you hit your jump.*
6. *Land on count “5” with your feet together and arms held at your sides. Hold this for count “6”*
7. *On count “7,” stand in a clean position and hold for count “8”*



COUNT
1, 2



COUNT
3



COUNT
4



COUNT
5, 6



COUNT
7, 8

Cheerleading Counts (Intermediate)

1. *To begin the jump, stand in a clean position. Your feet should be together with your arms at your sides.*
2. *While in this position, you will count “5,6,7,8”*
3. *Next, clasp on count “1,2”*
4. *On count “3,4” bring arms from clasp into a High V (Image 1)*
5. *On count “5” you will prepare to jump by swinging your arms down. As you bring your arms down, your knees should bend and your arms cross. (Image 2)*
6. *Hit your jump on count “6” (Image 3)*
7. *Land on count “7,8” (Image 4)*
8. *Stand on count “1” (Image 5)*



IMAGE
1



IMAGE
2



IMAGE
3



IMAGE
4



IMAGE
5

Note: Instructional videos on the Upward YouTube Channel use these counts.

Spread Eagle

Help cheerleaders perfect their overall jump form by teaching this drill with Spread Eagle first before moving to another jump.

1. Arms in a High V and feet together.
2. Swing arms around. Slightly bend your knees, placing your weight on the balls of your feet.
3. Swing arms out and around to a High V, keeping your back straight. Spread legs with toes pointed, knees facing forward.
4. Squeeze legs together for a “feet together” landing with arms by your side.
5. Stand up with feet together and hands on hips or hands by your side.



Tuck Jump

1. Arms in a High V and feet together.
2. Swing arms around. Slightly bend your knees, placing your weight on the balls of your feet.
3. Keep legs squeezed together and back straight while bringing your legs up to your chest. Hit a T-motion or a High V with arms.
4. Squeeze legs together for a “feet together” landing with arms by your side.
5. Stand up with feet together and hands on hips or arms by your side.



Toe Touch

1. Arms in a High V and feet together.
2. Swing arms around. Slightly bend your knees, placing your weight on the balls of your feet.
3. Swing both arms out to a T-motion while lifting both legs in a split high as they will go.
4. Squeeze legs together for a “feet together” landing with arms by your side.
5. Stand up with feet together and hands on hips or arms by your side.



Herkie

The example shown is for a right herkie:

1. Arms in a High V and feet together.
2. Swing arms around. Slightly bend your knees, placing weight on the balls of your feet.
3. Swing right arm out to a T-motion, placing the left arm on your hip while lifting the right leg out to the side as high as it will go. Keep the left leg into a hurdle position to the side and slightly behind your body.
4. Squeeze legs together for a “feet together” landing with arms by your side.
5. Stand up with feet together and hands on hips.



All cheers, chants, and dance routines provided in this book are also demonstrated on MyUpward.org. You can also find cheers, chants, and dance routines from previous seasons on the Upward Sports YouTube page.

➔ Cheers

It's time to get loud and to have some fun! This section will provide you with a base of cheers to use during the season. Squads are not required to use all the cheers provided in this book. Squads are encouraged to create their own cheers, too! If you do create your own cheers, remember to keep them positive and uplifting. Visit MyUpward.org for video demonstrations of all cheers.

Cheers are labeled as either K5-2nd Grade or 3rd Grade and Up. These are guidelines to use when selecting cheers for your squad. Use your judgement based on your squad's strengths and abilities when selecting cheers. You may use cheers from either level.

When teaching cheers, follow these guidelines:

- ◆ Teach the words first.
- ◆ Have cheerleaders repeat until everyone is familiar with the words.
- ◆ Teach the entire cheer, chant, or dance.
- ◆ As cheerleaders start to practice, make sure they are starting the cheer correctly. Some cheers start with "Ready? Ok!" while others will start with the name of the cheer. When starting the cheer, cheerleaders should be in ready position.

- ◆ Review slowly, but still focus on sharp and precise motions.
- ◆ Once everyone has the overall knowledge, practice the cheer at a full speed. Look for correct motion placement and sharpness, while emphasizing squad synchronization from the very beginning.
- ◆ Do not move on without first perfecting technique.

Teach cheerleaders to end each cheer, chant, and dance routine by showing spirit! Encourage them to yell things such as, “Go, Upward!” “Let’s go!” and other similar phrases. Have them practice three to four short phrases after every cheer.

The cheers in the Coach Cheerbook are those used in the Weekly Practice Plans. If you’re looking for more cheers for your squad, you can find the Master Cheerbook in the Resource section on MyUpward. There you will find more cheers, along with links to cheer video demonstrations.

GO BLUE, GO WHITE

Call it: Go blue, go white

WORD	MOTION
Fans	Low V
(PAUSE)	Clasp
Get on your	Step right foot forward and hit daggers
Feet	Step forward and feet together, touchdown
Yell	Clasp
With us	Clasp
And Keep	Clasp above head
The	Clasp above head
Beat	Clasp above head
Go	Step right foot out, right T
(PAUSE)	Clasp
Blue	Right punch
(PAUSE)	Clasp
Go	Right T
(PAUSE)	clasp

(cont.)

WORD	MOTION
Blue	Right punch
(PAUSE)	Turn to the center and clasp
Go	Step left foot out and left T
(PAUSE)	Clasp
White	Left punch
(PAUSE)	Clasp
Go	Left T
(PAUSE)	Clasp
White	Left punch

*Replace with this season's colors

RED AND BLUE

Call it: Red and blue

WORD	MOTION
(PAUSE)	Clasp
Hey	Shake poms
(PAUSE)	Clasp
On this side	Right T
Yell	Clasp
Red	Right high V
(PAUSE)	Clasp
Red	Right high V
Hey	Shake poms center
(PAUSE)	Clasp
On this side	Left T
Yell	Clasp
Blue	Left high V
(PAUSE)	Clasp
Blue	Left high V

(cont.)

WORD	MOTION
Put	Clasp
It	Clasp
Together	Clasp
for	Clasp
Red	Right high V
And	Clasp
Blue	Left high V
(PAUSE)	Clasp
Red	Right high V
And	Clasp
Blue	Left high V

**Replace with this season's colors*

SHOUT IT OUT

Call it: Ready? Okay!

WORD	MOTION
Shout it	Step to the left, hit a low V
Out	Clasp
Let's Hear It	Step to the right, hit a low V
(PAUSE)	Clasp
Let's show our	Step to the left, hit a low V
Team	Clasp
Your spirit	Step to the right, hit a low V
Yell	Clasp
Let's	Daggers
Go	Clasp
Upward	Daggers
(PAUSE)	Clasp
Let's	Step right foot forward, hit a right broken T
Go	Right dagger
Upward	Right high touchdown
(PAUSE)	Clean

UPWARD, GO BLUE

Call it: Upward, go blue

WORD	MOTION
Yell	Clasp
Upward	Right punch
(PAUSE)	Clasp
Upward	Right punch
Go	Clasp
Blue	Left punch
(PAUSE)	Clasp
Blue	Left punch
Put it	Clasp
(PAUSE)	Clasp
Together	Clasp
Yell	Clasp
Upward	Right punch
(PAUSE)	Clasp
Blue	Left punch

**Replace with this season's colors*

WHEN WE SAY

Call it: Ready? Okay!

<https://youtu.be/aytC7f3q7aw?si=mKGA9xS4pZhEjWBt>

WORD	MOTION
When we say	Daggers
Blue	Clasp
You say	Daggers
Gold	Clasp
Blue	Step forward with right foot, squat, right dagger
Gold	pump right dagger to a right punch
Blue	Squat, right dagger
Gold	pump right dagger to a right punch
When we say	Step right foot back and put feet together, daggers
Play	Clasp
You say	Daggers
Win	Clasp
Play	Step forward with right foot, squat, right dagger
Win	pump right dagger to a right punch
Play	Squat, right dagger
Win	pump right dagger to a right punch

(cont.)

WORD	MOTION
When we say	Step right foot back and put feet together, daggers
Go	Clasp
You Say	Daggers
Upward	Clasp
Go	Step forward with right foot, squat, right dagger
Upward	pump right dagger to a right punch
Go	Squat, right dagger
Upward	pump right dagger to a right punch
Go	Squat, right dagger
Upward	pump right dagger to a right punch
Go	Squat, right dagger
Upward	pump right dagger to a right punch

**Replace with this season's colors*

CLAP IT OUT

Call it: Blue and white

WORD	MOTION
Here	Step forward and hit a Low V
We	Break low V
Go	Low V
(PAUSE)	Clasp twice
Clap It	Clasp to the right
Out	Clasp to the left
(Pause)	Clasp twice
Blue	Right high V
And	Clasp
White	Left high V
PAUSE	Clasp together
Now yell	Step forward and hit a Low V
With	Break low V
Us	Low V
(PAUSE)	Clasp twice
Shout It	Clasp to the right

(cont.)

WORD	MOTION
Out	Clasp to the left
(PAUSE)	Clasp twice
Blue	Right high V
And	Clasp
White	Left high V
(PAUSE)	Clasp together
Blue	Right high V
And	Clasp
White	Left high V

**Replace with this season's colors*

LET'S GO UPWARD

Call it: Let's go Upward

WORD	MOTION
(PAUSE)	Clasp
Fans	T
(PAUSE)	Broken T
In	Candlesticks
The stands	Touchdown
Yell let's	Right punch
(PAUSE)	Clasp
Let's	Right punch
(PAUSE)	Clasp
Fans	T
(PAUSE)	Broken T
In	Candlesticks
The stands	Touchdown
Yell go	Left punch

(cont.)

WORD	MOTION
(PAUSE)	Clasp
Go	Left punch
(PAUSE)	Clasp
Fans	T
(PAUSE)	Broken T
In	Candlesticks
The stands	Touchdown
Yell Upward	Muscle pose
(PAUSE)	Clasp
Upward	Muscle pose
(PAUSE)	Clasp
Put it	T
Together	Broken T
One	Candlesticks

(Continue on next page)

LET'S GO UPWARD (cont)

WORD	MOTION
More time	Touchdown
Yell let's	Right punch
Go	Left punch
Upward	Muscle pose
(PAUSE)	Clasp
Let's	Right punch
Go	Left punch
Upward	Muscle pose

UPWARD RUMBLE (NEW!)

Call it: Stop, drop, and rumble

WORD	MOTION
Hey fans	Daggers
(PAUSE)	Clasp
In the	High V
Stands	Prep for a toe touch
Get on your	Hit a toe touch
Feet and	Land from jump and clean
Clap your hands	Clap seven times
Now stop	Step right foot out, left arm in ready position, and make a stop motion with right hand
Drop	Squat, place hands on knees
And rumble	Roll poms to the right
Every	Squat and hit daggers
Body	Step left foot to right, pop left knee, and clasp
Do the Upward	Step left foot to the left, squat and hit daggers
Rumble	Step right foot to the left, pop right knee, and clasp
Every	Step right foot to the right, squat, and hit daggers

(cont.) >

WORD	MOTION
Body	Step left foot to right, pop left knee, and clasp
Do the Upward	Step left foot to the left, squat and hit daggers
Rumble	Step right foot to the left, pop right knee, and clasp
Stop	Step right foot out, left arm in ready position, and make a stop motion with right hand
Drop	Squat, place hands on knees
And Rumble	Roll poms to the right
Every	Step right foot to the right, squat, and hit daggers
Body	Step left foot to right, pop left knee, and clasp
Do the Upward	Step left foot to the left, squat and hit daggers
Rumble	Step right foot to the left, pop right knee, and clasp
Stop	Step right foot out, left arm in ready position, and make a stop motion with right hand
Drop	Squat, place hands on knees
And Rumble	Roll poms to the right

WE WANT TO HEAR YOU YELL

Call it: U-P-W-A-R-D

WORD	MOTION
Fans	High V
(PAUSE)	Clasp
In	Clasp
The stands	Clasp
We	Box motion, point thumbs towards self
Want to hear	Box motion, point thumbs towards self
You yell	High V
(PAUSE)	Clasp
U	Low V to the right side
(PAUSE)	(Ripple 1) high clasp (Ripple 2) low clasp
U-P	Low V to the left side
(PAUSE)	(Ripple 1) high clasp (Ripple 2) low clasp
U-P	Low V to the right side
W	(Ripple 1) high clasp (Ripple 2) low clasp

(cont.)

WORD	MOTION
A-R	Low V to the left side
D	(Ripple 1) high clasp (Ripple 2) low clasp
U	Low V to the right side
(PAUSE)	(Ripple 1) low clasp (Ripple 2) high clasp
U-P	Low V to the left side
(PAUSE)	(Ripple 1) low clasp (Ripple 2) high clasp
U-P	Low V to the right side
W	(Ripple 1) low clasp (Ripple 2) high clasp
A-R	Low V to the left side
D	(Ripple 1) low clasp (Ripple 2) high clasp

➔ Chants

Chants are shorter than cheers and are recited 3 times. However, the crowd is usually a good indicator of when to end a chant.

Visit MyUpward.org for video demonstrations of all chants.

Chants are labeled as either K5-2nd Grade or 3rd Grade and Up. These are guidelines to use when selecting chants for your squad. Use your judgement based on your squad's strengths and abilities when selecting chants. You may use chants from either level for your squad.

K5-2nd Grade chants contain basic motions, no spelling, and no ripples. If you feel your squad is ready for chants that include more advanced motions, spelling, or ripples, please see the 3rd Grade and Up chants.

3rd Grade and Up chants may use basic to more advanced motions, have faster progressions between motions, use ripples, and require the spelling of words.

Squads are encouraged to create their own chants, too! If you do create your own chants, remember to keep them positive and uplifting. Visit MyUpward.org for video demonstrations of all chants.

The chants in the Coach Cheerbook are those used in the Weekly Practice Plans. If you're looking for more cheers for your squad, you can find the Master Cheerbook in the Resource section on [MyUpward](http://MyUpward.org). There you will find more chants, along with links to chant video demonstrations

When learning and teaching chants:

- ◆ Learn the words first.
- ◆ Be sure to teach the call to the chant. Below the name of each chant is the “call it” section which indicates how to start the chant.
- ◆ Repeat the chant until everyone is familiar with the words and rhythm.
- ◆ Learn the motions.
- ◆ Practice it at a full speed and with sharpness.

Always look for correct motion placement and sharpness, while emphasizing team synchronization. Do not move on to a new chant without perfecting technique.

BIG G, LITTLE O (NEW!)*Call it: Big G, Little O, go go*

WORD	MOTION
Big G	High O Motion
Little O	Low O Mot
Go	Low V
PAUSE	Broken Low V
Go	Low V
Repeat 2 more times	

DOWN THE COURT*Call it: Shoot two*

WORD	MOTION
Down	Step feet apart, right punch across body
The court	Right broken T
Down	Left punch across body
The court	Left broken T (will be a broken T as right broken T should be held)
Shoot	Dip and rustle poms
Two	Jump feet together and hit a high V
Repeat 2 more times	

COME ON, COME ON*Call it: Come on, come on, yell defense*

WORD	MOTION
Come on	Jump to the right and hit a right high V
Come on yell	Jump to the left and hit a left high V
De	Clasp
Fense	Clasp
Repeat 2 more times	

DRIBBLE IT, PASS IT, WE WANT A BASKET

Call it: We want a basket

WORD	MOTION
Dribble it	Dribble motion with both hands
(Pause)	Clap x2
Pass it	(move hands back and forth as if passing)
(Pause)	Clap x2
Dribble it	Dribble motion with both hands
(Pause)	Clap x2
Pass it	(move hands back and forth as if passing)
(Pause)	Clap X2
Dribble it	Dribble motion
Pass it	Pass motion
We want	Rustle poms
A basket	Jump Out, High V
Repeat 2 more times	

GET FIRED UP (NEW!)

Call it: Get fired up

WORD	MOTION
Hey	Shuffle poms in a squat
Upward	Jump out and hit a high V
Get	Clasp
Fired	Clasp
Up	Step in and hit a right high V
Repeat 2 more times	

GO UPWARD

Call it: Everybody yell go Upward

WORD	MOTION
Hey	Shuffle poms in a squat
Go Upward	Right punch and stand
Everybody	Turn right and shuffle poms
Yell	Turn left and shuffle poms
Go Upward	Punch and stand
(Pause)	Clean
Repeat 2 more times	

GUARD 'EM DEFENSE

Call it: Guard 'em defense, guard 'em

WORD	MOTION
Guard 'em	Broken T with right knee popped
Defense	T with left knee popped
Guard 'em	Broken T with right knee popped
(PAUSE)	Shuffle poms in a squat

Repeat 2 more times

LET'S SCORE

Call it: Come on, Upward let's score

WORD	MOTION
Shoot	Rustle poms
Two	High V
Come on	Clasp
Upward	Clasp

Let's score Right punch

Repeat 2 more times

HANDS UP

Call it: Hands up defense

WORD	MOTION
Hands	Step right foot forward and hit daggers
Up	Step feet together and hit a touchdown
(Pause)	Clasp
(Pause)	Clasp

De Crossed daggers

Fense T motion

Repeat 2 more times

STAND UP*Call it: Stand up and yell go Upward*

WORD	MOTION
Hey	High V
(Pause)	Clasp
Go Upward	Low V
(Pause)	Clasp
Stand up and	Daggers
Yell	Touchdown
Go	Clasp
Upward	Clasp
Repeat 2 more times	

TWO POINTS MORE*Call it: Two points more*

WORD	MOTION
Two	Broken right low V
Points	Right low V
More	Broken left low V
Upward	Left low V
Two	Clasp
Points	Clasp
More	Right punch
Repeat 2 more times	

WE'RE SO PROUD OF YOU (NEW!)

Call it: We're so proud of you

WORD	MOTION
We're	Daggers

(Pause)

Clasp

So	Daggers
----	---------

(Pause)

Clasp

Proud	Daggers
-------	---------

Of

Clasp

You	Daggers
-----	---------

(Pause)

Clasp

We're	Daggers
-------	---------

So

Clasp

Proud	Daggers
-------	---------

Of

Clasp

You	Daggers
-----	---------

(Pause)

Clasp three times

Repeat 2 more times

BIG G, LITTLE O*Call it: Big G, little O, go go*

WORD	MOTION
Big	(Ripple 1) Low V (Ripple 2) High V
G	Clasp
Little	(Ripple 1) High V (Ripple 2) Low V
O	Clasp
Go	(Ripple 1) Low right V (Ripple 2) High right V
(Pause)	(Ripple 1) Low broken right V (Ripple 2) High broken right V
Go	(Ripple 1) Low right V (Ripple 2) High right V
(PAUSE)	Clasp
Repeat 2 more times	

COME ON, COME ON*Call it: Come on, come on, yell defense*

WORD	MOTION
Come on	Jump to the right and hit a right high V
Come on yell	Jump to the left and hit a left high V
De	Step right foot forward, squat, and hit a right dagger
Fense	Stand up and hit a right punch
Repeat 2 more times	

DRIBBLE, DRIBBLE, DRIBBLE (NEW!)*Call it: Take that ball to the hoop, hoop*

WORD	MOTION
Dribble, dribble, dribble	Dip and rustle poms
Shoot	Step right foot out and hit a right high V
Shoot	High V
Take that ball to the	Step in and clasp two times
Hoop	Ripple 1: High O Ripple 2: Low O
Hoop	Ripple 1: Low O Ripple 2: High O
(PAUSE)	Clean
Repeat 2 more times	

GET UP*Call it: Get up, get up and yell go*

WORD	MOTION
Get up	(Ripple 1) High V

Get up and (Ripple 2) High V

Yell	Clasp
------	-------

Go Low

Repeat 2 more times**GO BIG BLUE***Call it: Go big blue*

WORD	MOTION
Upward	Rustle poms

Pause Clasp

Let's Go	(Ripple 1) Step back with right foot, T motion
----------	--

Let's Go (Ripple 2) Step back with right foot, T motion

Go	Step out, clasp
----	-----------------

Big Clasp

Blue	High V
------	--------

Repeat 2 more times**Replace with this season's colors.*

HERE WE GO*Call it: Here we go, blue and white, let's go Upward*

WORD	MOTION
Here	Pony and swing arms back
We go	Pony and swing arms forward
(Pause)	Clasp
(Pause)	Clasp
Blue	Right high V
White	Left high V
(Pause)	Clasp
(Pause)	Clasp
Let's	Low V
Go	Clasp
Upward	High V
Repeat 2 more times	

Replace with this season's colors*HEY, HEY, HERE WE GO***Call it: Hey, hey, here we go big blue*

WORD	MOTION
Hey	(Ripple 1) Right high V
Hey	(Ripple 2) Right high V
Here	Circle right arm around
We go	Left lunge and hit a high V
Go	Clasp
Big	Clasp
Blue	Right punch
Repeat 2 more times	

**Replace with this season's colors*

H-U-S-T-L-E*Call it: Hustle, Upward, hustle*

WORD	MOTION
H	(Ripple 1) Step out with right foot and hit a right punch across body
U	(Ripple 1) Broken T
S	(Ripple 1) T motion
T	(Ripple 2) Step out with right foot and hit a right punch across body
L	(Ripple 2) Broken T
E	(Ripple 2) T motion
Hustle	Step together and clasp
Upward	Step forward with right foot and hit a right touchdown
Hustle	Step feet back together and clasp
(PAUSE)	Hold clasp

Repeat 2 more times**PASS THE BALL***Call it: Go, Upward, go*

WORD	MOTION
Down the	(Ripple 1) Daggers
Court	(Ripple 1) Touchdown
Pass the	(Ripple 1) Daggers
Ball	(Ripple 2) Touchdown
Go	Clasp
Upward	Clasp
Go	Clasp
Repeat 2 more times	

REBOUND, REBOUND (NEW!)*Call it: Rebound, rebound*

WORD	MOTION
Jump	Squat and clasp
Up	Jump feet apart and hit a high V
(PAUSE)	High Clasp
(PAUSE)	High Clasp
Bring It	Hold high clasp, jump feet together
Down	Middle clasp
(PAUSE)	Clasp
(PAUSE)	Clasp
Rebound	Right low V
Rebound	Left low V
Repeat 2 more times	

TO THE HOOP*Call it: To the hoop, to the hoop, Upward, to the hoop*

WORD	MOTION
To the hoop	O motion to the left
(PAUSE)	O motion
To the hoop	O motion to the right
(PAUSE)	O motion
Up	Clasp
Ward	Clasp
To the hoop	High V
Repeat 2 more times	

UPWARD LET'S GO GO*Call it: Upward let's go go*

WORD	MOTION
G	Clasp
G	Right punch
O	T motion
O	High O
Upward	Clasp
Let's	Clasp
Go	Right high V
(Pause)	Broken right high V
Go	Right high V
Repeat 2 more times	

Replace with this season's colors*UPWARD UPWARD***Call it: Let's go big blue*

WORD	MOTION
Upward	(Ripple 1) Right high V(Ripple 2) Right low V
(Pause)	Clasp
Upward	(Ripple 1) Left high V(Ripple 2) Left low V
(Pause)	Clasp
Let's	Clasp
Go	Clasp
Big blue	Right punch
Repeat 2 more times	

UPWARD YELL*Call it: Let's go white*

WORD	MOTION
Hey	High V
(Pause)	Clasp
Upward	Daggers and rustle poms
Yell	Clasp
Let's	(Ripple 1) Right lunge and hit a right high V
Go	(Ripple 2) Right lunge and hit a right high V
White	(Ripple 3) Right lunge and hit a right high V
Repeat 2 more times	

Replace with this season's colors*V FOR VICTORY***Call it: Roll that C-T-O-R-Y*

WORD	MOTION
V	Pony and clasp
For victory	Pony and clasp
V	Pony and clasp
For victory	Pony and clasp
Split that V	High V
Dot the I	Touchdown
Roll that C-T-O-R-Y	From touchdown, roll poms down
Repeat 2 more times	

YELL GO GO (NEW!)*Call it: Yell go go*

WORD	MOTION
Yell it	T motion with feet apart

(PAUSE)

Broken T

To the G	Right T and pop toe
----------	---------------------

To the O

Left T and pop toe

Yell go	High V with feet together
---------	---------------------------

(PAUSE)

Swing arms in and step forward

Go	High V
----	--------

(PAUSE)

Clap with feet together

Repeat 2 more times

➔ Dance Routines

After your cheerleaders have learned enough cheers and chants to provide a significant base to use during each game, consider teaching them a dance routine that can be performed at halftime or during the season celebration. *Visit MyUpward.org for video demonstrations of all Dance Routines.* Here are some points to consider as you prepare to teach dance routines:

- ◆ If a routine involves poms, be sure to teach placement.
- ◆ Evaluate your squad's performance. If there is a step too difficult for your group, simplify it before continuing. The goal is to master clean and simple routines.
- ◆ Consider teaching two 8 counts per practice. Review each one until everyone has learned the routine and it looks synchronized. Continue to teach the rest of the routine at your next practice.
- ◆ Once the cheerleaders have learned the entire dance routine, make necessary corrections to improve motions and motion placement. The best way to do this is to count aloud, "Five, six, seven, eight, one" and have your squad freeze on count "one." Make the necessary corrections and repeat the drill for "one" again. Do not go on to count "two" until everyone has correctly performed count "one." Repeat for count "two." When everyone has learned count "two," add that to count "one." Repeat the process for the entire routine until it is perfected.
- ◆ Allow half of your squad to watch while the other half performs the dance routine. This is a great way to encourage your cheerleaders. The encouragement from their own teammates will inspire and excite them for their big performance.
- ◆ The dances in the Cheerbook are included in the weekly Practice Plans. See the YouTube Playlist for additional dances. You may choose a different dance for your squad.

➔ Dance Routines

POM DANCE: Pom dances are eight 8 counts that can be performed during one-minute timeouts or for halftime. Pom dances are three 8 counts of cheer motions repeated twice for a total of eight 8 counts. Pom dances include formation changes, level changes, and ripples in a cheer-motion style with poms.

TIME OUT DANCE: Timeout dances are the simplest of all dances and can be performed during 30-second timeouts. The intro to all timeout dances begins with one 8-count clapped out, followed by one 8-count dance that is repeated three times for a total of four 8 counts. Timeout dances include level changes and ripples in a dance style.

Feel free to modify cheers, chants, and dances to fit the skill level of your group.

RECOMMENDED FORMATION

X X X X X X X X

Cheerleaders will start in a straight line.

During the first 8 count, cheerleaders will move either forward or backward starting on count 5 through count 8 (move and shake poms).

X X X X X X X

On the fourth 8 count, cheerleaders will move back into a straight line on count 5 through count 8.

X X X X X X X X

Intro	MOTION
5, 6, 7, 8	Hold and start in straight line
1	Daggers to right side
2	Daggers to left side
3	Swing arms down
4	Daggers
5	Move and shake poms (move to two lines)
6	Move and shake poms
7	Move and shake poms
8	Move and shake poms

(Continue on next page)

SPARK (CONT.)

Intro	MOTION
1	High O (on toes)
2	Hold
3	Jump out and hit a high V
4	Hold
5	Low V
6	Hold
7	Jump together
8	Hold
1	Swing arms to right and squat
2	Swing arms to left and squat
3	Swing arms to right and squat
4	Swing arms to left and squat
5	Clean
6	Hold
7	Clap
8	Clap
Repeat the three 8 counts	Repeat the three 8 counts
1	Right punch

RECOMMENDED FORMATION

X X X X X X X X

Cheerleaders will start in a straight line.

During the first 8 count, cheerleaders will move either forward or backward to create two lines starting on count 1 through count 8 (move and shake poms).

X X X X
X X X X

On the fourth 8 count, cheerleaders will move back into a straight line on counts 1 through count 8.

X X X X X X X X

Intro	MOTION
5, 6, 7, 8	Hold and start in straight line, squatting down
1	Shake poms and move, making two lines
2	Shake poms and move, making two lines
3	Shake poms and move, making two lines
4	Shake poms and move, making two lines
5	Shake poms and move, making two lines
6	Shake poms and move, making two lines
7	Shake poms and move, making two lines
8	Shake poms and move, making two lines

(Continue on next page)

SPARK (CONT.)

Intro	MOTION
1	Hands behind head
2	Hold
3	Jump out and hit a high V
4	Hold
5	Clap above head
6	Clap above head
7	Clap above head
8	Clap above head
1	Right punch across body and step to right side
2	Right T
3	Left punch across body and step to the left side
4	T
5	Arms around head and step forward with right foot
6	Turn to back
7	Step and turn back to front and clap
8	Back to the front
Repeat the three 8 counts	Repeat all three 8 counts, moving back into a straight line
1	End in ready position with feet apart

RECOMMENDED FORMATION



For this dance, cheerleaders should line up in a staggered formation.

Intro	MOTION
1	Step forward with right foot and hit a T
2	Clap above head
3	T
4	Clap above head
5	T
6	Clap above head
7	Step back with hands on hips
8	Hold

(Continue on next page)

LET'S GO (CONT)

Intro	MOTION
1	Right foot steps forward and hit a broken T
2	Forward buckets
3	Sit in a low V
and	Stand and break low V
4	Sit in a low V
5	Right foot steps back with hands behind head
6	Repeat for ripple 2
7	Repeat for Ripple 3
8	Clean

Repeat Eight count 3 more times

RECOMMENDED FORMATION

X X X X X X X X

Cheerleaders will start in a straight line.

During the sixth 8 count, cheerleaders will shake poms and move into two lines. They will stay in this formation for the remainder of the dance.

X X X X
X X X X

Intro	MOTION
	Hold for 8 counts while facing back with right foot behind you.
1	Turn and hit a high V
2	Clean
And	Left T, right broken T, step to the right side
3	Left broken T to right T
And	Left T, right broken T
4	Left broken T, right T, step left foot behind right and look to the right
5	Step back with left and turn to side with hands on hips and look to front
6	Hold
7	Squat with hands on knees facing right side
8	Hold

(Continue on next page)

VELOCITY (CONT)

Intro	MOTION
1	Ripple 1: Step apart and shake poms in a high V
2	Hold
3	Ripple 2: Step apart and shake poms in a high V Ripple 1: Squat with hands on knees facing left side
4	Hold
5	Ripple 3: Step apart and shake poms in a high V Ripple 2: Squat with hands on knees facing left side
6	Hold
7	Ripple 3: squat with hands on knees facing left side
8	Hold
1	Ripple 1: Step apart and shake poms in a high V
2	Hold
3	Ripple 2: Step apart and shake poms in a high V Ripple 1: Squat with hands on knees facing left side
4	Hold
5	Ripple 3: Step apart and shake poms in a high V Ripple 2: Squat with hands on knees facing left side
6	Hold
7	Ripple 3: Squat with hands on knees facing left side
8	Hold
1	Step out with right foot; hands clasped in front
2	Turn to front and bring hands in (still clasped)

(Continue on next page)

VELOCITY (CONT)

Intro	MOTION
3	Swing right arm/left arm on hip and step to right side
4	Right arm behind head; left arm on hip; step together
5	Swing left arm/right arm still behind head; step to left side
6	Left arm behind head/step together; right arm still behind head
7	Jump out to high V
8	Hold
1	Clap
2	Clap
3	Daggers to right side and bring right foot up and bend
4	Bring foot down and arms to low touchdown
5	Right kick with high V
6	Bring leg and arms down
7	Clap
8	Clap
1	Shake poms and move to two lines
2	Shake poms and move to two lines
3	Shake poms and move to two lines
4	Shake poms and move to two lines

(Continue on next page)

VELOCITY (CONT)

Intro	MOTION
5	Clean, with right foot behind
6	Hold
7	Turn over left shoulder to face back, leaving right foot behind
8	Hold
Repeat the first four 8 counts	Repeat the first four 8 counts
1	End in a high V and jump out

RECOMMENDED FORMATION



Cheerleaders will start close together, will turn away from one another during the second half of the first full 8 count. During the sixth 8 count, they will return to the original formation, closer together.

Intro	MOTION
5, 6, 7, 8	With backs turned to the front, stomp right foot on each count
1, 2, 3, 4	Shake poms and turn over left shoulder, turning to the front on count four
5	With hands behind back, turn to the outside
6	Continue turn
7	Step to front
8	Feet together and clasp
1	T Motion
2	Front row: Low clap Back row: High clap
3	T motion
4	Front row: Low clap Back row: High clap

(Continue on next page)

WILD WEST (CONT)

Intro	MOTION
5	T motion
6	Front row: High clap Back row: Low clap
7	T motion
8	Front row: High clap Back row: Low clap
1	Turn to the right and pump poms up
2	Pump poms up again
3	Turn to the left and pump poms up
4	Turn to the left and pump poms up
5	Left arm behind back, pump right pom up while turning to the left
6	Left arm behind back, pump right pom up while turning to the back
7	Left arm behind back, pump right pom up while turning to the right
8	Turn to the front and clean
1	Hands behind back, right toe forward
2	Hands behind back, left toe forward
3	Hands behind back, right toe back
4	Hands behind back, left toe back
5	Ripple 1: Keep left hand behind back, tap left foot with right hand

(Continue on next page)

WILD WEST (CONT)

Intro	MOTION
6	Ripple 2: Keep left hand behind back, tap left foot with right hand Ripple 1: Turn to the right
7	Ripple 3: Keep left hand behind back, tap left foot with right hand Ripple 2: Turn to the right
8	Ripple 3: Turn to the right
1, 2	Ripple 3: Touchdown and shake poms
3, 4	Ripple 3: Poms down Ripple 2: Touchdown and shake poms
5, 6	Ripple 2: Poms down Ripple 1: Touchdown and shake poms
7	Ripple 1: Poms down
8	Hold
1	Clean
2, 3, 4, 5, 6	Move and shake poms
7	Squat down
8	Hold
1, 2	Back row: Jump up and shake poms, squat back down
3, 4	Middle row: Jump up and shake poms, squat back down
5, 6	Front row: Jump up and shake poms, squat back down

(Continue on next page)

WILD WEST (CONT)

Intro	MOTION
7	Stand up
8	Hold
1, 2	Right foot behind left
3	Turn
4	Hold
5, 6, 7, 8	Stomp right foot
1	Cross right foot over left
2	Turn to the front

RECOMMENDED FORMATION



For this dance, cheerleaders should line up in a staggered formation

Intro	MOTION
1	Step forward with right foot and hit a T
2	Clap above head
3	T
4	Clap above head
5	T
6	Clap above head
7	Step back with hands on hips
8	Hold

(Continue on next page)

CLAP IT OUT (CONT)

Intro	MOTION
1	Hands behind head with feet apart
2	Clap to the right while pointing left toe (Ripple 1)
3	Ripple 2
4	Ripple 3
5	Squat over left knee
6	Look up
7	Right T and left hand on hip with feet together
8	Right punch and left arm by side

Repeat Eight Count 3 More Times

SECTION 3

PRACTICE DEVOTIONS

Biblical Virtues

DEVOTION OUTLINE	104
PRACTICE 1: PEACE	106
PRACTICE 2: PEACE	111
PRACTICE 3: PEACE	116
PRACTICE 4: PEACE	121
PRACTICE 5: CONTENTMENT	126
PRACTICE 6: CONTENTMENT	131
PRACTICE 7: CONTENTMENT	136
PRACTICE 8: GOOD NEWS	141
PRACTICE 9: JOY	146
PRACTICE 10: JOY	151
PRACTICE 11: JOY	156

➔ 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

A grayscale photograph of a young woman with dark hair, smiling and looking through a chain-link fence. The fence is in the foreground, and the woman is behind it, her face partially obscured by the mesh. The background is dark and out of focus.

SECTION 4

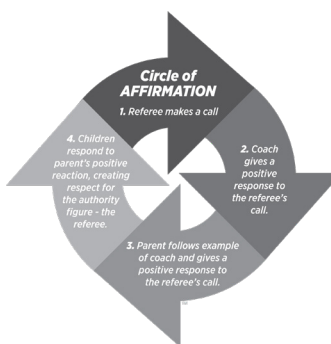
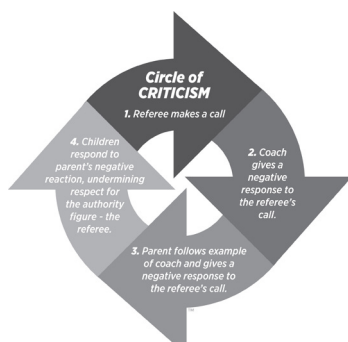
GAMES

Game Day Attitude	159
Cheer Format	160
Game Day Stars	160
Cheer Competition & Showcase	162
Season Celebration	162
Game Day Format	163

Circle of Affirmation

Choosing the right game day attitude is key to being an effective Upward Cheer 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 Circle of Affirmation goes beyond the referee. A coach's affirmation of players inspires encouragement and praise from parents, family members and other players. Practicing the Circle of Affirmation makes the game a better experience for everyone.

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

➔ Upward Cheer Format

- ◆ All cheers should be encouraging and avoid negative terms like kill or destroy.
- ◆ Teams may cheer for a different team each week.
- ◆ Upward Sports recommends you avoid tumbling and stunting as part of your cheerleading program if you do not have proper equipment and qualified coaches.
- ◆ In most cases, like age groups will be cheering together.

➔ Game Day Stars (**if included in your Team Box*)

If your league is using Game Day Stars, you will have an Award Stars booklet. These multi-colored stickers are given to each cheerleader at the end of every game. Star presentation should be an exciting time. Encourage parents to cheer as stars are distributed to each cheerleader. 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.

Encourage participants to display the stars they receive on their posters or megaphones. 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 cheerleader who always gives their maximum effort, no matter what.



LEADERSHIP (*red star*) is for a cheerleader who helps the squad stay focused and calls cheers well so the rest of the squad knows when to be ready.



***SPIRIT (gold star)** is someone who does everything with excitement and eagerness. It also means treating others on the squad the way you want to be treated.*



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



***CHEERS (gray star)** is a cheerleader who works well with the rest of the squad on motions, jumps, and the correct timing of words.*

DISTRIBUTING GAME DAY STARS

Star presentation is a special time for every cheerleader. When distributing these stars, make it fun by:

- ◆ Inviting parents and other spectators to meet at a specific area away from where the game took place.
- ◆ Giving specific reasons why each cheerleader received their star.
- ◆ Applauding each child as they receive their star.

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

The Star Distribution Form can be found on MyUpward and in the back of your coach cheerbook. Use this form to track which stars participants receive each week. Avoid giving cheerleaders the same star each week and make an attempt to award each cheerleader all five stars throughout the season.

Note: The green practice star should be awarded to every cheerleader who participates in the weekly practice devotion time.

CHEER COMPETITION

If you're interested in hosting a competition in your league, get together with your league director and discuss the possibilities. To help answer any questions you may have, as well as provide step-by-step instruction in carrying out a first-class cheer competition, visit the Cheer Director page on MyUpward.org.

CHEER SHOWCASE

An Upward Cheer Showcase is a great way to highlight cheerleaders on game day. This is a fun event that takes place on a game day in place of a basketball game. It is a way to celebrate and encourage cheerleaders while showing what they have learned throughout the season. If you are interested in incorporating a Cheer Showcase on one of your game days, review the resources found on [MyUpward](http://MyUpward.org).

➔ The Season Celebration

The Season Celebration event provides another opportunity to celebrate with your cheerleaders and connect with their families. Since your attendance at this event demonstrates your love and support for your cheerleaders, all coaches should attend. Your league director may provide each team with an end-of-season gift to give out at the Season Celebration.

➔ **Game Day Format**

Game Day for Upward Cheerleaders is an exciting time. Cheerleaders have practiced, learned, and are ready to cheer in front of spectators, players, and coaches. Here are some helpful reminders to make game day a great experience and ensure that, as a coach, you are prepared..

- ◆ **Game Preparation:** Use the “Game Day Plan” from the back section of this book to write out a plan for your squad’s game day. There is a form for each individual game day. Use the form to plan out warm-ups and stretches for your squad. List which cheers, chants, or other routines you plan to have the squad perform during the game, between periods, and at halftime. You can also use this form to make notes for game day stars. The key is to have an active squad and to help them have fun so that they can develop mentally, athletically, physically, and socially.
- ◆ **Warm-up:** Instruct cheerleaders to arrive 15 to 20 minutes before their scheduled game time to warm up and stretch before cheering. Use your Game Day Plan form to prepare a warm-up routine and list of stretches. Have an assistant coach along with a cheerleader lead the squad in stretching. After warming up, the cheerleader can select from the list of stretches. Giving cheerleaders leadership roles helps them to feel comfortable leading a group and helps them to develop mentally and socially.
- ◆ **Introductions:** Your league may include player and cheerleader introductions. Check with your cheer director for the protocol of participant introductions. Cheerleaders should go first and can then form a tunnel for players

to run through. Your cheer director may have a form for you to list cheerleader names for introductions before the game. You can rotate the list each week so that a different cheerleader goes first.

- ◆ **Pregame Prayer:** Be sure to include your cheerleaders in the pre-game prayer with all players, coaches, and referees before the start of the game.
- ◆ **During the game:** Make sure that cheerleaders are active throughout the game, and are part of the game day experience. Cheerleaders should perform in an area designated specifically for them while the game is taking place. You can allow a specific cheerleader or a rotation of cheerleaders to call out the next cheer or chant from a list you have prepared ahead of time. It's ok to repeat cheers and chants as your squad develops favorites.
 - ***Be alert:*** Cheerleaders should be alert to the action taking place on the court to protect themselves from an out of bounds ball or player coming their way.
 - ***Be organized:*** Encourage cheerleaders to place their poms on the ground as a marker for their position in the lineup. This reminder helps them look uniform on game day.
 - ***Be flexible:*** Cheerleaders can switch to a different location at halftime if two games are taking place side by side.
- ◆ **Between periods:** This is a great time to have cheerleaders perform during the game. A quick routine of less than one minute is appropriate between periods.

Work with game officials to alert you when there is an end of a quarter.

- ◆ **Halftime:** Halftime allows for a longer dance routine or a couple of cheers or chants. Make sure to consult with your cheer director to know what will take place at halftime. There may be a devotion or interactive activity to engage the fans. Cheerleaders are one of the highlights of halftime activities.
- ◆ **After the game:** At the end of the game, have cheerleaders perform the “We’re So Proud of You” chant before leaving the area. Gather cheerleaders and their families away from the game so that you can hand out Game Day Stars to highlight cheerleaders’ efforts using the Award Star Booklet. Having an assistant coach is helpful as they can take notes and determine which star each cheerleader receives.
 - Take time: After all of the game day activities, make sure to take time to interact with your families. This time after the events are ideal for engaging with one family and recognizing the growth you are seeing in their cheerleader. Try and do this with each family throughout a season.

Let's Go! Take time during practice to make signs and posters cheerleaders can use on game day.

SECTION 5

FORMS

Game Day Forms.....167

Star Distribution Form.....176

Game Day 1

Warm-ups: It's essential to get your body active before the game.

Stretch: Being more flexible helps prevent injuries.

DURING THE GAME

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. _____ pg. _____ | 11. _____ pg. _____ |
| 2. _____ pg. _____ | 12. _____ pg. _____ |
| 3. _____ pg. _____ | 13. _____ pg. _____ |
| 4. _____ pg. _____ | 14. _____ pg. _____ |
| 5. _____ pg. _____ | 15. _____ pg. _____ |
| 6. _____ pg. _____ | 16. _____ pg. _____ |
| 7. _____ pg. _____ | 17. _____ pg. _____ |
| 8. _____ pg. _____ | 18. _____ pg. _____ |
| 9. _____ pg. _____ | 19. _____ pg. _____ |
| 10. _____ pg. _____ | 20. _____ pg. _____ |

BETWEEN PERIODS

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ pg. _____ | 3. _____ pg. _____ |
| 2. _____ pg. _____ | 4. _____ pg. _____ |

HALFTIME

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ pg. _____ | 2. _____ pg. _____ |
|--------------------|--------------------|

NOTES FOR GAME DAY STARS

Game Day 2

Warm-ups: It's essential to get your body active before the game.

Stretch: Being more flexible helps prevent injuries.

DURING THE GAME

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. _____ pg. _____ | 11. _____ pg. _____ |
| 2. _____ pg. _____ | 12. _____ pg. _____ |
| 3. _____ pg. _____ | 13. _____ pg. _____ |
| 4. _____ pg. _____ | 14. _____ pg. _____ |
| 5. _____ pg. _____ | 15. _____ pg. _____ |
| 6. _____ pg. _____ | 16. _____ pg. _____ |
| 7. _____ pg. _____ | 17. _____ pg. _____ |
| 8. _____ pg. _____ | 18. _____ pg. _____ |
| 9. _____ pg. _____ | 19. _____ pg. _____ |
| 10. _____ pg. _____ | 20. _____ pg. _____ |

BETWEEN PERIODS

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ pg. _____ | 3. _____ pg. _____ |
| 2. _____ pg. _____ | 4. _____ pg. _____ |

HALFTIME

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ pg. _____ | 2. _____ pg. _____ |
|--------------------|--------------------|

NOTES FOR GAME DAY STARS

Game Day 3

Warm-ups: It's essential to get your body active before the game.

Stretch: Being more flexible helps prevent injuries.

DURING THE GAME

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. _____ pg. _____ | 11. _____ pg. _____ |
| 2. _____ pg. _____ | 12. _____ pg. _____ |
| 3. _____ pg. _____ | 13. _____ pg. _____ |
| 4. _____ pg. _____ | 14. _____ pg. _____ |
| 5. _____ pg. _____ | 15. _____ pg. _____ |
| 6. _____ pg. _____ | 16. _____ pg. _____ |
| 7. _____ pg. _____ | 17. _____ pg. _____ |
| 8. _____ pg. _____ | 18. _____ pg. _____ |
| 9. _____ pg. _____ | 19. _____ pg. _____ |
| 10. _____ pg. _____ | 20. _____ pg. _____ |

BETWEEN PERIODS

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ pg. _____ | 3. _____ pg. _____ |
| 2. _____ pg. _____ | 4. _____ pg. _____ |

HALFTIME

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ pg. _____ | 2. _____ pg. _____ |
|--------------------|--------------------|

NOTES FOR GAME DAY STARS

Game Day 4

Warm-ups: It's essential to get your body active before the game.

Stretch: Being more flexible helps prevent injuries.

DURING THE GAME

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. _____ pg. _____ | 11. _____ pg. _____ |
| 2. _____ pg. _____ | 12. _____ pg. _____ |
| 3. _____ pg. _____ | 13. _____ pg. _____ |
| 4. _____ pg. _____ | 14. _____ pg. _____ |
| 5. _____ pg. _____ | 15. _____ pg. _____ |
| 6. _____ pg. _____ | 16. _____ pg. _____ |
| 7. _____ pg. _____ | 17. _____ pg. _____ |
| 8. _____ pg. _____ | 18. _____ pg. _____ |
| 9. _____ pg. _____ | 19. _____ pg. _____ |
| 10. _____ pg. _____ | 20. _____ pg. _____ |

BETWEEN PERIODS

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ pg. _____ | 3. _____ pg. _____ |
| 2. _____ pg. _____ | 4. _____ pg. _____ |

HALFTIME

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ pg. _____ | 2. _____ pg. _____ |
|--------------------|--------------------|

NOTES FOR GAME DAY STARS

Game Day 5

Warm-ups: It's essential to get your body active before the game.

Stretch: Being more flexible helps prevent injuries.

DURING THE GAME

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. _____ pg. _____ | 11. _____ pg. _____ |
| 2. _____ pg. _____ | 12. _____ pg. _____ |
| 3. _____ pg. _____ | 13. _____ pg. _____ |
| 4. _____ pg. _____ | 14. _____ pg. _____ |
| 5. _____ pg. _____ | 15. _____ pg. _____ |
| 6. _____ pg. _____ | 16. _____ pg. _____ |
| 7. _____ pg. _____ | 17. _____ pg. _____ |
| 8. _____ pg. _____ | 18. _____ pg. _____ |
| 9. _____ pg. _____ | 19. _____ pg. _____ |
| 10. _____ pg. _____ | 20. _____ pg. _____ |

BETWEEN PERIODS

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ pg. _____ | 3. _____ pg. _____ |
| 2. _____ pg. _____ | 4. _____ pg. _____ |

HALFTIME

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ pg. _____ | 2. _____ pg. _____ |
|--------------------|--------------------|

NOTES FOR GAME DAY STARS

Game Day 6

Warm-ups: It's essential to get your body active before the game.

Stretch: Being more flexible helps prevent injuries.

DURING THE GAME

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. _____ pg. _____ | 11. _____ pg. _____ |
| 2. _____ pg. _____ | 12. _____ pg. _____ |
| 3. _____ pg. _____ | 13. _____ pg. _____ |
| 4. _____ pg. _____ | 14. _____ pg. _____ |
| 5. _____ pg. _____ | 15. _____ pg. _____ |
| 6. _____ pg. _____ | 16. _____ pg. _____ |
| 7. _____ pg. _____ | 17. _____ pg. _____ |
| 8. _____ pg. _____ | 18. _____ pg. _____ |
| 9. _____ pg. _____ | 19. _____ pg. _____ |
| 10. _____ pg. _____ | 20. _____ pg. _____ |

BETWEEN PERIODS

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ pg. _____ | 3. _____ pg. _____ |
| 2. _____ pg. _____ | 4. _____ pg. _____ |

HALFTIME

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ pg. _____ | 2. _____ pg. _____ |
|--------------------|--------------------|

NOTES FOR GAME DAY STARS

Game Day 7

Warm-ups: It's essential to get your body active before the game.

Stretch: Being more flexible helps prevent injuries.

DURING THE GAME

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. _____ pg. _____ | 11. _____ pg. _____ |
| 2. _____ pg. _____ | 12. _____ pg. _____ |
| 3. _____ pg. _____ | 13. _____ pg. _____ |
| 4. _____ pg. _____ | 14. _____ pg. _____ |
| 5. _____ pg. _____ | 15. _____ pg. _____ |
| 6. _____ pg. _____ | 16. _____ pg. _____ |
| 7. _____ pg. _____ | 17. _____ pg. _____ |
| 8. _____ pg. _____ | 18. _____ pg. _____ |
| 9. _____ pg. _____ | 19. _____ pg. _____ |
| 10. _____ pg. _____ | 20. _____ pg. _____ |

BETWEEN PERIODS

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ pg. _____ | 3. _____ pg. _____ |
| 2. _____ pg. _____ | 4. _____ pg. _____ |

HALFTIME

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ pg. _____ | 2. _____ pg. _____ |
|--------------------|--------------------|

NOTES FOR GAME DAY STARS

Game Day 8

Warm-ups: It's essential to get your body active before the game.

Stretch: Being more flexible helps prevent injuries.

DURING THE GAME

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. _____ pg. _____ | 11. _____ pg. _____ |
| 2. _____ pg. _____ | 12. _____ pg. _____ |
| 3. _____ pg. _____ | 13. _____ pg. _____ |
| 4. _____ pg. _____ | 14. _____ pg. _____ |
| 5. _____ pg. _____ | 15. _____ pg. _____ |
| 6. _____ pg. _____ | 16. _____ pg. _____ |
| 7. _____ pg. _____ | 17. _____ pg. _____ |
| 8. _____ pg. _____ | 18. _____ pg. _____ |
| 9. _____ pg. _____ | 19. _____ pg. _____ |
| 10. _____ pg. _____ | 20. _____ pg. _____ |

BETWEEN PERIODS

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ pg. _____ | 3. _____ pg. _____ |
| 2. _____ pg. _____ | 4. _____ pg. _____ |

HALFTIME

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ pg. _____ | 2. _____ pg. _____ |
|--------------------|--------------------|

NOTES FOR GAME DAY STARS

Game Day

Warm-ups: It's essential to get your body active before the game.

Stretch: Being more flexible helps prevent injuries.

DURING THE GAME

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. _____ pg. _____ | 11. _____ pg. _____ |
| 2. _____ pg. _____ | 12. _____ pg. _____ |
| 3. _____ pg. _____ | 13. _____ pg. _____ |
| 4. _____ pg. _____ | 14. _____ pg. _____ |
| 5. _____ pg. _____ | 15. _____ pg. _____ |
| 6. _____ pg. _____ | 16. _____ pg. _____ |
| 7. _____ pg. _____ | 17. _____ pg. _____ |
| 8. _____ pg. _____ | 18. _____ pg. _____ |
| 9. _____ pg. _____ | 19. _____ pg. _____ |
| 10. _____ pg. _____ | 20. _____ pg. _____ |

BETWEEN PERIODS

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ pg. _____ | 3. _____ pg. _____ |
| 2. _____ pg. _____ | 4. _____ pg. _____ |

HALFTIME

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ pg. _____ | 2. _____ pg. _____ |
|--------------------|--------------------|

NOTES FOR GAME DAY STARS

Upward Cheer *Star Distribution Form*

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

Cheerleader's Name	Game 1	Game 2	Game 3	Game 4	Game 5	Game 6	Game 7	Game 8

Blue (B): Effort

Red (R): Leadership

Gray (Gr): Cheers

Gold (Go): Spirit

White (W): Christlikeness

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*

