



GRACEAC

ATHLETICS

THE VIRTUES OF GREATNESS



The Playbook

Letter To Our Coaches

Dear Coach,

Thank you so much for volunteering your time this season, it is very much appreciated. Now, what if we told you there is a secret to winning more games this season by employing a strategy used by coaching giants like Wooden, Lombardi and Krzyzewski that guarantees greater success on the playing field? The answer: By instilling virtues into our young athlete's hearts and minds as we teach them how to play the games we love. As these legends proved over and over again, the more an athlete's character is built and the less the focus is simply set on the outcome of the contest, a great paradox occurs – teams end up winning more games!

What is virtue? Virtue is the habitual choosing of the good.

The purpose of this program is to give coaches and parents tools to teach our children how to grow in virtue and not only become better teammates, but also better people as well. Simply put, our goal as Christians is to get our kids into heaven and coaches have a unique opportunity to assist them by integrating virtue into their daily lives through the training ground of sport. And here's how we plan to do so simply, efficiently, and effectively...

Each week, coaches will receive a brief email detailing the virtue we are hoping to incorporate into practice. We are expecting this to take no more than 2-3 minutes at each practice. The idea is not to give a full-blown lesson, but a quick definition of the virtue and a talk on how it relates to your sport.

From there, as much as possible, we want coaches to "catch" our athletes exhibiting the virtue and point it out to positively reinforce the action.

This will be a process that hopefully will develop over years to come. As our coaches grow in their understanding of the virtues, it will become second nature as to how to incorporate this with their teams and achieve even greater success on the field of play, but more importantly, in the lives of our cherished youth.

We warmly invite you to join us in making our plan come to life with our young athletes.

God Bless

The Plan

1.) Start and/or End each practice *AND* game with prayer. You may use one of the below athlete's prayers or your own version.

An Athlete's Prayer

God,
Let me play well, but fairly.
Let competition make me strong, but never hostile.
Forbid me to rejoice in the adversity of others.
See me not when I am cheered,
But when I bend down to help my opponent up.
If I know victory, allow me to be happy.
If I am denied, keep me from envy.
Remind me that sports are just games.
Help me to learn something that matters once the game is over.
And if through athletics I get to be an example
Let it be a good one.
Amen.

OR

Dear God,
May everything I am be a prayer to you.
May I race with strength, courage and endurance and fulfil my potential today.
Amen.

2.) Spend 2-3 minutes at each practice discussing the week's virtue with the team. Examples of practicing the virtue will be provided to assist in your discussion.

3.) "Catch" your athletes showing virtue and try to make a point of telling them how that has improved their performance or their teams performance.

The Virtues

Week #1: Prudence (Wise): Sound reason and judgment.

- Pray for guidance and seek good advice from trusted people
- Listen to your coach and be willing to follow directions – thank your coach for rightful corrections
- Plan short-term and long-term goals (practice drills or learning new skill by end of season)

Week #2: Courage (Gritty): Strength in the face of adversity.

- Withstand difficulties; complete tasks from start to finish
- Stay with tasks even when it is hard, difficult or boring
- Be patient when it is difficult, listen to others, wait for one's turn and tolerate inconveniences or annoyances without complaining

Week #3: Temperance (Self-control): Mastery and moderation of natural desires and passions.

- Exercise the freedom to say “no” to one's wants and desires
- Honesty – be aware that God knows your heart; don't hide things from your parents or friends; seek to live and speak the Truth even when it is hard
- Set limits for yourself; create a balance with homework, practice, TV, junk food, etc.

Week #4: Justice (Respectful): Fairness in giving all their due.

- Recognize what is due to God first and then to others
- Be kind to your teammates and opponents
- Smile; acknowledge the presence of others, both peers and adults and try to see Jesus in others

Week #5: Humility (Self-forgetful): Acknowledging one's proper place and limitations.

- Awareness that all of your gifts come from God and appreciation for the gifts of others
- Acknowledge the accomplishments of others
- Look at one's strengths and weaknesses honestly, find your role on your team and excel at it

Week #6: Magnanimity (Great-hearted): Striving for greatness while bringing others along with them.

- Compliment your teammates & opponents and allow others to receive the praise and credit they deserve
- Ask God to help you recognize the good in others even when it may be difficult
- Strive to do difficult tasks with God's Grace



“The quality of a man’s life is in direct proportion to his commitment to excellence, regardless of his chosen field of endeavor.” – Vince Lombardi

