

# SOCCER LEAGUE DEVOTIONS

UPWARD  
SPORTS

## PRACTICE 1

Virtue:

**GRACE**

Okay, team. I want to start this huddle by asking you a question. What does the word grace mean to you? (*Wait for responses*)

Grace is a word that brings to mind ideas of love and beauty. But in reality, grace is so much deeper than that. Grace is an amazing gift from God.

This season we're going to spend time learning about grace. We'll also learn about some other things related to grace such as patience and forgiveness. We'll dive deeper into the word grace in a few weeks using this verse from the Bible: *God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God.* Ephesians 2:8 (NLT)

That verse is from a book in the Bible called Ephesians. Ephesians is found in the New Testament.

This season during our devotion time, we'll be learning about grace, patience, and forgiveness using stories and verses from the Bible. The Bible is a book that contains 66 smaller books written by people who lived a really, really long time ago. You might wonder, "why would a book written so long ago be important for me to learn about grace or patience or forgiveness?" You might wonder how a book that old could be relevant to your life at all. Let me quickly go over a few key reasons the Bible is such an important, life-changing book.

First of all, it's historically accurate. All of the stories from the Bible actually happened. We know this because historians have studied various manuscripts and personal accounts of stories. Secondly, the Bible represents the lives of real people. The people in the Bible faced real problems and made real mistakes. They aren't any better or any worse than we are. Because of that, we can find important lessons that pertain to our own lives through their stories.

Third, the Bible is a life-changing book. We'll talk more about this as the season goes along, but the essence of the Bible is this: God made us, He loves us, and even when we do things that displease him, he still wants us to trust him. That's where God's Son Jesus comes in. Because of Jesus living on earth, dying on the cross for our sins, and rising from the dead, we can be forgiven of our sins and have eternal life! More on that later, but it's a really important part of the Bible.

Lastly, the Bible is inspired by God. We read in a passage in 2nd Timothy that all of scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching. When we are unsure as to what is right and wrong, we can look to the Bible for answers.

I'm excited to be with you all this season. I can't wait to see you learn how to play and work together as a team. But I'm also super excited to see you learn more about the Bible, about grace, and about how much God loves you!

Let's take a minute to pray and ask God to bless our season.

## LET'S PRAY

***God, thank you for these young athletes. Thank you that they want to learn more about playing and working together as a team. Open their hearts and minds to what you want to say to them through your Word, the Bible. We are excited for what you have in store for us this season! Bless our time together at this practice and this entire season. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.***

# SOCCER LEAGUE DEVOTIONS

UPWARD  
SPORTS

## PRACTICE 2

Introduce Virtue:

# GRACE

*is getting something great that you don't deserve.*

### MEMORY VERSE

**“GOD SAVED YOU BY HIS GRACE WHEN YOU BELIEVED. AND YOU CAN'T TAKE CREDIT FOR THIS; IT IS A GIFT FROM GOD.” -EPHESIANS 2:8 (NLT)**



### Practice Card Reminder:

*At the end of practice, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled Practice 2.*

### ***Bottom Line: God will always love me more than I can imagine.***

We know that loving other people certainly isn't easy. In fact, it's a lot harder to say you love someone when they've hurt you or let you down. Does anyone know what grace is? Grace is getting something great (like someone's love) that you don't deserve. And guess what? There's someone out there who loves us more than we can ever imagine even though we don't deserve it.

Any guesses? Right! God loves us no matter what. That means that when we do things that hurt God, when we let him down by continually doing things we know are wrong, and when we ignore what his Word says about how we should live, he still loves us. We don't deserve God's love but he still loves us more than we can imagine. That's grace.

Let me give you a great analogy that explains grace. Have you ever gotten in trouble in school? Maybe you were talking during class or maybe you didn't do your homework. Let's say you get in trouble for something, and the teacher disciplines you by making you stay after class or miss recess. That's justice.

Now let's say you get in trouble, but your teacher lets you off with a warning and lets you go play. That's what you would call mercy.

Okay, now let's say your teacher catches you doing something you shouldn't be doing like being disruptive in class or even cheating on a test. But instead of punishing you or just giving you a stern warning, your teacher decides to let you go play outside 10 minutes before anyone else! Or they give you an A+ on the test without even grading it! See, that's grace. That's when you get something you don't deserve.

# DISCUSSION

## QUESTIONS

### **(K-2nd Grade)**

- » How do you think about God knowing that he loves you no matter what you do?
- » When has someone shown you grace? How can you show grace to others?

### **(3rd-6th Grade)**

- » What's the difference between justice, mercy, and grace?
- » Is it easy or hard to show grace to someone? Why?

### **(7th Grade and up)**

- » How is grace different from mercy and justice?
- » Is it easy for you to show grace to others? Why or why not? How has someone shown you grace?

## LET'S PRAY

***God, thank you for loving us.***

***Thank you for loving us more than we could ever imagine.***

***Help us to accept your grace and to show your love to others.***

***We know we have done nothing to deserve the good things you've done for us. We love you, God! Amen.***

# SOCCER LEAGUE DEVOTIONS

UPWARD  
SPORTS

## PRACTICE 3

Review Virtue:

**GRACE**

*is getting something great that you don't deserve.*

### MEMORY VERSE

**“GOD SAVED YOU BY HIS GRACE WHEN YOU BELIEVED. AND YOU CAN'T TAKE CREDIT FOR THIS; IT IS A GIFT FROM GOD.” -EPHESIANS 2:8 (NLT)**

#### Practice Card Reminder:

*Coach: Do NOT distribute practice cards at this practice.*

#### ***Bottom Line: Jesus came to rescue everyone.***

Have you ever lost something really important? In the Bible, Jesus tells two stories about people who lost things. (From Luke 15:1-10) First He told about a shepherd who had 99 sheep but was missing one. That shepherd left the other 99 to hunt for the one, and when he found it, he was so excited he called his friends together to celebrate! In the second story, a woman had 10 silver coins but lost one. She turned on all the lights and searched her whole house until she found her one missing coin. And when she found it, she called her friends together to celebrate!

Both of these stories are about someone hunting for something that was missing and then celebrating when it was found. But did you know that God misses us and celebrates when we are found? Let me explain.

Before Jesus was born, people had to do all sorts of things to make up for their sins—the wrong things they did, said, or even thought. But no matter how much they tried to make up for the bad things they did, when they died, they had to be apart from God. That was simply the punishment for sinning. Then Jesus came. And he made it possible for everyone—including you and me—to be with God in heaven after we die. He rescued us from being separated from our Creator and Heavenly Father!

So, what did we do to deserve what Jesus did for us? Absolutely nothing! Jesus came to rescue everyone from the punishment for sin even though we didn't do anything to deserve it! This is hands-down the coolest and craziest example of our virtue, grace. Because grace is getting something great that you don't deserve. Grace is such an important thing to have in your relationships and we're so lucky to have Jesus to look to for the ultimate example of grace.

## **DISCUSSION**

### *QUESTIONS*

#### **(K-2nd Grade)**

- » Have you ever been lost somewhere? How did you feel? Who found you?
- » How do you feel when you find something you thought you had lost?

#### **(3rd-6th Grade)**

- » Do you believe God loves you?
- » How did the shepherd and the woman react when they found the things they lost? How does God react when people he loves choose to follow him?

#### **(7th Grade and up)**

- » Have you ever been lost? How did you find your way to where you needed to be?
- » Do you believe God loves you? How do you know? Do you think God celebrates when you choose to follow him?

## **LET'S**

### *PRAY*

***God, thank you for loving us.***

***We are the lost sheep. We are the lost coin. And when you***

***find us you rejoice over us. God,***

***help us to trust you. We are tempted to go our own way.***

***Help us focus on you and the***

***grace you poured out for us***

***through your Son, Jesus. Amen.***

# SOCCER LEAGUE DEVOTIONS

UPWARD  
SPORTS

## PRACTICE 4

Review Virtue:

**GRACE**

*is getting something great that you don't deserve.*

### MEMORY VERSE

**“GOD SAVED YOU BY HIS GRACE WHEN YOU BELIEVED. AND YOU CAN'T TAKE CREDIT FOR THIS; IT IS A GIFT FROM GOD.” -EPHESIANS 2:8 (NLT)**

### Practice Card Reminder:

*Coach: Do NOT distribute practice cards at this practice.*

### ***Bottom Line: Everyone needs to be rescued, even me.***

Have you ever gotten yourself into a situation that you weren't sure how to get out of? Maybe you rode your bike so far from your house you weren't sure how to get back. Maybe you wandered off from your mom in a big store and couldn't find her. Maybe you started something—like an art project or putting together a model car—and you needed help finishing it. Some of these situations are silly—you probably would have survived if that model car was never finished. But some aren't so silly—like getting lost on your bike.

What if when you got separated from your mom or lost on your bike, your parents decided just to let you figure it out? What if they decided to teach you a lesson and didn't come to rescue you? What if your mom and dad said, “Well, it's no big deal. We have other kids. Maybe another family will find him”? Would that actually happen? No way. Why? Because they're your parents. You're a part of their family. And most importantly, they love you. But while your mom and dad may rescue you from physical dangers, God is looking out for us and rescuing us in a different way.

God rescues you—even though we don't deserve it. What a great reminder of what we have been talking about these last couple of weeks! It's grace—getting something great (like being rescued by God himself) that you don't deserve. In fact, God went so far as to send his only Son to rescue you.

But what does he rescue us from? God rescues us from our sin—our bad decisions, stubbornness, selfishness, and all the ugly things we try to hide from others. Everyone hurts people they love. And that's exactly why everyone needs to be rescued, even me. Because that ugliness—that sin—separates us from our perfect God. And even though we all mess up and we all sin, we still want to be close to God. But first, we have to realize that we need to be rescued. Think about it. For your

mom or dad to find you in that big store, you have to realize you're lost and stand tall where you are or find someone working at the store to help. Otherwise, you could just go in circles. In the same way, for God to rescue us and keep us close to him forever, we have to realize that we need to be rescued and take a step toward him. Everyone needs to be rescued. Even you. Even me.

## DISCUSSION

### QUESTIONS

#### (K-2nd Grade)

- » What comes to mind when you think of someone being rescued?
- » Why do we need to be rescued from our sins?

#### (3rd-6th Grade)

- » What does it mean to rescue someone or something?
- » Do you ever feel like you need to be rescued? Why do we need to be rescued from our sins?

#### (7th Grade and up)

- » What does the word "rescue" bring to mind? Do you know anyone that has needed to be rescued?
- » •Do we really need to be rescued from our sins? How do we know we need to be rescued?

## LET'S PRAY

***God, thank you for rescuing us. We have done wrong in so many ways. We've neglected you and gone our own way. Forgive us, God. Rescue us from our sins. Keep us from temptations that come our way. We want to follow you. Help us trust you completely. In the name of Jesus I pray, Amen.***



# SOCCER LEAGUE DEVOTIONS

UPWARD  
SPORTS

## PRACTICE 5

Introduce Virtue:

**PATIENCE**

*is waiting until later for what you want now.*

MEMORY VERSE

**“FINISHING IS BETTER THAN STARTING. PATIENCE IS BETTER THAN PRIDE.”**

- ECCLESIASTES 7:8 (NLT)



### Practice Card Reminder:

*At the end of practice, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled Practice 5.*

### ***Bottom Line: Trust God while you wait.***

“You’ll have to wait until you’re older.”

“No dessert until you eat your dinner.”

“Maybe you’ll get it for Christmas.”

Do you ever feel like all you do is wait? Waiting can be hard. Most of us just want what we want right when we want it! That’s when we need patience. Patience is waiting until later for what you want now.

But what if you looked at things differently? What if instead of always wishing for what was coming next, you decided to be happy about where you are right now? And what if you went one step further and tried to see what you could learn by waiting?

I’ll give you an example for us. What if our entire team decided we were tired of all this practicing every week? What if instead of taking this time each week to practice, we just headed full force into the game, hoping for the best? Do you think we’d play well? Do you think our team would succeed without putting in the work and waiting until we’re ready? My guess is probably not!

The truth is, we need practice time. We need to run drills and work together as a team to become stronger and better. While it might seem like more fun to just play the game, the discipline and patience it takes to practice will ultimately help us to play better when it’s time for the game.

God created us to learn new things—to grow and become better. Having patience means that you understand it takes time to learn new things. And in the meantime, God wants us to trust him even when we want to rush ahead, even when we want it now and even when we don't love waiting. We need to trust God and see what we can learn while we're waiting.

## DISCUSSION

### QUESTIONS

#### (K-2nd Grade)

- » When is it most difficult for you to be patient?
- » Why is it important for us to be patient?

#### (3rd-6th Grade)

- » When have you had to be patient? What was it for?
- » Is being patient hard? Why is it important to be patient?

#### (7th Grade and up)

- » What makes being patient difficult?
- » A lot of young people try to “grow up” too quickly. What are the dangers of not being patient as a teenager?

## LET'S PRAY

*God, thank you for this group of young people. Thank you for being patient with us. Waiting is hard, God. We know that you have good things in store for us. Help us to be patient. Use the time we spend waiting to build our faith and trust in you. Amen.*

# SOCCER LEAGUE DEVOTIONS

UPWARD  
SPORTS

## PRACTICE 6

Review Virtue:

**PATIENCE**

*is waiting until later for what you want now.*



### MEMORY VERSE

**“FINISHING IS BETTER THAN STARTING. PATIENCE IS BETTER THAN PRIDE.”**

- ECCLESIASTES 7:8 (NLT)

### Practice Card Reminder:

*Coach: Do NOT distribute practice cards at this practice*

***Bottom Line: When you think you can't wait, don't forget what's true.***

Do you guys remember what we started talking about last week during our devotion time? Patience—waiting until later for what you want now. Sometimes it's easy to think we know better. Sometimes we choose to be impatient because we just can't wait!

There's a great example of this from the Bible. Moses had led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt through some amazing circumstances. Now they were wandering in the desert, heading for the Promised Land. The Promised Land was an area that God had designed especially for his people to live. All this wandering was getting old, and the people were frustrated. They were tired of all this traveling, and Moses was gone - again. He was up on Mount Sinai, talking to God.

They didn't want to wait on Moses. They were ready to get wherever they were going. So they told Aaron, Moses' brother and sort of second-in-command, "Let's make our own god. This guy, Moses, the one who brought us out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him." In other words, he's not coming back fast enough for us so let's take matters into our own hands!

They took all their gold jewelry, melted it in the fire, and Aaron molded that gold into a golden calf. And here's the really crazy part. Once their golden cow statue was complete, all the Israelites started bowing down and worshiping it as if it was a real god! Can you believe that? Their impatience led them to take matters into their own hands in a crazy way!

When Moses came down off the mountain and saw them carrying on, knowing that they had completely disregarded what God—the real God—had done to save them, he was furious! Their impatience led them to completely forget what they knew to be true! They had seen God save them, they had watched in amazement as he parted the Red Sea and provided food for them to eat in the

desert. But at that moment, they forgot everything they had seen God do and they let their impatience take over.

You and I can learn something important from this crazy story. When you think you can't wait, don't forget what's true. Don't be like those Israelites who decided their way was better. When you feel yourself starting to become frustrated and impatient, ask God to help you remember this lesson. Why don't we ask God to help us with that right now?

## DISCUSSION

### QUESTIONS

#### (K-2nd Grade)

- » Have you ever been glad you waited for something instead of getting it right when you wanted?
- » What did the Israelites do when they were impatient? What crazy things might happen if you get impatient?

#### (3rd-6th Grade)

- » What might be some reasons God wants you to wait for something?
- » How does it change things when you think about the times God has taken care of you in the past?

#### (7th Grade and up)

- » The Israelites grew so impatient waiting for Moses to return that they took matters into their own hands. When have you gotten tired of waiting for something and tried to do things on your own?
- » Is it easy or hard to be patient when waiting for God to answer you? Why?

## LET'S PRAY

***God, we are amazed at how you love us. We don't deserve your grace and mercy, yet you are patient and kind with us. Please, Lord, help us not be tempted to follow other things or other people when we get impatient. Help us stay grounded in the truth that you love us and have a great plan for our lives. We love you, Lord. Amen.***

# SOCCER LEAGUE DEVOTIONS

UPWARD  
SPORTS

## PRACTICE 7

Review Virtue:

**PATIENCE**

*is waiting until later for what you want now.*

MEMORY VERSE

**“FINISHING IS BETTER THAN STARTING. PATIENCE IS BETTER THAN PRIDE.”**

- ECCLESIASTES 7:8 (NLT)

### Practice Card Reminder:

*Coach: Do NOT distribute practice cards at this practice*

***Bottom Line: When you think you can't wait, don't lose your cool.***

Raise your hand if you have a brother or sister. Awesome. Keep your hands up. Now raise your other hand if you've ever had trouble being patient with your brother or sister. That's what I thought. Okay, you can put your hands down.

Isn't it crazy how the people we should be the most patient with—our families—are the people we're sometimes the most impatient with? Maybe your sister is taking too long in the bathroom. Or maybe your brother still won't let you have your turn with the video game controller. Or maybe you're tired of your mom saying, "We can go once your brother wakes up from his nap." Whatever the situation is, we could all use a little more patience.

Have you ever gotten so impatient that you got really angry? Have you ever gotten so mad because you had to wait on someone that you did something you shouldn't have? I know I certainly have.

The Bible has something to say on the subject of patience. Ecclesiastes 7:8 (NLT) says, "Finishing is better than starting. Patience is better than pride." Sometimes when we're impatient, it's hard to see the end of the situation. What if in my earlier example I could have hit the fast forward button to see how I was about to overreact and do something I shouldn't, hurting the people I care about? What if I could have seen what I was about to do before I did it and chose a different way to respond? If I could have seen the end of the matter, the end of the situation first, I know I would have chosen to respond differently.

Patience teaches us a lot of important lessons. Choosing patience always protects our relationships with others. When you're patient with your family, or with your teammates or friends, you're putting others first. So remember this week, when you think you can't wait, don't lose your cool.

## **DISCUSSION**

### *QUESTIONS*

#### **(K-2nd Grade)**

- » Who in your life shows you patience? How would you feel if they were impatient with you?
- » What do you need to do to become a more patient person?

#### **(3rd-6th Grade)**

- » When have you been impatient with someone in your family? What were the results?
- » What steps can you take to be more patient?

#### **(7th Grade and up)**

- » What do you think the verse in Ecclesiastes means when it says “Patience is better than pride”?
- » Who are you most impatient with? What can you do to become a more patient person?

## **LET’S**

### *PRAY*

***God, we want to thank you for your patience. We know we often are impatient with others, even those close to us. Thank you for being patient with us. Help us to be patient with others. Help us to not be in a hurry, to not be angry or frustrated when things don’t happen when we want them to. We love you, Lord. Amen.***

# SOCCER LEAGUE DEVOTIONS

## PRACTICE 8

## GOOD NEWS



### MEMORY VERSE

**“GOD SAVED YOU BY HIS GRACE WHEN YOU BELIEVED. AND YOU CAN’T TAKE CREDIT FOR THIS; IT IS A GIFT FROM GOD.” -EPHESIANS 2:8 (NLT)**



### Practice Card Reminder:

*At the end of practice, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled Practice 8.*

We’ve spent time the past several weeks in devotion time talking about grace and patience. I want to continue talking about those things today by discussing something really important: the Gospel. The word gospel means “good story” or “good news”. And I think the Gospel we learn about in the Bible is the best story and the best news ever!

The Bible tells us a lot about God and his love for people. But you know what? The Bible also tells us a lot about ourselves. We learn in the very first chapter of the Bible that God made us in his image. He made us to be like him. God is perfect and wants us to be that way too!

But something keeps us from being perfect. Do you know what it is? It’s sin. Sin is anything we say, do, or think that displeases God. Everyone other than Jesus that has ever lived has sinned. Everyone. We learn this in the Bible as well. Romans 3:23 tells us that everyone has sinned and has fallen short of God’s standard. Maybe you wonder how you’ve sinned. Have you ever told a lie, even a small one? Have you ever made fun of someone else? Have you ever been disobedient to a parent or disrespectful to a teacher? All of those are sins.

Because of our sin, we cannot have a right relationship with God. Sure, we might say God exists and believe that, but if we continue living in sin and not seeking forgiveness for our sin, we can’t walk step-in-step with God. And there’s nothing that we can do to achieve this right relationship. But Jesus can do something. Through Jesus, God showed us his grace.

Jesus is God’s Son who came to earth, lived a perfect life, and died on the cross as a payment for our sins. Not only that, but three days after he died on the cross, Jesus rose from the grave! He defeated both sin and death. And he did it for us, even though we didn’t deserve it. God showed us grace!

Jesus gave up his life as a payment for your sin and my sin. Why did he do that? Because he loves us. John 3:16 tells us this: For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. When we believe in God and that the way for us to have a relationship with him is through his Son, Jesus, we will have eternal life!

God showed us grace through his Son, Jesus. He gave up his life for us. There is no greater example of love and grace than that! So, know that we can't manage life on our own. We need to follow Jesus and live the way he wants us to live!

I want to close in prayer and if you feel like God is asking you to trust him and follow him with your life, I want you to come talk to me after the prayer or after practice. The most important decision you'll ever make with your life is whether or not you will trust in Jesus and live a life pleasing to God.

***\*NO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS THIS WEEK. IF PLAYERS HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS DEVOTION, CONSIDER ANSWERING THEM ONE-ON-ONE WITH THE LEAGUE DIRECTOR OR ANOTHER COACH PRESENT.***

## LET'S PRAY

***God, thank you for your great love for us. You show us so much grace, God. You made us to be like you! And God, we have failed so many times. We have done so many things that are displeasing to you. God, I pray right now for the forgiveness of my sins. Help others admit their sin and their need for you. Speak to the hearts and minds of everyone here that they too may seek to follow you and dedicate their lives to living the way you want them to live. Remind them, Father, of your great love and compassion for them. Remind them of the great grace you have shown all of us. We love you, Lord. Amen..***



# SOCCER LEAGUE DEVOTIONS

UPWARD  
SPORTS

## PRACTICE 9

Introduce Virtue:

## **FORGIVENESS**

*is deciding that someone who has wronged you doesn't owe you anything.*

### MEMORY VERSE

**“MAKE ALLOWANCE FOR EACH OTHER’S FAULTS, AND FORGIVE ANYONE WHO OFFENDS YOU. REMEMBER, THE LORD FORGAVE YOU, SO YOU MUST FORGIVE OTHERS.”**

- COLOSSIANS 3:13 (NLT)



### Practice Card Reminder:

*At the end of practice, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled Practice 9.*

### ***Bottom Line: When you don't forgive, you miss out.***

There are some things about following God that aren't that hard to do like being generous or kind. But then there's . . . forgiveness. Forgiveness is deciding that someone who has wronged you doesn't owe you anything. And I'll be honest; forgiveness is one of the hardest things for me to do sometimes. But we know it's possible because God has asked us to do it, and He doesn't ask us to do something that's impossible!

God wants you to forgive because He knows something important: when you don't forgive, you miss out. What do you miss out on? Well, you might miss out on something fun, or on a relationship that is important in your life. It's easy to hold onto the wrong things other people have done. Maybe you and someone on our team have a disagreement and you can't seem to get past it. Think of the things you could miss out on like friendship with a teammate or a unified team. It's hard to be unified when we are mad at each other, right?

Or maybe your mom says you can have ice cream after you and your sister clean your room. You spend two hours doing an awesome job, but your sister takes like two minutes. Mom takes you both for ice cream, but you're so mad at your sister for not doing all the work, that you don't even enjoy your mint chocolate chip.

Or your friend borrows your favorite game and accidentally drops it in the dog's water dish. You're so angry you decide not to invite him to sleep over this weekend after all. And you miss out on a really fun time!

In any of these cases, choosing to forgive would make all the difference between you being miserable and you getting to enjoy a fun time with friends or family. That's why it's so important to remember that when you don't forgive, you miss out!

Forgiveness isn't about being fair. It's about remembering that God has forgiven you. And because of your love for God and through God's power, you can forgive others. It's not easy, but it's always worth it!

## DISCUSSION

### QUESTIONS

#### (K-2nd Grade)

- » When have you needed to be forgiven for something?
- » Why should we be willing to forgive others?

#### (3rd-6th Grade)

- » Why do you think forgiveness is so hard?
- » Who right now do you need to forgive? What might you miss out on if you don't forgive them?

#### (7th Grade and up)

- » What makes forgiveness so hard for many your age?
- » Who in your life right now do you need to forgive? What might you be missing out on by not forgiving them?

## LET'S PRAY

*Dear God, thank You for forgiving us for the things that we do wrong. We've all been the person who has messed up and made bad choices and needs forgiving. But we've all also been the person who had to forgive someone who messed up and hurt us. Just like we need to be forgiven by you, we also need to forgive others. Please help us to do that so that we don't miss out on the things you want for us and the relationships that we could enjoy. We love you. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

# SOCCER LEAGUE DEVOTIONS

UPWARD  
SPORTS

## PRACTICE 10

Review Virtue:

## **FORGIVENESS**

*is deciding that someone who has wronged you doesn't owe you anything.*

### MEMORY VERSE

**“MAKE ALLOWANCE FOR EACH OTHER’S FAULTS, AND FORGIVE ANYONE WHO OFFENDS YOU. REMEMBER, THE LORD FORGAVE YOU, SO YOU MUST FORGIVE OTHERS.”**

- COLOSSIANS 3:13 (NLT)

### Practice Card Reminder:

*Coach: Do NOT distribute practice cards at this practice*

### **Bottom Line: God forgives you.**

I want you to imagine that one of you didn't show up to practice tonight. It would be a bummer, right? But we'd still keep practicing, right? Because we would assume that you're okay at home with your family, you're probably just not feeling well. But what if you didn't show up again the next practice? Well, I'd start to get worried and I'd definitely call your mom or dad and check up on you. Because you're a part of this team, and I want to know that you're okay!

Remember the story from a few weeks ago about the lost sheep? Let me read to you what Jesus said. "If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them gets lost, what will he do? Won't he leave the ninety-nine others in the wilderness and go to search for the one that is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he will joyfully carry it home on his shoulders. When he arrives, he will call together his friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.'" (Luke 15:4-6, NLT)

You might be thinking, that's a pretty sweet story, but what does it mean? Well, I'm not sure if you caught on to this, but the shepherd in the story Jesus told is God. And God wants us to know that like that lost sheep, there is nothing that we've ever done or ever will do that is so terrible He can't forgive us. Nothing is too big for God's forgiveness. And He loves you so much that He will always come and find you.

The fact is, we've all messed up. We've made mistakes. We hurt other people. But God wants to forgive us for everything. Maybe you've never asked God for His forgiveness before. Maybe you never

even knew you needed it! That makes this a great time to ask God to forgive you for the wrong things you've done. If you aren't sure where to start, talk with someone who's following God already, like one of your coaches or a family member.

Or maybe you've already asked God for His forgiveness. That's awesome! But it doesn't mean you don't still make mistakes. Don't forget to ask God for His forgiveness each day.

## DISCUSSION

### QUESTIONS

#### (K-2nd Grade)

- » How does it make you feel knowing that nothing you do is too big for God to forgive?
- » Have you done anything you need God's forgiveness for? Have you asked him to forgive you?

#### (3rd-6th Grade)

- » Is there anything you need to ask God to forgive you for?
- » Does the fact that God will always forgive you mean that you can do whatever you want? Why or why not?

#### (7th Grade and up)

- » God is willing to forgive you for anything you've done. Does that truth change how you view God? Does it change how you view your sin?
- » How does God's desire to bring all lost sheep to him make you feel?

## LET'S PRAY

***Dear God, thank You for loving us so much that you would have sent Jesus to save even just one of us! We know that we all mess up and that we need your forgiveness. Help us to remember that you love us no matter what, and that means we can be honest with you. We don't need to hide or run away when we do things wrong, because you will forgive us, we only need to ask. We love you. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.***

# SOCCER LEAGUE DEVOTIONS

UPWARD  
SPORTS

## PRACTICE 11

Review Virtue:

## **FORGIVENESS**

*is deciding that someone who has wronged you doesn't owe you anything.*

### MEMORY VERSE

**“MAKE ALLOWANCE FOR EACH OTHER’S FAULTS, AND FORGIVE ANYONE WHO OFFENDS YOU. REMEMBER, THE LORD FORGAVE YOU, SO YOU MUST FORGIVE OTHERS.”**

- COLOSSIANS 3:13 (NLT)

### Practice Card Reminder:

*Coach: Do NOT distribute practice cards at this practice*

***Bottom Line: Since God forgives you, you should forgive others.***

Let's say a kid at school has been saying mean things about you.

Or your brother keeps taking your device and losing it.

Or your mom has lost her temper and yelled at you a lot this week.

Or your classmate keeps leaving you out of the game at recess.

What do all of those things have in common? They all require you to forgive someone. And not just one time either.

Forgiveness is deciding that someone who has wronged you doesn't have to pay. We've talked about how when you don't forgive, you miss out. And we also talked about how God forgives you. Both of those are really important reasons to forgive others! Listen to what our memory verse this month says. "Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others." (Colossians 3:13, NLT)

This verse sums up why we should forgive quite simply: because God forgave us! When Jesus was on the earth, He told a story of a servant who refused to forgive a man who owed him a little bit of money—even though the servant himself had been forgiven a much bigger debt by the king! So even though the king forgave the debt and said the servant didn't have to pay him back, the servant still refused to forgive someone else a smaller debt. It seems kind of crazy, doesn't it?!

But when you think about it, if we refuse to forgive others, we're just like that servant. Because God has already offered us forgiveness for something much bigger: every sin we've ever committed or ever will commit! If God has forgiven us for a lifetime of sin, how can we refuse to forgive others? Jesus goes on to say that we should forgive someone 77 times. That's a high number, but Jesus doesn't mean that we should keep track and stop forgiving someone on the 78th time they do something to us. No, Jesus meant this: God has forgiven us so much. He wants us to forgive others in the same way—even if we have to forgive over and over and over.

That doesn't mean you need to be a doormat or put yourself in an unsafe situation. If someone is being mean to you over and over again, you should definitely tell an adult. But what it does mean is that when someone wrongs you, it's your chance to pass on God's forgiveness. Remember, since God forgave you, you should forgive others.

## DISCUSSION

### QUESTIONS

#### (K-2nd Grade)

- » How many times should we forgive each other?
- » How often does God forgive you? Have you done something that you think God can't forgive you for?

#### (3rd-6th Grade)

- » Why do you think Jesus puts so much importance on forgiveness?
- » How often should you forgive someone? Does forgiving someone mean you have to be friends with them?

#### (7th Grade and up)

- » In today's world, how is the idea of forgiveness viewed? How is Jesus' teaching on forgiveness counter-cultural to what the world teaches?
- » Forgiving someone doesn't mean you have to have a relationship with that person. Does this truth make forgiveness easier? Why or why not?

## LET'S PRAY

*Dear God, thank you most of all for forgiving us. You didn't have to send Jesus, but you did, out of your great love for us. We love you too, and we want to follow your example. Please help us forgive others just as you have forgiven us. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*