



PRAY LIKE A CHAMPION

A COLLECTION OF PRAYERS FOR ATHLETES,
COACHES AND PARENTS

**PLAY LIKE
A CHAMPION
TODAY**

Character Education Through Sports

DEVELOPED BY THE PLAY LIKE A CHAMPION
TODAY EDUCATIONAL SERIES



INTRODUCTION

Play Like a Champion is excited to provide this resource to partners striving to integrate faith into their athletic programs. Whether a school or community organization, a team or individual, the collection of prayers on the following pages offer an opportunity for us to grow in our awareness of God's presence and deepen our relationship with Him through the gift of sport. This collection brings to print our popular *Daily Prayers for Champions* resource, which remains available online via www.playlikeachampion.org/daily-prayers. Credit has been given to the many partners who have submitted prayers included within these pages.

Each section includes a number of prayers that can be used by coaches, athletes, teams and sports parents for private or group prayer. They are excellent options for prayer before or after practices and games, as well as in school Physical Education programs or team functions. Please use these prayers as you feel called. We hope this new resource provides an opportunity to grow in your relationship with Christ and help others to do so as well.



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PRAYERS FOR ATHLETES



I Offer Myself to You

God, I offer myself to you – to build with me and to do with me as you desire. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do your will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to your grace. My creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to my team. Grant me strength, as I go out to do your bidding. Amen.

A Friendship Prayer for Teammates

Lord, bless my teammates and me! Help us to grow in fondness for one another, So that joy becomes the fruit of friendship's vine. Make trust the glue that binds, and honesty the bridge to mutual respect. When one of us is overwhelmed by misfortune, Send the other to lighten the load. If there be hurt and suffering, let compassion soothe our pain. And, Lord, in moments of hard questioning, may fairness and wise judgement prevail. Should faults be laid bare, help us to understand human failing and be quick to forgive. When one of our team is weak, Lord, grant another may be strong. When evil shadows threaten, let our loyalty be a source of light to dispel the darkness. And on these occasions when words fail, let our silence proclaim the bond between us. And then, dear Jesus, in the stillness, make us grateful that our friendship rests in You!

Prayer by Paul A. Ritter

On Significance

The significance of oneself cannot be measured by the fame and glory of my athletic accomplishments but by the love and compassion I have shown to others every day of my life, without fame or glory or thanks just in the name of love. May all the little things we do for one another count as the most significant thing we do in our life time. Amen.

Adapted from poem by Mi Sun Ellis

PRAYERS FOR ATHLETES

A Prayer for Transformation

Loving Father, I invite you into my life today and make myself available to you. Help me to become the-best-version-of-myself by seeking your will and becoming a living example of your love in the world. Open my heart to the areas of my life that need to change in order for me to carry out the mission and experience the joy you have imagined for my life. Inspire me to live the Catholic faith in ways that are dynamic and engaging. Show me how to best get involved in the life of my parish. Make our community hungry for best practices and continuous learning. Give me courage when I am afraid, hope when I am discouraged, and clarity in times of decision. Teach me to enjoy uncertainty and lead your Church to become all you imagined it would be for the people of our times. Amen.

Prayer by Anne Stricherz, Sport & Spirituality Newsletter

Run So As to Win

Heavenly Father, through St. Paul you admonish us to "run so as to win" in our athletic pursuits, while keeping our eyes on the eternal glory of heaven. May we always take the lessons we learn in sports and use them to help us grow in faith, hope and love. Help us to follow the example of your saints, who showed great courage and proclaimed your glory no matter the cost. We lift our prayers to you and ask that you bless our teammates and coaches during this practice and in the week to come. Help us to strive to use our talents to the best of our abilities and to glorify you in doing so. We all these things through Christ, our Lord, Amen.

An Athlete's Prayer for Sports Parents

God, thank you for the gift of my family and the sacrifices they make so that I can play sports. Thank you for their love and support, thank you for the hours they spend driving me to practices and games, sitting in the stands, and lending an ear when I need to talk through a difficult situation. May they know how much this means to me and the impact it has on my ability to play the sports I love. I ask that you bless them today and always, keeping them safe and bringing them joy, just as they have brought me joy through their support and love. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

PRAYERS FOR ATHLETES

A Prayer for Young Athletes Before a Practice or Game

Jesus, send the Holy Spirit upon us as we play today. Bless my teammates that we may have fun together. Bless my coaches as they coach us. We pray that none of us get hurt. Thank you for the gift of this game. Amen.

Prayer by Emma Piscitello

St. Teresa's Prayer

May today there be peace within.

May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.

May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.

May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you.

May you be content knowing you are a child of God.

Let this presence settle into your bones and allow your soul the freedom to play, dance, praise and love.

It is there for each and every one of us. Amen.

Prayer Credited to St. Teresa of Avila

A Prayer Before Practice 1

Lord, you have called us all to be saints. May my actions here on earth be worthy of this title so that I may one day spend eternity with you in heaven. May I work hard at this practice to use the gifts you have given me and may I always treat others with love, knowing that each of us is called to be a saint. Bless my parents, teachers and coaches who help me along the way and grant us a fun and safe practice today.

A Prayer for Before Practice 2

Heavenly Father, you form in me a conscience that helps me to understand good and evil. Be with me and help me to understand how to make good, moral decisions so that I can always follow God's will and treat others with the dignity they deserve. Help me as I continue to learn how to pray and learn about you at home, in school and here with my team. May I always make good decisions in life and in sports. Bless my team and help us to have a fun practice while we learn and grow.

PRAYERS FOR ATHLETES

A Prayer Before Practice 3

Heavenly Father, you taught your apostles to pray and you teach us how to pray so that we might speak to you and have a relationship with you. Hear my prayers at practice, at home and at school and help me to learn to pray always and everywhere. Bless my team with a safe and fun practice today; I pray that we may learn new skills and grow in our relationship with you through our participation in this sport. I ask all this through Christ, Our Lord, Amen.

Lift Me Up

Lord, please clear my head of all distractions
And my heart of burdens I may bear,
So I may perform my very best,
Knowing You'll always be there.
Please lift me up before the moment,
So through Your eyes I may see,
And have a clearer understanding,
As the game unfolds before me.
With great courage I will meet this challenge,
As You would have me to,
But keep me humble and remind me,
That my strength comes from knowing You.
Then when all eyes are upon me,
At the end of this game,
I will return their eyes to You O'Lord,
And to the glory of Your Name.
Amen.

A Basketball Player's Prayer

God, thank you for this game I love and for the strength to play it. I need my coaches, teammates, and opponents, although I may not say it. Please keep me safe from injury, as on the court I go. Give me grace in defeat and victory, your matchless love to show. Bless all who helped invest in me, whose wisdom helped me grow. I know it's just a game, dear lord, but how I love it so. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR ATHLETES

Competing Well

God, let me play well but fairly. Help me to learn something that matters once the game is over. Let competition make me strong but never hostile. Always let me help my opponent up. Never catch me rejoicing in the adversity of others. If I know victory, allow me to be happy; if I am denied, keep me from envy. Remind me that sports are just games. If through athletics I set an example, let it be a good one. Amen.

Prayer from an Unknown Catholic Gym

An Athlete's Prayer of Thanksgiving

Heavenly Father,
Thank you for the gift of sport.
Thank you in particular for (list the sports I play),
for the great joy these games have brought me and continue to bring.
Thank you for the skills I have learned,
and the character I have developed through participating.
Thank you for the coaches who have believed in me,
and worked with me to teach me and help me to grow.
Thank you for the teammates who have been with me,
through the ups and downs of practices and games,
through triumph and defeat.
Thank you for the ways in which they have helped me to grow,
the fun we've had and the team we've created.
Thank you for the practices that have formed me,
The games that have tested me,
and the moments that will stay with me forever.
Amen.

Using My Gifts to Glorify God

Dear God, May everything I am be a prayer to you. May I race with strength, courage and endurance and fulfill my potential today. Be with me as I compete, that win or lose I may use the gifts you have given me to give You glory. Amen.

Adapted from Living Prayers [www.living-prayers.com]

PRAYERS FOR ATHLETES

For Blessing on Athletes

O God, you gave us bodies— as well as minds and hearts— with which to praise and worship you. Our sports and exercises are a fitting use of gifts and talents you have given us. Bless our workouts and the games we play, and those with whom we exercise or compete. Give us strength, endurance, courage and agility as we compete or train. Keep us safe and healthy as we celebrate our physical and mental skills in sport. Amen.

Prayer Courtesy Marquette University [www.marquette.edu]

An Athlete's Prayer for Focus

Heavenly Father, help me to focus on this task I am about to perform. Help me to block out distraction so that I may perform to the best of my ability, glorifying You by maximizing the gifts you have given me. May I recall with clarity the teaching of my coaches and the things that I have learned in past practices and games. Give me an inner peace that will allow me to play this game freely and with joy. Help me to be unburdened by the prospect of failure or the lure of success and instead give me the grace to be present in each moment and focus on the task at hand. Lord, be with me in each of these moments so that I might keep my focus and in doing so play my best. I ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

On Sacrifice

Thanks God, for giving me life; and talents for my participation in sports. Help me to play well, to use my powers to the full, to see them as gifts from you. Be with me when I have to deal with the pain of injury, disappointment, loss. Keep me aware of the brotherhood I have with all athletes, even when they are opponents; free me from the temptation to fake, to foul, to cheat. I need to see that dedication to the cause will require sacrifice, but let me know that it is the kind of sacrifice that leads to new life and greater maturity. Help me play with heart, and never lose heart. Most of all, help me never to quit in my efforts to be open to you. For I believe your full coming into my life is the way to real life, in all I do; I believe it is the way of my becoming the truly unique person you destined me to be. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR ATHLETES

A Prayer for Those Involved in Sports

O God, we pray for all who participate in youth and high school sports. May their hearts be open to see your presence in and through the gift of sport. May their minds remember the element of fun reflective of your spirit. May their bodies reflect the gracefulness and wonder of your creation. Let all who compete be enriched by your presence on the course, in the gym, on the field or on the track. Amen.

Adapted from a prayer by the National CYO

A Prayer for Healing from Injury

Saint Raphael the Archangel is the patron saint of healing. In Hebrew, his name literally means "God heals." We can find Raphael in the Old Testament Book of Tobit, where he is revealed as a healer of mind, body and spirit. We can invoke his powerful intercession in our own daily lives.

Glorious Archangel St. Raphael, great prince of the heavenly court, you are illustrious for your gifts of wisdom and grace. You are a guide of those who journey and consoler of the afflicted. In my injury I beg you, assist me in all my needs and be with me in my journey of recovery. Because you are the "medicine of God" I humbly pray that in His name you heal the ills that afflict my body. I especially ask of you the favor of healing (insert injury here), and the blessing of a quick return to my team. Grant that I may grow spiritually as well as physically as I heal, That I may know the grace of God and see this injury as a blessing in disguise. I beg your intercession to the Lord, our God, from whom all good things come. Amen.

Playing to the Best of Our Abilities

Today Lord I praise and thank you for the gift of playing the great game of (fill in your sport). I ask you to give us the grace to practice the virtues of perseverance and respect in and through my play. Help my team and our opponents play to the best of our abilities, keep us safe and strong and free from injury. And most importantly, Lord, help us to have fun in our play together recognizing your presence among and within this game. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR ATHLETES

Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek

to be consoled as to console,

to be understood as to understand,

to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

Lord, as I pray this Prayer of St. Francis, help me to take seriously the call to be an individual sharing peace, love, hope and joy on my team. Through this individual commitment and collectively with my team, may we grow to be an invincible force for good in our world, for this will be our ultimate victory. Amen.

A Prayer for an Injured Athlete

Lord, I pray for (Insert Name Here) and for all athletes who are injured during practice and competition. May you bless them with courage and strength. Keep them from fear, that they may know your comfort in their anguish and your loving protection in the midst of pain. I pray that the road to recovery may be swift. Be with them through adversity that they may know your presence, and be lifted up with the graces they need in this time. Grant them the graces they need to remain steadfast in the resolve to overcome the challenges and obstacles they face. May you grant them a spirit of fortitude, and may you bless them in this time of need. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

PRAYERS FOR ATHLETES

An Athlete's Prayer

I thank you O God, for giving me a body which is fit and strong and for making me able to use it well. In my training, help me never to shrink the discipline which I know that I need and that I ought to accept. In my leisure and in my pleasure, help me never to allow myself any indulgence which would make me less fit than I ought to be. When I compete with others, help me, win or lose, to play fair. When I win, keep me from boasting; when I lose, keep me from making excuses. Keep me from being conceited when I succeed and from being sulky when I fail. Help me always with good will congratulate a better man who beat me. Help me so to live that I will always have a healthy body, and a healthy mind. This I ask for Your love's sake. Amen.

<http://prayers-and-poetry.blogspot.com/2007/07/athletes-prayer.html>

A Prayer of Thanksgiving for Sports

Heavenly Father,
Thank you for the gift of sport.
Thank you for these games that we play that bring fun and joy.
Thank you for the gift of practices that help me to grow and to develop my skill.
Thank you for the gift of teammates who help me to improve each day,
Teammates who support me as we work toward a common goal.
Thank you for the gift of opponents who provide a challenge,
Who bring out my best and allow me to experience the joy of competition.
Thank you for the officials who keep the games fair,
and the parents and fans who cheer us on from the crowd.
Lord, I pray in thanksgiving for this great opportunity;
Be with me as I seek to glorify you in all that I do.
May I give you my all not just in practices and competition,
but in my daily life, my relationships,
and the time I spend in prayer with you.
I ask this through Christ, our Lord,
Amen.

PRAYERS FOR ATHLETES

Help Me to Play the Game

Help me to play the game, dear Lord, with all my might and main;
Grant me the courage born of right, a heart to stand the strain...
Send me a sense of humor, Lord, to laugh when victory's mine;
To laugh, if I should meet defeat, without a fret or whine...
Give me the grace to follow rules, to 'fess up when I'm wrong,
When silence or some other thing wins plaudits from the throng...
When foes are tough and fighting fierce and I am getting weak,
Dear God, don't ever let me show a broad, bright, yellow streak.
And teach me, Lord, life's game to play just one day at a time.
With Thee as coach and trainer, Lord, real victory must be mine.
Amen.

Used with Permission by Fr. Brian Cavanaugh, T.O.R., Chaplain for Franciscan University Athletics, "Apple Seeds"® <http://www.appleseeds.org>

In Thanksgiving for Sports Parents

Heavenly Father, I thank you on this day especially for my parents. Thank you for all their hard work and all they do for me, especially driving to practice and making sure I have fun. I pray that you may help me to listen to them and to help them by being a good child. Bless also my practice that I may learn and grow as a child of God. Amen.

God Has a Plan for Each of Us

Jeremiah 29: 11 asserts that "God has a plan for each of us."

As a player, help me Lord to see what you are calling me to do today in this practice/game. Help me to be a difference-maker for my team. As a team help us to plan and execute an effective practice/game today recognizing that God is with us in our every move. Grant us a positive attitude, a willing spirit and contagious energy to learn and to get better. Remind us to use every gift God has given us along with the power of the Holy Spirit's gifts to unleash the very best of ourselves so that we play for Your glory. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR ATHLETES

Praying the Words of Cardinal Newman

God has created me to do Him some definite service; he has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. God has not created me for naught. I shall do good; I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place while not intending it – if I do but keep His Commandments. Therefore will I trust Him. Whatever, wherever I am. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him; in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him; in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him; God does nothing in vain. He knows what He is about. He may take away my friends; He may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me – Still he knows what He is about.

~ Cardinal Newman

Loving Others as God Loves

God of Love, you gave us your only Son and He died for us on the cross so that we might have eternal life. Help me to love you and to love others as you taught. May I follow the example of the saints and follow you each day, no matter where you lead me, knowing that if I follow you I will someday know the joy of heaven. During practice and games please help me and my teammates to treat each other with love by helping each other, working together to achieve our goals, and doing everything to the best of our ability. May we always encourage others and spread your message in everything that we do. I ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

An Athlete's Prayer for Coaches

Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of my coaches. Thank you for the time and energy they dedicate to helping me improve as a person and as an athlete. I pray that you will bless them. Bless them with a great faith. Grant them health and happiness, help them to understand the gift they are to their athletes. Give them courage to always do what is right and wisdom to see the ways in which they can maximize the potential of the children they coach. In return, may I always listen to them and give them my full effort. That together as athlete and coach, we may glorify you in all that we do. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR ATHLETES

Prayer on the Fruits of the Holy Spirit

St. Paul tells us that the fruits of the Holy Spirit are “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” Galatians 5:22. Help me Lord to take these fruits of the Spirit seriously in my play and on my team. Show me Lord how I can show my team (read slowly and allow time for reflection after each fruit):

Love...

Joy...

Peace...

Patience...

Kindness...

Goodness...

Faith...

Gentleness...

Self-control...

No matter our age or our position, we can share these fruits of the spirit as an outward sign of our Christian commitment. Today is the day to do this to the best of my ability. Thank you for this challenge Lord. God chose me for this team at this time and has “commissioned me to go out and bear fruit, fruit that will last.” Amen.

Relying on God

Dear Lord, help us today to truly rely on you in our play.

Proverbs 3: 5-6 can give us inspiration:

Have confidence in the Lord with all your heart.

And lean not on your own understanding.

In all your ways think of Him.

And he will direct your steps.

Help me set aside my ego and remember that only through you Lord will I find the confidence to trust that you guide my every step. Bring us together as a team to walk in your ways glorifying you always through our play. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR ATHLETES

A Young Athlete's Prayer from Pope Francis

Looking for a simple way to teach young athletes to pray? We're a fan of the simple 5 Finger Prayer method advocated by Pope Francis. Use the five fingers on your hand to go through the following prayer:

1. The thumb is the closest finger to you. So start praying for those who are closest to you. They are the persons easiest to remember. To pray for our dear ones is a “sweet obligation.”
2. The next finger is the index. Pray for those who teach you, instruct you and heal you. They need the support and wisdom to show direction to others. Always keep them in your prayers.
3. The following finger is the tallest. It reminds us of our leaders, the governors and those who have authority. They need God’s guidance.
4. The fourth finger is the ring finger. Even that it may surprise you, it is our weakest finger. It should remind us to pray for the weakest, the sick or those plagued by problems. They need your prayers.
5. And finally we have our smallest finger, the smallest of all. Your pinkie should remind you to pray for yourself. When you are done praying for the other four groups, you will be able to see your own needs but in the proper perspective, and also you will be able to pray for your own needs in a better way.

A Prayer for An Injured Teammate

Lord, I ask for your blessing on (Teammate's Name) who has been injured. May you give him comfort and healing. As you healed the blind, the paralyzed and so many others in your earthly ministry, heal too this teammate who suffers. Help him to find strength in you, that his faith may increase. Give him courage in the face of adversity. Be with him as he works his way back, helping him to overcome obstacles in recovery. May (Teammate's Name) find blessing in the midst of this trial, that he may grow through the experience and have a full recovery. Grant me the graces I need to be a caring friend and teammate, to encourage him and be there for him when most needed. I ask for the intercession of Saint Rafael the Archangel, Patron Saint of Healing. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR ATHLETES

A Basketball Player's Prayer

The following prayer was submitted by Mike Owens of Austin, Texas. This beautiful prayer is written for basketball, but you can easily insert details of your own sport to make it personal to you.

I am a basketball player, but I am a child of God first. This game that I am about to play is one small event in a much bigger life and universe. It is an opportunity for me to enjoy the gifts that God has given to me and glorify Him through my play. I glorify God by playing hard and giving effort on every play. I glorify God by treating others as I want to be treated and showing respect to my coach, the officials, the other team, and the fans. I glorify God by overcoming adversity and avoiding frustration after a mistake. I glorify God by winning the right way with my character intact and if I happen to lose by losing graciously but doing my best to the end. I will fight for loose balls and for position, but I will play clean and will not use these moments to take cheap shots at the other team. I will not retaliate if someone takes a cheap shot at me and will walk away from those conflicts and seek to make peace where I can. I will help others up when they fall no matter what team they are on and I will apologize if I do harm to another. I will strive to keep my composure and focus on what I can control. I will let my play and my character speak for me and will not talk trash or try to instigate conflict. I will remember who I am and why I am here – because of God's grace – and I will not get caught up in the moment. I will play to have fun and enjoy the gifts that God has given to me – I am a child of God first and a basketball player second – I will glorify Him through my effort and by playing the right way. Amen.

Training for the Ultimate Goal

“Run as to win,” St. Paul instructed the Corinthians. In your example St. Paul, help me remember that the discipline it takes to endure the process of physically training my body through athletics also relates to the discipline needed in my spiritual life. As I play sports and compete to win, help me be ever mindful that my true training is to win the ultimate grace of living forever with Jesus in heaven. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR ATHLETES

Don't Quit

Lord, when things go wrong, as they sometimes will,
when the road I'm trudging seems all uphill,
when the funds are low and the debts are high,
and I want to smile but I have to sigh,
when care is pressing me down a bit...
Grant me rest, but help me not to quit.
Life is queer with its twists and turns.
As everyone of us sometimes learns.
And many a fellow turns about when he might have won had he stuck it out.
May I not give up though the pace seems slow,
for I may succeed with another blow.
Often the goal is nearer than it seems to a faint and faltering man;
often the struggler has given up when he might have captured the victor's cup;
and he learned too late when the night came down,
how close he was to the golden crown.
Help me to see that success is failure turned inside out,
the silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
and when I cannot tell how close I am, may I have faith that my goal is near.
Help me to stick to the fight when I'm hardest hit,
that when things seem worst, I may not quit.
I ask this through Christ, Our Lord,
Amen.

Adapted from a Poem by Edgar A. Guest

Growing in Strength

As athletes, we seek to be strong. Help me grow in physical strength through our athletic training, but to always recognize that I cannot depend solely on my own strength and abilities. Christ is our true strength. Help me to rely on Christ and always play with gusto for the greater glory of God. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR ATHLETES

An Athlete's Prayer

Dear God, today is game day and I place myself in your loving hands. Help me to be a good sport. I pray that I do not seek individual glory or accolades, but rather that I play for your glory and for the good of my team. I pray that all who play this game today are protected from physical harm. And, my Lord, help me to accept the bad breaks as part of the game. I pray that I play to the best of my ability and to give honor to you by accepting my position and my place in the lineup.

Loving God, I pray for those who watch from the stands that they, too, give glory to you by accepting, without prejudice, the rules and decisions of the game today. May their hearts be filled with joy and gladness that you have given them the ultimate gifts they watch this day: the players.

Dear God, I pray for the coaches and referees that they too experience your loving guidance in the decisions they make today. For those who work behind the scenes to make this day enjoyable and for the founders and supporters of (Insert School/ League name).

Finally, I pray to you, Loving God, that you enjoy this game today and bestow on each of us wisdom and acceptance—no matter the outcome of the final score. With you in our hearts, we are all winners. Amen.

Linda Fleshman, Parent Fort Worth Christian Football League Fort Worth, TX

PRAYERS FOR ATHLETES

I Asked God for Strength...

For I asked God for strength that I might achieve,
Instead I was made weak that I might learn to humbly obey.
I asked for help that I might do greater things,
Instead I was given infirmity that I might do better things.
I asked for riches that I might be happy,
I was given poverty that I might be wise.
I asked for power that I might have the praises of men,
I was given weakness that I might feel the need of God.
I asked for things that I might enjoy life,
I was given life that I might enjoy all things.
I got nothing I asked for, but everything I hoped for.
Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered.
Because I am among all athletes who have been most richly blessed:
You see, I lost by inches, but I won by a mile.

Adapted from a prayer written by an unknown Confederate Soldier
<http://www.willowayfarmco.com/AthletesPrayer.html>

On Being a Champion

A Champion is a winner, a hero...
Someone who never gives up
Even when the going gets rough.
A Champion is a member of a winning team...
Someone who overcomes challenges, even when it requires creative solutions.
A champion is an optimist. A hopeful spirit...
Some who plays the game, even when the game is called life.
There can be a champion in each of us.
If we live as a winner, If we live as a member of the team,
If we live with a hopeful spirit, For Life.

An Excerpt from Mattie Stepanek's Book

PRAYERS FOR ATHLETES

St. Joseph the Worker Prayer

Practice can be hard work and this popular Christian prayer can be used for athletic teams as well as traditional workers. Try using this as a team to offer both the difficult and the fun parts of your work to God and thank Him for the results that hard work will bring. St. Joseph, by the work of your hands and the sweat of your brow, you supported Jesus and Mary, and had the Son of God as your fellow worker. Teach me to work as you did, with patience and perseverance, for God and for those whom God has given me to support. Teach me to see in my fellow workers the Christ who desires to be in them, that I may always be charitable and forbearing towards all. Grant me to look upon work with the eyes of faith, so that I shall recognize in it my share in God's own creative activity and in Christ's work of our redemption, and so take pride in it. When it is pleasant and productive, remind me to give thanks to God for it. And when it is burdensome, teach me to offer it to God, in reparation for my sins and the sins of the world. Amen.

A Prayer for Athletes

Thanks God, for giving me life; and talents for my participation in sports. Help me to play well, to use my powers to the full, to see them as gifts from you. Be with me when I need to play hurt, when I have to deal with the pain of injury, disappointment, loss. Keep me aware of the brotherhood/sisterhood I have with all athletes, even when they are opponents; free me from the temptation to fake, to foul, to cheat. I need to see that dedication to the cause will mean suffering, but let me know that it is the kind of suffering that leads to new life and greater maturity. Help me play with heart, and never lose heart. Most of all, help me never to quit in my efforts to be open to you. For I believe your full coming into my life is the way to real life, in all I do; I believe it is the way of my becoming the truly human person you destined me to be. Amen.

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PRAYERS FOR ATHLETES

Athlete Prayers During Competition

There's a great theological truth you need to know: When you step on the playing field, God is with you. There are so many scriptures about God being our present help in a time of trouble (Psalm 46:1), our strength and our shield (Psalm 28:7), our comforter (Isaiah 40:1, Matthew 5:4, Romans 15:4, 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17), the one who prepares our hand for battle (Psalm 144) and the one who will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5,6). Every game has planned breaks in the action—halftime, quarters, time between periods, races, etc. Many times in these gaps the team talks to one another and receives instruction from the coaching staff. These pauses also contain moments where the Christian athlete can talk to our Lord:

“Lord help me work through this frustration”

“God help me relax and shut out distractions”

“Lord help me calm my butt down”

“Lord give more strength and endurance than I think I have”

“God help me raise my intensity”

“Lord forgive me for that flagrant foul or stupid penalty where I lost my head”

Pray for the people around you. Many times during games we can forget that God is at work in the lives of many people. During the gaps in the games, what if you prayed for a struggling friend or someone whose anger is hindering them from their best play? What if we could move away from simply selfish prayers during a game and learned to love God by thinking about other people in the middle of the games? That would be radical, but it would also be retraining our hearts to properly worship in the midst of competition.

This reflection and prayers for during games come from Athletes in Action. www.athletesinaction.org.

PRAYERS FOR ATHLETES

A Poem by St. Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa)

This poem was written by St. Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Theresa) and is engraved on the wall of her home for children in Calcutta.

People are often unreasonable, illogical
And self-centered;
Forgive them anyway
If you are kind, people may
Accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives
Be kind anyway.
If you are successful, you will win some
False friends and some true enemies;
Succeed anyway.
If you are honest and frank, people
May cheat you;
Be honest and frank anyway.
What you spend a year building
Someone could destroy overnight;
Build anyway.
If you find serenity and happiness
They may be jealous;
Be happy anyway.
The good you do today
People will forget tomorrow,
Do good anyway.
Give the world the best you have,
And it may never be enough;
Give the world the best you've got anyway.
You see, in the final analysis, it is
Between you and God,
It never was between you and them anyway.

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS



A Prayer for Teams

Heavenly Father, we ask that you help our team to grow in the virtue of humility this season.

Help each of us individually, as coaches and players, to glorify God for our talents and gifts while working hard to realize those God-given talents to the best of our ability. Help us always to seek God's will in how we use our talents and gifts for the good of others and help us to submit to the authority of our coaches, parents, and others who truly want us to realize these gifts. Grant that we may become more humble through our practice and games this week. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

A Team Prayer by Lou Holtz

This is the beginning of a new day. God has given me this day to use as I will. I can waste it or use it for good. But what I do today is important because I'm exchanging a day of my life for it. When tomorrow comes this day will be gone forever, leaving in its place that which I have traded. I want it to be gain not loss, good not evil, success not failure. I know I shall not regret the price I have paid for it because the future is just a whole string of now's! Lord, help me to live this day according to your will. Amen.

Filled with Zeal

Loving God, the followers of Jesus were filled with zeal to lead others to Christ. Help us to grow in faith and love, so that we as teammates zealously proclaim the Gospel through our joy in play. Inspire our words and our actions so that others may see our love for you and long to know you. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

Preaching the Gospel

Heavenly Father, you sent John the Baptist to preach and baptize so that the world could be prepared for the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ. Help us to do our part in the world today to teach people about Jesus and help us to share the message of the gospel by how we talk, act and play on our team in this season. May we always put God first in our lives and work to lead others to Him. Bless our team that we may learn and grow in our skill as well as our faith. Amen.

For the Glory of Our School

Oh Lord who created me and died for me help me to be worthy of this team. Do not let me look down upon those with less talent or be jealous of those with more. Help us all work together for the honor and glory of our school: _____. May we be humble in victory, gracious in defeat, obedient to my coaches, respectful to my teammates and devoted to my school. Oh Lord, always be in our heart and minds for with you together everyone achieves more. Amen.

Prayer Courtesy Central Catholic High School in Lawrence, MA

To the Blessed Virgin Mary

Holy Mother of God, we ask for your prayers during this practice that you might help lead us closer to God through our participation on this team. We ask that you keep us safe this week and lift up all the prayers we hold in our hearts to God, that we may come to know Him more fully through you. May our practice and play honor you so that it may be worthy of Christ. Amen.

Almighty God, We Praise Your Name

Almighty God, we praise your holy name and rejoice in the gift of this day, our families, teammates and coaches. We thank you for the gift of participating in this sport, that our bodies are able and our minds challenged by the exercise before us. We thank you for the example of those who have gone before us and who model for us the way of virtue and character. Bless us on this day with safety in our practice and the will to grow in virtue and follow you always. We ask this through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

For the Gift of Life

God, you so loved the world that you sent your son to take on flesh and become man. That as one of us He would die for our sins and rise from the dead so that we might have life eternal. We pray especially today in thanksgiving for the gift of life. We pray in thanksgiving for our own lives, for those of our teammates and coaches, and for all those who uphold the dignity of life each day in our world. In word and action, may we always treat our teammates, friends, coaches, opponents and officials with dignity and respect. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Serving Others

Lord, you give us the example of service as the path by which we can love others and seek to follow you. Help us to learn from your example of service here on earth so that we may always seek to serve others in our teams, our families and our communities. May we never grow tired of putting others needs before our own, so that one day we may know the joy of eternal life. Bless our team and protect us. Amen.

The Good Shepherd

Lord, you are the Good Shepherd. Protect us and lead us so that we might have eternal life. Help us to learn to lead others as you do, with great love and care. Bless our team that we might continue to grow as faithful servants while learning new skills and giving our best effort. Grant that this practice will be safe and fun for all involved. Amen.

For Blessings on Practice

Heavenly Father, bless us in this practice as we proclaim you as God and seek to live according to your commandments. Help us to always strive to keep your commandments in everything we do. Help us also to find ways that we can set aside special time for God through the week and especially on Sunday. Bless our practice and keep us safe while having fun. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

The Blessing of This Team

Dear God, we thank you for the wonderful blessing of this team. Hear our prayers both now and always, helping us to understand that you know what is best for everyone and always hear us when we pray. Bless our team and each person here, that we may have a safe and fun practice and grow in our relationship with you. May we perform to the best of our ability and learn new skills. Hear our special intentions and bless our families, friends and teammates. Amen.

Mercy

Heavenly Father, you show us examples of great mercy throughout every generation. Let us follow the example of Christ, that we may show mercy and love to our brothers and sisters. Help us to follow the examples of great saints, who even though they were not perfect sought and received your mercy, allowing them to do great things through You. Bless our team that we might always remember to follow this example in our practice and competition, as well as in our school and daily lives. May we glorify God in all that we do. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Demonstrating Love

Lord, we rejoice in the love you showed us, even unto death on a cross. May we follow your example of love and return that love to you through our prayer and the way we treat others in this world, in particular our teammates, coaches and opponents. Help us to overcome difficulties that we face in relationships so that we can demonstrate this love through our words and actions each day. Bless our team this year that we may know this love among our teammates and coaches. Grant us the graces we need to accept and offer this love. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

A Prayer of Thanks

God, thank you for the many gifts that you have given us and all our friends on this team and in school. Thank you for our parents, teachers and coaches who help us to use our talents and gifts. Help us to constantly give thanks to You for all the blessings we have each day and help us to show this thanks by giving back to other people who are in need. Help us to find ways to help those in need in our schools, our families and our community. We ask that you bless us during practice this week. Amen.

A Prayer for Parents

Lord, we thank you especially for the mothers and fathers you have given us who teach us the faith and help us to know you. Thank you also for their sacrifice and hard work that allows us to go to school and to have fun playing on this team. Bless them in a special way this week. We ask you to help us to always be obedient to them and to show them our love. May we honor them through our hard work and joyful play. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Love Our Neighbor

Jesus, you taught us by your actions and words to love our neighbor and care always for those in need. Help us to care for our brothers and sisters in Christ and to show them your love in our own actions and words. Help us to treat others how we would want them to treat us. May we be good teammates and opponents this week in practices and our game. Bless our efforts and help us to do as you wish, Lord. Amen.

Keep Us Safe This Practice

Lord, we know that you watch over and protect us each day. Keep us safe during this practice and help us to know that you are always looking out for us, whether we realize it or not. Help our team to trust in you and seek you in all things. May we all have fun and get better in our sport during this practice. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

Using Our Gifts and Talents

Heavenly Father, you have given us each unique and special talents and gifts that we can share with others. Help us to understand how we can use these gifts to serve our family and friends. Help us to understand what skills you have given us on our team so that we can use these skills to serve our teammates. May you help us to have fun this week using the talents you have given us and to always be grateful for whatever skills you bless us with, understanding that all of us will have different talents we can use to serve others. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Giving of Ourselves

Lord, you teach us to feed the hungry and care for all those in need. Help us to follow your example and learn to give of ourselves to others both from our material goods and from our own service. May we be devoted to helping others in our home, our school and on this team. Bless our practices and game this week, keep us safe and help us to have fun by doing all things in Your name. Amen.

The Corporal Works of Mercy

Corporal Works of Mercy: The Corporal Works of Mercy are 7 specific ways in which we can help our "neighbors" by showing them God's love and mercy:

To feed the hungry;

To give drink to the thirsty;

To clothe the naked;

To shelter the homeless;

To visit the sick;

To visit the imprisoned; To bury the dead.

Father, we learn of Jesus healing the sick and you teach us the Corporal Works of Mercy so that we can live out the lessons of Christ in today's world. Help us to do this as a team through the ideas we have discussed and the actions we have planned.

May our compassion for others help us to bring Your love into the world. Grant that we may have a fun and safe week of practice & games and bless our efforts to show your mercy and love to the world. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

A Prayer for Sick Family Members or Friends

Father Damien of Molokai was a priest from Belgium (Europe) who lived in the 1800's. He was sent on a mission to Hawaii to help evangelize and care for those in need. After several years there, he made the decision to go to the island of Molokai and tend to a group of people there with leprosy. Leprosy affects people by causing lots of painful skin sores and weakening muscles. It can be caught by coming into contact with someone who has leprosy, so in many places in history people with the disease are outcast and made to live in groups away from most people. Like Jesus, Fr. Damien had compassion for these people and wanted to share the love of God with them. He built hospitals and cared for the sick, particularly the children. Eventually, Fr. Damien got leprosy himself and died. He taught many people about God and cared for many sick, just as Jesus taught.

Intentions: Ask for any special intentions from the kids for family or friends who are sick.

Heavenly Father, you teach us to care for the sick and gave us the example of St. Damien of Molokai and all the great saints who cared for those who were sick. We ask that you remember now those for whom we offer this prayer, all our family and friends who are sick. Help us to care for them as Jesus taught us. Bless our practice that we may be kept safe from injury and bless all those in our classes and on opposing teams that they may be healthy and safe this season. Amen.

On Miracles

Lord, we love you with all our heart. You worked great miracles during your life on earth and through your saints. Help us to believe and increase our faith through these miraculous events. Bless and protect all those who need our prayers or who might need a miracle. Teach us how to give our best effort and have fun during all our games and practices. Help us to pray often and to always seek to do your will. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

The Beatitudes: A Prayer for Athletes

The Beatitudes are the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1-10). Jesus teaches us that if we live according to the Beatitudes, we will live a happy Christian life. The Beatitudes fulfill God's promises made to Abraham and his descendants and describe the rewards that will be ours as loyal followers of Christ.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the clean in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus, you gave us the Beatitudes and commandments so that we might understand how you call us to live, speak and act. Bless our team and help us all to consider these beatitudes in our hearts, that they might affect how we act in practices and games. May we always understand our true reward is not in winning games or earning trophies, but in the heavenly kingdom. Grant us a fun practice today and help us to perform to the best of our ability. Amen.

A Prayer for the Intercession of St. Faustina

Father of Mercy, we thank you for the lessons of mercy and love which you have showed us through your son and the many saints who have followed you throughout the ages. Bless our team on this day and help us to be examples of your love and mercy whenever we can. Help us to learn how we can show mercy and follow you. We ask especially for the intercession of Saint Faustina. Make us joyful like Saint Faustina and help us to learn from her. Help us to always learn to know you better, Lord, in all that we do this week. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

Father of Mercy

Lord, we thank you for your great mercy and love for us. We thank you that we may be at this practice and participating with our friends in this game. Help us to forgive others as you forgive us and may we always be grateful for the times when you have showed us mercy and saved us from sin. Bless our practice with safety and fun today so that we can learn and work to the best of our abilities. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

In Thanksgiving for Practice

Dear God, you teach us to put you first each day, in everything that we do. Help us to put you first at home, at school and in practice. May we glorify you by trying our hardest in everything we do and giving thanks for your many blessings. Teach us how we can put you first in our lives by giving up things that aren't that important or by making sure we pray often. Bless us with a safe and fun practice, we pray. Amen.

A Prayer for Vocations

Lord, we ask that you bless all those who are discerning their vocations. This week we especially pray that all those God call to be priests and religious, that they will hear him calling them and respond to this call. We also pray for our priests that God will guide them and protect them in their ministry. Help us to listen to God and pray that he will help us when we are older and discerning our vocation. Bless our practices this week and keep us safe. Amen.

A Prayer for Parents

Heavenly Father, we thank you on this day especially for our parents. We thank you for all their hard work and all they do for us, especially driving us to practice and making sure we have fun. We pray that you may help us to listen to them and to help them by being good children. Bless also our practice that we may learn and grow as a child of God. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

Following God

Lord, help us each day to follow what you want us to do. Help us to listen to our parents, our teachers and our coaches so that we can learn to listen better to you. We pray that we can learn more about our own talents during this practice and we ask you to keep us safe and help us to have fun. Amen.

The Week of Practice Ahead

Heavenly Father, we ask that you watch over us during this week of practice and our upcoming games. We thank you for allowing us to be a part of this team with our friends, and we ask for the prayers of all the saints in heaven. We pray that as we practice and play this week that we will always do so in a way that helps lead others to God. Amen.

A Team Prayer for Justice

St. Paul proclaimed that “there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Grant us the courage to be an agent of peace on our sports team, welcoming our teammates as brother or sister rooted in Christ's love and justice for all. As a team, may we stand together in the tradition of St. Paul, but also modern heroes such as Martin Luther King, Jr. or athlete pioneers like Jackie Robinson and Wilma Rudolph, empowered by their example to eliminate the sins of discrimination and racism in our own thoughts, words and actions. As a team, let us seek unity and stand together, so that all forms of injustice will cease. Amen.

Loving Our Neighbor

Jesus, you taught us by your actions and words to love our neighbor and care always for those in need. Help us to care for our brothers and sisters in Christ and to show them your love in our own actions and words. Help us to treat others how we would want them to treat us. May we be good teammates and opponents this week in practices and our game. Bless our efforts and help us to do as you wish, Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

The Gift of Our Team

Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of this team and each of our teammates. Help us to understand that we are all made in the image of God and that you have given us special gifts to contribute to this team. We pray that we may use the gifts you have given us during this practice to benefit our team. Also help us to sacrifice ourselves for the good of the whole team. May we be good listeners so that we can learn and grow in this time together. We ask this through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

A Prayer Before Practice

Lord, we thank you for your great mercy and love for us. We thank you that we may be at this practice and participating with our friends in this game. Help us to forgive others as you forgive us and may we always be grateful for the times when you have showed us mercy and saved us from sin. Bless our practice with safety and fun today so that we can learn and work to the best of our abilities. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The Example of St. Dominic Savio

Lord, you give us the example of St. Dominic Savio as a child who demonstrated great holiness and love for his friends and family. Help us to be like him and to treat all our friends at school, our teammates and our families with great love and respect, always striving to lead others to heaven. May you help us to lead "extraordinary" lives of holiness so that we may glorify you in all that we do. Bless us in this practice and help us to learn how to become better athletes as well as better teammates, friends, brothers, sisters and children. Amen.

Putting on the Mind of Jesus

Scripture invites us to "Put on the mind of Jesus." (Phil 2:4). As we play today, help us Lord to consider what you would do in the situations we will face. Help us to act as you would, so that our goal is "No longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." (Gal 2:20). Amen. Alleluia!

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

Our Unique Talents

Heavenly Father, you have given us each unique and special talents and gifts that we can share with others. Help us to understand how we can use these gifts to serve our family and friends. Help us to understand what skills you have given us on our team so that we can use these skills to serve our teammates. May you help us to have fun this week using the talents you have given us and to always be grateful for whatever skills you bless us with, understanding that all of us will have different talents we can use to serve others. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

A Prayer for Healing

**First, ask for any special intentions from the kids for family or friends who are sick.*

Heavenly Father, you teach us to care for the sick and gave us the example many great saints who cared for those who were sick. We ask that you remember now those for whom we offer this prayer, all our family and friends who are sick. Help us to care for them as Jesus taught us. We thank you for our health, for the blessing of being here with the ability to run and play. Bless our practice that we may be kept safe from injury and bless all those in our classes and on opposing teams that they may be healthy and safe this season. Amen.

Christ Dwells Within Us

Lord, help us to remember that Christ dwells within and among each of us on our team and that we have a responsibility to be Christ for each other. St. Theresa of Avila reminds us that “Christ has no body now on earth but yours. No hands but yours, no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes, which look out with Jesus’ compassion to the world. Yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good. Yours are the hands with which He is to bless others now.” Help us Lord to see when our teammates are down and to walk over to them to provide encouragement. Remind us to high five each other as a sign of our friendship and to huddle together in solidarity and brotherhood/sisterhood to always play for God’s glory. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

Rejoice Always!

“Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” 1 Thes 5: 16-18.

Lord, show us the right way to rejoice in our play remembering to be humble when we are successful and to even rejoice in our defeat recognizing hardships can help us to improve and become better. We can and should give thanks for all that happens on our team: the good and the difficult and lift all our play up as a prayer to you. Amen.

God is Love

St. John's First Epistle tells us, “God is love and all who abide in love, abide in God.”

Today let us make Love the most important value of our team. Help us to truly care for each other in order to be the best team we can be. Help us to love each other in good times and most especially in challenging times. Love is patient and kind, it is not jealous or boastful. Help us to make love the foundation of our team's every practice and every game. Help us to love one another as you Lord love us perfectly and unconditionally. Amen.

The Body of Christ

Dear Lord, help us today to appreciate the many diverse gifts each member of our team is blessed with. Some of us are Jesus' hands, others, Jesus' eyes or ears. We need each other to share Jesus in His fullness throughout our team. If the body of Jesus were only eyes, how would we hear the cry of the poor? If the body of Jesus were only hands, how would we walk to those who need us? Help us to come together to recognize and appreciate each team member's unique gift to our team and to the world. Help us each to be open to new gifts of the spirit. Through our diverse gifts, we are stronger together. Pope John Paul II said “Remain in the attitude of constant and grateful availability for every gift that the Spirit wishes to pour into your hearts.” In your name we pray, Amen.

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

A Prayer for a New Season

Jesus, we thank you for bringing us together as a team in this new season. We pray that during all our practices and games this year that we can put you first and remember you in all that we do. Help us to be safe and to have fun this year. We ask this as we pray together the Glory Be prayer: Glory Be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, a world without end. Amen.

God Comes First

Dear God, you teach us to put you first each day, in everything that we do. Help us to put you first at home, at school and in our sport. May we glorify you by trying our hardest in everything we do and giving thanks for your many blessings. Teach us how we can put you first in our lives by giving up things that aren't that important or by making sure we pray often. We pray that you will bless our teammates, our coaches and the hard work we do here in practices and games. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

A Team Prayer for Vocations

Lord, we ask that you bless all those who are discerning their vocations. This week we especially pray that all those God call to be priests will hear him calling so that we can always have good priests in our parishes. We also pray for our priests, that God will guide them and protect them in their ministry. Help us to listen to God and pray that he will help us when we are older and discerning our vocation. Bless our practices this week and keep us safe. Amen.

Working Hard

God, we thank you for our practice this coming week and for all the abilities you have given us so that we can play sports. Help us to remember that God created each one of us in his image, so that everyone on the field - no matter who they are or how talented they are - is an image of God. Help us to love each other and work hard so that we can glorify God in all that we do this week. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

A Prayer Before a Game

Dear Lord,
As we face our opponents tonight,
may we play our hearts out and give 100% effort.
May we also be good sports to our opponents,
before, during and after the game.
Finally Lord,
we ask that you watch over us
during this game.
Give us the stamina to endure the game,
and empower us mentally to overcome
every challenge we will face.
Amen.

A Prayer Before a Game

Almighty God and Father, We ask your blessing on all who participate in today's activities. Thank you for bringing us together in your name. Watch over all who play today and all who made these games fun and enjoyable. Thank you for giving us the chance to teach our faith to others by our actions. In Jesus' name, Amen.

This prayer is said before every game in the Diocese of Brooklyn. Thanks to the Diocese of Brooklyn CYO for sharing.

A Prayer for Coaches

Mighty God, from the love between you and Christ flows forth the Holy Spirit. May we pray that it comes upon us and guides us each day in all that we do. We thank you for the gift of our parents, teachers and coaches as they too help lead us and teach us about the Trinity. We thank you for the hard work of our coaches and thank you for all the improvements we have made through the season. Bless this practice (or game) that we might have a safe and fun time growing in the skills you have given us.
Amen.

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

Intercessory Prayer for Teams

Leader: For our sports teams this season, we pray for safe play, a fair playing field and good fortune. We pray to the Lord.

Response: "Lord, build our team." (Use for all responses below.)

L: For focus on the field/court, help us to stay centered during our play and perform to the best of our abilities. We pray to the Lord. **Response.**

L: For fun on the field/court, help us to enjoy ourselves and remember that the act of play is meant to be fun. We pray to the Lord. **Response.**

L: For good team communication and camaraderie out on the field/court, help us to work well together as a group each time we are together. We pray to the Lord. **Response.**

L: For fairness of play, we pray that we accept our mistakes and play with a spirit of fair competition. We pray to the Lord. **Response.**

L: For the opportunity to play our sport, we thank you for the abilities you have given each athlete, as well as the chance to engage in recreation that we enjoy. We pray to the Lord. **Response.**

L: For the bodies, minds and spirits of each member of our team, help us to make decisions both on and off the field/court that promote health and give us strength. We pray to the Lord. **Response.**

L: For your presence among us Lord, help us to represent your spirit in our play. We pray to the Lord. **Response.**

L: For strength and agility, help us to play with skill and capability. We pray to the Lord. **Response.**

L: For leadership both on and off the field/court, help us to respect each team member's personalities and contributions to the team. We pray to the Lord. **Response.**

Lord, bless our team and draw us close to you through our experiences together. We ask all these things in your name. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

A Prayer Before a Game

Dear God, help us to play to the best of our abilities and to show good sportsmanship. Please let us be respectful and to remember it is just a game. Allow the players to be safe, to be fair and to have fun. We give thanks for the coaches, referees and families for their support and time. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Prayer written by students at All Saints Catholic School (2012).

For Our New Teammates and a New Season

Lord, thank you for all of us gathered here today. Thank you for our new teammates who we will play with this season, and for the coaches who will help us to learn this game and grow. As we begin this new season, We ask that you bless us. Keep us healthy and strong, help us to focus so that we can learn how to play (enter sport), help us to work hard so we can improve our skills with each practice, and Help us to have fun while doing all of this. Most importantly Lord, help us to follow you in everything that we do, and to always glorify you through our practice and play. We ask this through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

A Child's Prayer for Parents

Dear Lord! Fill our parents with blessings; enrich their souls with Your holy grace; Fill them with wisdom; inspire them to impart it to their children. May they ever walk in the way of Your commandments, and may we their children be their joy on earth and their crown of glory in heaven. Pray that together we may glorify you through this experience of sport; Give them the grace to watch faithfully from the sideline, fearing not injury nor failure, but enjoying this experience to the fullest. Finally, Lord God, grant that both our father and mother may attain to extreme old age and enjoy continuous health in mind and body. May they give you abundant thanks because you have bestowed upon them the great gift of parenthood. Amen.

Adopted from Children's Prayer for Their Parents (Catholic Online. www.catholic.org).

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

Father, Creator of All

Father, creator of all, you are the center of all life. Everything in this world points to you and leads us to you. Today we ask you for the grace to keep you at the center of our lives and the center of our sport team so that we can use you as the reference point of all our thoughts, words, and actions. Help us to get our individual selves out of the center of attention, and put you there. In serving you as individuals, we hope to give our best selves to all whom we encounter this day. In serving you as a team, we seek to give glory to your name through our play and our teamwork. Amen.

Giving Thanks

Lord, we thank you for the gift of this game in which we were able to participate. Thank you for the bodies that allow us to glorify You through our play. Thank you for the gift of competition, for our opponents, officials, coaches and fans. Thank you for our parents who support us and those who could not be here today. We thank you for our health and pray for those who may have been injured today. Help us to learn from our mistakes today as well as our successes, that win or lose we may take this and all contests as an opportunity to grow physically and mentally. Help us to grow spiritually through our giving of ourselves to this team and our teammates. May we always be humble in victory and gracious in defeat, asking that Your will be done at all times. Finally, be with us as we go forth to guide us and protect our families. We ask this in Jesus name. Amen.

The Fruit of Prayer

"The fruit of silence is prayer. The fruit of prayer is faith. The fruit of faith is love. The fruit of love is service. The fruit of service is peace." Dear Lord, help us as a team to pray together so that we grow in our faith as we learn to love and serve each other on our team to feel your peace in our hearts and in our lives. Amen.

The above quote/prayer is from Saint Teresa of Calcutta, better known as Mother Theresa.

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

Run So as to Win

Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Well, I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air; but I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9: 24-27)

Heavenly Father,
As Saint Paul uses sport to call us to a greater example of faith,
We too seek to win our race while seeking the imperishable victory of eternal life.
Help us to work diligently to achieve our goals on this earth,
But never to forget that our ultimate goal lies in heaven.
May the decisions we make on our team and in our life
Reflect the glory of God as we seek to fulfill His will.
With this in mind, help us to focus on the task at hand,
To exercise self-control, and to give our full effort.
That in this way, we too may win the prize,
Both here and when our race is done.
Amen.

Steadfast and Determined

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of our team and this game we play together. May we be steadfast in working toward our goals and determined in our effort to grow together through this journey. Grant us the grace we need to be good teammates, that our contributions to this team may make others better and that the experience may be more fruitful because of our participation. Give us the courage to sacrifice for the good of the team when necessary and the wisdom to know when to do so. May we follow the example of your son Jesus as we interact with each other every day. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

Every Step of the Way

Dear Lord, we thank you for the gift of this team and the journey we are about to embark upon. As we begin this season, we ask that you be with us every step of the way. Bless our practice and games and grant us protection from injury. Grant us focus and determination in our effort to improve. Keep us humble in our success and lift us up when we fall. Help us to grow as individuals, as teammates and as friends. Most importantly, may we glorify you in all that we do and remember to have fun playing this game you have given us. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Servant Leadership

Lord, as we discern the meaning of our call to servant leadership, help us recognize the ways you seek to minister through our lives. Inspired by the knowledge of your abiding presence, may we have the courage to reach out and support one another, to stand firm in what is true, to decrease when others should increase, and to lead with vision and compassion, as faithful followers of Jesus, your Son. We make this prayer to you in His name. Amen.

Imitating Christ as Servant

Lord God, you call us to live life in all its fullness, following the path set out by Jesus your Son. As we reflect on Jesus' leadership as Servant, we ask you to deepen our desire to imitate his example. May our exercise of the unique gifts you have given each of us be a faithful reflection of Jesus' presence in our collective lives. Help us to exercise our gifts for the good with classmates, teammates, teachers, coaches, parents, competitors and our school community. We make this prayer to you through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

A Prayer for the Servant Leader

"Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant ... just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve." ~ Matthew 20

Jesus in your example, may we seek to truly understand what it means to be a "Servant Leader." We are called to be kind, helpful, supportive and fair in our relationships with our teammates, coaches, opponents and officials. Let us commit to cooperate fairly, to communicate kindly and to challenge gently with the goal of serving one another in love. Amen.

Building Your Kingdom on Earth

Lord Jesus, lead us in building your Kingdom here on earth, especially within our team. Help us to look beyond the everyday things and the struggles to see how everything comes together to bring us closer to you, each other, and ourselves. Help us take advantage of opportunities to dive more deeply into the beauty of life through our sport. May we appreciate and use more fully our senses of hearing, seeing and touching to be better athletes and closer teammates. Striving together as a team, we can find the peace and wholeness that represents your Kingdom. Amen.

St. Sebastian

Dear Commander at the Roman Emperor's court, you chose to be also a soldier of Christ and dared to spread faith in the King of Kings, for which you were condemned to die. Your body, however, proved athletically strong and the executing arrows extremely weak. So another means to kill you was chose and you gave your life to the Lord. May Soldiers and Athletes be always as strong in their faith as their Patron Saint so clearly has been. Intercess for us we pray, that our faith may imitate yours and that God may protect us as we seek to use the gifts He has given us to glorify Him this day. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

A Prayer for the Season Ahead

Loving God,
You give each of us special gifts and
You call us to serve You and one another in particular ways.
Help us to do the very best we can sharing our talents and skills.
Bless our team and season.
When we have the opportunity to excel,
encourage us toward excellence in Heart, Mind and Body.
When challenges and obstacles come our way,
remind us to Fulfill our responsibilities and commitment to TEAM.
Help us, Loving God, to always do our best at whatever we do.
We pray this in the name of Jesus, our Lord.
Amen.

Tim Boyle, Athletic Director, Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception Oldenburg, IN

Gathering in Prayer

Lord Jesus,
We welcome Your presence here among us and In our community of (Insert School/League Name).
Today, we gather together to represent our School/Church.
Share with us Your Spirit of peace and love for one another.
Bless us with a team spirit of good will,
both for ourselves And the team we face in the game.
Help us to be the best we can possibly be,
To strive to play fairly and well.
We ask this in Your name, Lord Jesus.
Amen.

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

A Prayer of Release

Dear Lord,
Please give us a faith that expects greater things.
Whatever we do, let us give it our best.
Anxious in nothing, at peace with the promise,
that when we've done all we can,
You'll take care of the rest.
Amen.

Mike Zelenka, Principal, Incarnation Catholic School Tampa, FL

May the Lord Bless You and Keep You

May the Lord bless you and keep you;
May God's courage fill your hearts,
And God's strength be in your legs.
May God's right arm be upon you,
And God's shoulder be at your back.
May God's passion inflame your spirit,
And the dignity of God's presence guide your play
And stem your temper;
This day, may God's enduring fortitude
Raise you up to be men/women
Who are strong, noble and wise.
May the blessing of Almighty God descend upon you, The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Used with Permission by Fr. Brian Cavanaugh, T.O.R., Chaplain for Franciscan University Athletics, "Apple Seeds"® <http://www.appleseeds.org>

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

A Communal Response Team Prayer

Leader: We pray for the strength and courage to perform to the best of our abilities this evening.

Response: Lord, our hearts are on fire for you.

L: We pray that everyone is safe and free from injury tonight and always.

Response.

L: We pray that you inspire us to live for you with greater fervor. **Response.**

Response.

L: We pray that you will make us like diamonds so that we may shine for you.

Response.

Leader: May we all now join in the Lord's Prayer...

Our Father,

Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name;

Thy Kingdom come,

Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Amen.

Mike Zelenka, Principal, Incarnation Catholic School Tampa, FL

Prayer to Play Fair in the Game of Life

Dear Lord, in the struggle that goes on through life We ask for a field that is fair, A chance that is equal with all the strife, The courage to strive and to dare; And if we should win, let it be by the code, With our faith and our honor held high; And if we should lose, let us stand by the road and cheer as the winners go by. Amen.

Prayer Attributed to Legendary Notre Dame Football Coach, Knute Rockne

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

Prayer Before a Game

Heavenly Father,
We thank you for this day,
for these two teams,
For the chance to study,
To understand the world around us a little better,
For the health to be here,
For the thrill of a sporting event,
And for individuals leaning to play as a team.
Grant that we not take days like this for granted.
Give us the grace to play our best, to be a good sport,
Win or lose, and to honor You with our efforts.
Amen.

Blessings on a Game

Father in Heaven, we ask Your blessing on the game we are about to play. Give each one of us the courage to play the game in a manner, which by our words and our actions, is pleasing to You. Let us enter into the competition in a spirit of sportsmanship And with respect for members of the opposing team. We ask you Father, to bless each one of us And especially the coaches, officials and players. Keep us under the protection of Your Son, Jesus Christ, And help us to be aware of His presence with us in the game. Amen.

Tim Boyle, Athletic Director, Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception Oldenburg, IN

Reflecting Your Presence

Lord Jesus, you tell us that whenever two or more are gathered In Your name, You are present in their midst. And so we are confident that as we lift up our thoughts to You, You are indeed with us. Help all we do with this event to reflect Your presence among us and within us. May all our actions give glory to Your name and promote peace and love to the world. We pray this in Your most holy name. Amen.

Tim Boyle, Athletic Director, Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception Oldenburg, IN

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

A Prayer for Protection

Protecting God, as we enter into this competition, we pray for our protection and for the protection of those with whom we will compete. Help us to play with all our strength and with the spirit of good sportsmanship. Help us to remember that we are all Your children, no matter what uniform we wear. When we look back on this competition, let us see that we committed ourselves fully to the game and emerged with dignity and respect for our competition. Amen.

Tim Boyle, Athletic Director, Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception Oldenburg, IN

A Sportsmanship Prayer

Lord God, our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this opportunity to gather together this afternoon/evening in competition. We ask that all of those involved today/tonight may conduct themselves in a God-pleasing manner and show good sportsmanship despite the outcome. Lord, we thank you for the gifts and abilities you have blessed these athletes with, and we pray that they may use them to glorify You. We ask that all involved in today's/tonight's game may be kept free from injuries and that You will be with us as we leave this place today/tonight. All this we pray in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

A Prayer for Athletes

“Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” 1 Thes 5: 16-18. Lord, show us the right way to rejoice in our play remembering to be humble when we are successful and to even rejoice in our defeat recognizing hardships can help us to improve and become better. We can and should give thanks for all that happens on our team: the good and the difficult and lift all our play up as a prayer to you. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

A Prayer for Prudence

St. Irenaeus said, "The glory of God is people fully alive." A fully alive person has knowledge of what is true, good and beautiful. A fully alive person has the freedom to choose the right path and does what they ought to do with joy. The fully alive person is a person of virtue. There are four cardinal virtues which are the virtues that enable us to live as a moral person.

Help us Lord today to develop the Cardinal Virtue of Prudence within ourselves and on our team. Dear God, we ask for your grace to work on developing the Cardinal Virtue of Prudence. In sport there are many opportunities for decisions. As a Christian athlete, help us to make the right decisions even when our coach or the officials are not looking. This means never seeking an unfair advantage, but playing with integrity and honesty at all times. In your name we pray to grow in the virtue of prudence while playing for the glory of God. Amen.

A Prayer for Temperance

St. Irenaeus said, "The glory of God is people fully alive." A fully alive person has knowledge of what is true, good and beautiful. A fully alive person has the freedom to choose the right path and does what they ought to do with joy. The fully alive person is a person of virtue. There are four cardinal virtues which are the virtues that enable us to live as a moral person.

Help us Lord today to develop that Cardinal Virtue of Temperance within ourselves and on our team. Dear God, we ask for your grace to work on developing the Cardinal Virtue of Temperance. Temperance means putting everything in the proper perspective. Help us to remember we are playing a game that results in victories and defeats. Both outcomes can help us to develop into improved athletes and holy people living your will in our lives. Help us to keep the game in perspective as we seek to grow in the virtue of temperance while playing for the glory of God. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

A Prayer for Justice

St. Irenaeus said, "The glory of God is people fully alive." A fully alive person has knowledge of what is true, good and beautiful. A fully alive person has the freedom to choose the right path and does what they ought to do with joy. The fully alive person is a person of virtue. There are four cardinal virtues which are the virtues that enable us to live as a moral person.

Help us Lord today to develop the Cardinal Virtue of Justice within ourselves and on our team. Dear God, we ask for your grace to work on developing the Cardinal Virtue of Justice. Justice in the sport world means respect for ourselves, our teammates, our coaches, our opponents, the officials. Jesus you treated every person with deep dignity as a holy creation made in the image and likeness of God. Help us to follow your model of self-respect and respect for others as we seek to do your will in our sporting lives. In your name we pray to grow in justice while playing for the glory of God. Amen.

A Prayer for Fortitude

St. Irenaeus said, "The glory of God is people fully alive." A fully alive person has knowledge of what is true, good and beautiful. A fully alive person has the freedom to choose the right path and does what they ought to do with joy. The fully alive person is a person of virtue. There are four cardinal virtues which are the virtues that enable us to live as a moral person.

Help us Lord today to focus on and develop the Cardinal Virtue of Fortitude within ourselves and on our team. Dear God, we ask for your grace to work on developing the Cardinal Virtue of Fortitude. Help us to work hard; to never give up even while knowing it is very human to be tempted to quit. Help us to persevere toward reaching our goals, especially when they seem so far away. Most of all Lord, help us to have courage at all times to be persistent in pursuing our goals with determination. In your name we pray to grow in fortitude while playing for the glory of God. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

A Prayer for Setting Goals

Dear God, help our team to set goals that are challenging and that help us become stronger, faster and more precise. Help us to build positive relationships with all our team members, trust with our coaches and respect for officials. Help us to take ownership of our team as we become responsible for our training and take full responsibility for our performance. Finally, help us Lord to always strive with every ounce of our energy to put forth our best effort in all practices and competitions. When we strive to reach our goals, have strong relationships on our team and take responsibility for our actions, we will win as a team. In Christ's name, we pray, Amen.

Playing for the Glory of God

Dear God, you gift us with the privilege of playing sport. Thank you for our arms that enable us to throw; our legs that allow us to run fast; our mouths to communicate effectively with our teammates, our hearts to play with full energy and our spirit to play with enthusiasm. Help us to honor the game with a deep sense of gratitude for the opportunity to play. Help us remember to always play with a mindfulness of your presence Lord. Help us to play for the Greater Glory of God.

Full team chant: "For the Greater Glory of God." Amen.

The Emotions of Sport

Dear Lord, thank you for the gift of playing sports. Sports evoke such deep emotions within us: highs and lows; ups and downs; joy and pain; exhilaration and devastation; pride and fear. We ask that you help us appreciate all of these feelings, even the difficult ones. Support us in managing our emotions appropriately, to be humble in success and calm in failure knowing that through the storm of challenging experiences, we can become stronger athletes and better people as long as we stay rooted in you, Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

Striving for Our Best

God our Father,
You have created us
to strive for the best.
Grant to all athletes, coaches, and fans,
strength to pursue excellence
during this event.
We pray for the safety of these athletes;
Protect them from injury and harm.
And finally, we pray for your grace,
that you would provide us
with the endurance to pursue our heavenly prize:
eternal life in Your Son.
Amen.

Used with Permission by David Bennett, ChurchYear.Net
<http://www.churchyear.net/prayer/prayerbeforeasportsgame.html>

A Prayer Before a Game

Almighty God, You are the source of all our gifts and talents. As participants in (Insert Name) sports, please help us to represent You as members of the Body of Christ, in our attitudes, competition and actions. Protect us from all injuries and give us the strength to play our best using sound strategies in a fun, fair and competitive way. Help us to respect all that are here today; Parents, fans, coaches, teammates, opponents and officials. Guide the coaches and officials to aid us in playing in a Christ-like manner. Amen.

Prayer Courtesy Gary Roney

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

Striving for Our Best

God our Father, You have created us to strive for the best. Grant to all athletes, coaches, and fans, strength to pursue excellence during this event. We pray for the safety of these athletes; Protect them from injury and harm. And finally, we pray for your grace, that you would provide us with the endurance to pursue our heavenly prize: eternal life in Your Son. Amen.

Used with Permission by David Bennett, ChurchYear.Net
<http://www.churchyear.net/prayer/prayerbeforeasportsgame.html>

God Has Created This Day

God has created this day for ...
Gain not loss,
Success not failure,
Positive action not negative thought.
Lord, inspire us with the desire for greatness,
To wisely use the gifts and talents you
Have so generously given us.
They are tools to be used,
Not treasures to be stored.
Create in these athletes:
The RIGHT ATTITUDE to excel
In the classroom and in life. The attitude that says
“I can reach deeper inside myself.”
The FIRM BELIEF in God, themselves, their families,
And their teammates,
To have great expectations for the future.
The ENDURING COMMITMENT to persevere,
To never quit no matter what the odds.
Amen.

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PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

A Pre-Game Prayer for Champions

Please bless today's game, our opponent, our team, and all watching our play. Thank you for the opportunity to compete and bring out the best in each other. May we play hard and fair. Please keep everyone safe from injury and harm. We pray in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

A Post-Game Prayer for Champions

Thank you, Lord, for the chance to compete and use our talents through sports. Remind us that we are called to give our best and to finish the race while caring for others along the way. We pray in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Play Like a Champion Today Coaches Manual, University of Notre Dame

Playing in a Christ-Like Manner

Dear Lord, You have blessed us with many gifts and talents. We thank you especially for the ability to participate in sports today. Help us to play in a Christ-like manner. Help us to play in a way that fosters good will and teamwork. Help us to play to the best of our abilities. Win or lose, we hope to have fun, make friends and celebrate life. Amen.

*Composed by and Used with Permission by: Ron Bowes, Asst. Superintendent
Diocese of Pittsburgh Catholic Sports*

A Prayer for Athletes

God our Father, help us to put forth our best effort, to represent our school with class, to respect our opponents, and to grow as disciples of your Son, Jesus. Keep us safe from injury and harm through the intercession of Our Lady, the mother of your Son and our mother, too. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Saint Sebastian, Pray for us! Amen.

*Composed by and Used with Permission by: Monsignor Michael Heintz, Chaplain
Inner City Catholic League, South Bend, IN*

PRAYERS FOR TEAMS

A Daily Prayer for Champions

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for the gift of sports, which provide joy for athletes, coaches, parents and fans through so many different experiences. Thank you for the opportunity to exercise our minds and bodies in the pursuit of excellence, no matter our age or ability. Thank you for the way that sports draw together men and women across our world to share in competition, teamwork and fun.

We pray today that we may have the graces to understand sports through the lens of our faith. That we may understand that while it is “just a game”, it can also be so much more than that when offered back to You.

Grant that for athletes of all ages, sports may be an activity that builds fortitude; that by working toward a goal we may strengthen our courage and build unshakable trust that with God we can do all things.

Grant that in both victory and in defeat we may all learn something about ourselves and become more the person that God created us to be.

Grant that sports may help us to grow in hope. That through our belief in the improbable on the fields or courts, we may also grow in our belief in a God with whom hope in our daily struggles is never lost.

Grant that from our youngest to our oldest, sports may be something that brings our communities together, that forms bonds between individuals and families and strengthens relationships.

Father, help us to see that you created all things for good and to recognize the ways in which sports can indeed manifest that good. May we use sports as a way to draw closer to you and may you give us the graces we need to do so.

Amen.

A Team Prayer for Coaches

God, our Father, We pray for our coaches. We thank you for their unselfish dedication to the team. We thank you for the hours they have dedicated to our team, And for the honor they bring to our school By their leadership and commitment. Lord God, bless our coaches in the name of Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Tim Boyle, Athletic Director, Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception, Oldenburg, IN

PRAYERS FOR COACHES



A Coach's Prayer

Dear God, As the kids put on their gym clothes and prepare for today's practice, let us put on the belt of justice and faithfulness. Let us be champions of the children we coach today. Let them see justice and kindness. Help our gym to be a place where all children feel welcome and included. Let it be a place where all children can meet without fear of being left out or bullied. Let our gym be a place where children look after each other and feel safe and encouraged. Let our gym be a place where our children grow strong and compete fiercely, like lions , but each with warmth and acceptance like lambs. Amen.

The Ministry of Coaching

Gracious God, I thank you for calling me to the ministry of coaching. Help me to answer that call with a generous spirit. Enable me to be a good coach, skilled, informed, fair-minded and caring. Let me see beyond the rules of sports and capture their spirit. Grant us the wisdom to see that athletics are not only about healthy bodies but healthy minds, that sports are not only about victory but enjoyment, that competition is not only about winning but building community. Let the example of Christ inspire and guide my coaching so that I never lose sight of the dignity and worth of each and every person whom I coach. Help me to follow that example by coaching not only by instruction but by encouragement and love. Lord, keep me mindful of Your presence in my life and teach me and my athletes to be grateful for your many blessings. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR COACHES

A St. Sebastian Prayer

St. Sebastian, watch over these athletes during the game today. We ask God to help the athletes to have fun, play hard and do their best. Teach the athletes to be kind and fair to the opponents and to play with good sportsmanship. As in athletics may these athletes strive diligently and tirelessly to win the game of life and score the final goal of heaven. Amen

Through My Words and Actions

Lord, help me to be for these children a model of faith and love. Through my words and actions, may I show them what it means to be a Christian and how to live that faith through a participation in sports. May they know love through my caring for them personally and taking the time to help them grow in skill and virtue. Help me to be truly humble, that I might not be tempted by the pressure to win or to coach for my own sake, but always strive to do what is best for those you have entrusted to my care. Grant me the graces I need to help each of these children reach their absolute best in sport and in life, and give me the strength to remain steadfast in this commitment through the days and weeks to come. Amen.

Imitating St. Joseph

Dear God, you give us the example of Saint Joseph as a leader and a protector of the Holy Family, a man of great love and faith to whom you entrusted your son Jesus. I thank you for the gift of these athletes who you have entrusted to my care as a coach. I know that you created them in your image and I thank you for the gifts that each of them bring to this team. I pray that I may imitate the leadership of Saint Joseph as a coach, especially in his faithfulness to your will. May I always lead athletes closer to you as I help them to grow mentally, physically and spiritually on our team. I ask for the intercession of Saint Joseph in our season and pray that you will bless our team now and in the weeks to come. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR COACHES

Coaching for God

Lord, when I pick up the whistle, lace up my shoes and walk out of the locker room, I coach for You alone. There is no turning back. In every victory and every defeat, I celebrate Your goodness and greatness. The way I coach demonstrates my love for You. I stand for the cross and declare my loyalty to You. I coach for You. My energy and enthusiasm come from the Holy Spirit. My purpose and passion come from above. Through the strain and struggle, I never give up or give in. The champion inside of me is Jesus who gives me strength. Winning is honoring You in all I do. I coach for You. When I coach, I feel Your pleasure. My heart longs for Your applause alone. All of my abilities are from You. I am under Your authority as my Ultimate Coach. I will respect and honor all competitors, coaches, and officials. I compete by all of the rules. I coach for You. My coaching is my offering to my Savior. I am Your warrior in the heat of battle. I am humble in victory and gracious in defeat. I coach to serve You, my athletes, and our opponents. My words bring healing and refreshment that inspire and motivate. I speak words of life. I coach for You. Success isn't a winning program, but seeing the power of Christ transform the lives of my athletes. Victory is not the scoreboard, but for my athletes to become more like You. Bless my athletes in great ways and increase their faith and confidence. I coach for You. In the name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.

Prayer courtesy the Fellowship of Christian Athletes at <http://fcaresources.com>

Thank You for the Gift of Coaching

Heavenly Father,

I thank you for the privilege of coaching this team.

Thank you for the gift of each player and the gifts you have given them.

Thank you for all that these children contribute to this team.

Watch over this team as they compete,

Keep them safe and grant them courage and strength to complete the tasks required of them. May I give my best effort as a coach, as they give their best effort in competition.

Amen.

PRAYERS FOR COACHES

Guide Me As I Coach

Dear Lord,
Guide me as I try to coach this team,
to build each player's character
and boost their self-esteem.
May I keep an even temper,
and remember that it's just a game.
Let me not have favorite players,
but treat them all the same.
Grant me patience with them as I praise or correct.
Remembering that I must work,
to earn each one's respect.
Lord, whether we may win or lose,
may all who watch us see,
the kind of coach at every game,
that You would have me be.
Amen.

Prayer found online at lpgcards.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/43336.jpg

Bless Me in My Role as Coach

Lord, I thank you for the gift of this team. For each child and their unique personalities, for the gifts and talents that each of them bring to this team, and for the opportunity to spend time with them during practices and games. I ask you to bless me in my role as a coach. I pray that I may have the grace and wisdom I need to provide for each child what they need to grow. That through my teaching each of these children may reach their potential and maximize the gifts that you have given them. May I be slow to anger in my coaching, and quick to be positive and encouraging. May I coach in a way that each child knows how much I care, that they may truly enjoy the experience of this team, finding great joy in practices and games. Be with me Lord as I coach this team. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR COACHES

Thank You for These Athletes

Thank you Lord for all the gifts that coaching young people provides to me. Thank you for the energy and joy of young athletes as they learn and grow as part of my team. When my team has success, help me to not boast about our accomplishments in your service. Help me to remember that all good we do is due to your help, grace, and inspiration. Let us be aware of your assistance on our team in providing us with desire, drive, courage, and hope. Help me to be at peace with my team and my coaching, dedicating all I do and all our team does to play for God's glory. Amen.

A Coach's Prayer

God, grant me the insight to see the potential in every player; patience to encourage improvement; and character to always set a winning example. May those I coach always see you in my life, and be brought closer to you through me. In your precious name, I pray. Amen.

A Coach's Prayer of Thanksgiving

Lord, thank you for this opportunity to coach these children. Thank you for bestowing on me this great responsibility, and for entrusting your children to me. May I never lose sight of the blessing this is, nor take for granted the time I spend with them. Help me to recognize the role I have, in shaping them not just as athletes, but as children of God. Under my care, may they grow in skill, but also in faith and virtue. Father in Heaven, grant that I may have a positive and grateful attitude in all my work with these children. May my words and actions convey how much I care. I ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR COACHES

A Leader's Prayer

Leadership is difficult to define.

Lord, let us be the ones to define it with justice.

Leadership is like a handful of water.

Lord, let us be the people to share it with those who thirst.

Leadership is not about watching and correcting.

Lord, let us remember it is about listening and connecting.

Leadership is not about telling people what to do.

Lord, let us find and provide what people need.

Leadership is less about the love of power

And more about the power of love.

Lord, let us be affirmed by the servant leadership we witness in your son, Jesus.

Let our greatest passion be compassion,

Our greatest strength love,

Our greatest victory, the reward of peace.

In leading, let us never fail to follow You, and in loving, let us never fail to love as you did. Amen.

Thanks to the Diocese of Brooklyn CYO for sharing this prayer!

Called to Coach

Father in Heaven, you have entrusted to my care the souls of these young (men/women, boys/girls) and called me to coach them. Grant that I may have the graces I need to fulfill Your Will. I pray that my attitude and actions may always reflect Your love and care, that in all things our team may glorify You. May I have the courage to always put the development of each individual over short-term success, That they may grow physically, mentally and spiritually under my care. Help me to make this an experience that is fun and brings joy, while building up virtue and developing skill. Be with me in each moment of this journey, I pray. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR COACHES

Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is frustration, let me show patience.
Where there is confusion, clarity.
Where there is struggle, support.
Where there is success, celebration.
Where there is doubt, faith.
And where there is hurt, love.
Oh Divine Masters, grant that I may
Greet each athlete as a child of God,
Find joy and fun in my relationship with them,
And seek to learn as much as I coach, model and teach.
Amen.

Prayer submitted by Anne Stricherz, St. Ignatius, CA Coach

A Coach's Prayer for Young Athletes

Heavenly Father, be with my young athletes as they test their physical skills.
Let them play well, but fairly.
Let competition make them strong, but never hostile.
Grant them the strength to best their opponent, and lead them to always help the opponent up.
Grant them moments to rejoice, but not in the adversity of others.
Help them stay safe from injury, both physical and emotional.
Help them to learn something that matters once the game is over.
Help them remember that sports are just games.
If they know victory, allow them to be happy.
If they are denied, keep them from envy.
If through athletics, they set an example, let it be a good one.
In the name of Your Son, Jesus. Amen.

Used with permission by Les Wall

<http://chirho.wordpress.com/2007/11/10/prayer-for-young-athletes/>

PRAYERS FOR COACHES

Building Character

Heavenly Father, guide me as I try to coach my team to build each player's character and boost their self-esteem. May I keep an even temper and remember it's a game; let me not have favorite players, but treat them all the same. Grant me patient wisdom as I praise them or correct ...Remembering that I must work to earn each one's respect. Lord, whether we may win or lose, may all who are watching see the kind of coach at every game that you would have me be. Amen.

Used with Permission: Inner-City Catholic League, South Bend, IN

For Your Glory

Lord, bless these young athletes who you have entrusted to my care. I pray that through the hard work of practice and competition, that they may develop in physical skill, mental strength, and as teammates and friends. Most all, I pray that through the sports in which we participate, they may grow closer to You, Recognizing that all they are given is a gift and that all we do is for Your Glory. May you keep them healthy in mind, body and soul, and help them to grow in both victory and defeat. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

Help Me to Serve

Lord, thank you for the gift of the young athletes you have entrusted to my care. Grant that I may have the graces necessary to help them develop physically, mentally and spiritually. May they experience the joy of play and competition in the practice and games ahead.

Help me to teach them so that individual and team will maximize the gifts God has given them. May our team always exhibit sportsmanship consistent with our Christian values and may we strive to glorify You in all that we do.

Help me to set a positive example as a coach. May I always seek to serve Christ and His children through this role of Coach Minister.

Amen.

PRAYERS FOR COACHES

Inspired By Your Example

My Lord Jesus Christ,
Inspire me by your example to coach in a Christ-like way.
Help me to serve these children whom you have allowed me to lead, just as you served your disciples.
Help me to demonstrate love for each child on my team, just as you loved all who followed you.
Help me to teach these children not just to how to play and compete, but how to live.
Grant that I may be patient in developing the talents of each child,
Encouraging in failure or defeat,
Hopeful in the face of adversity,
And faithful in passing on the faith through all that we do.
Lord, you created each man and woman in Your image. May I always remember that I am called to be as Christ to those I lead and grant me the graces I need to coach as You desire. Amen.

Inspire My Coaching

O' gracious God, I thank you for calling me to the ministry of coaching. Help me to answer that call with a generous heart. Enable me to be a good coach, skilled, informed, fair-minded and caring. Let me see beyond the rules of sports and catch their spirit. Grant me the wisdom to see that athletics are not only about healthy bodies but healthy minds, that sports are not only about victory but enjoyment, that competition is not only about winning but building community.
Let the mind of Christ inspire and guide my coaching so that I never lose sight of the dignity and worth of each and every person whom I coach. Help me to follow the example of Christ who coached not only by instruction but by encouragement and love. Finally, dear Lord, teach me and the athletes whom I coach to be grateful for your many blessings.
I make this prayer through Jesus Christ, Our Lord.
Amen.

Prayer by Jerry Creedon, Courtesy our Partners at Cathedral High School in Hamilton, ON

PRAYERS FOR SPORTS PARENTS



A Sports Parent's Prayer

God, I thank you for the wonderful blessing it is to watch my children play sports. Thank you for the smile that it brings to their face and for the ways in which sports help them to grow in virtue and skill. I ask that as they participate you protect them from injury and harm and bless them with the grace to reach their full potential. Bless their coaches that they may embrace their role and have the courage to always do what is right for the children you have entrusted to their care. Grant all sports parents the graces we need to be supportive and to have perspective. May we seek not our own will for our child, but yours, and in doing so be freed to let them enjoy this experience no matter the result. May each of us - child, coach and parent - glorify you through our actions and come to know you better through this experience. I ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Give Me Eyes to See You

Lord, give me the eyes to see you in my children, your heart to love them and your gentleness to help them grow. Give me your wisdom to guide them and your strength when I need to let them go. Amen.

Give Me Eyes to See You

Lord, thank you for the gift of my children and for the opportunity they have to participate in sports. Thank you for the ways in which these sports help them to grow in faith and virtue as well as skill. Thank you for the friends they make, and the community they share in. Thank you for their physical growth, for the gift of play and for their health. Thank you for the joy that playing these games brings to these children, and the ways in which they glorify you through their play. Thank you also for the joy that it brings to me to watch them experience this play and to see them grow and develop. In Jesus Name I Pray, Amen.

PRAYERS FOR PARENTS

Slow Me Down, Lord!

Slow me down, Lord!
Ease the pounding of my heart
By the quieting of my mind.
Steady my harried pace
With a vision of the eternal reach of time.
Give me,
Amidst the confusion of my day,
The calmness of the everlasting hills
Break the tensions of my nerves
With the soothing music of the singing streams
That live in my memory,
Help me to know
The magical restoring power of sleep.
Teach me the art of slowing down to look at a flower;
To chat with an old friend or make a new one;
To pat a stray dog;
To watch a spider build a web;
To smile at a child;
Or to read a few lines from a good book.
Remind me each day
That the race is not always to the swift;
That there is more to life than increasing its speed.
Let me look upward
Into the branches of the towering oak
And know that it grew slowly and well.
Slow me down, Lord,
And inspire me to send my roots deep
Into the soil of life's enduring values
That I may grow toward the stars
Of my greater destiny.

By William A. Peterson

PRAYERS FOR PARENTS

Praise in Winter

Dear Lord, I praise you for the dormancy of wintertime. May I use these days to reflect upon my many blessings, namely the incredible gift of my children.

Guide me Lord in being a positive role model for my children. In particular help me to model respectful relationships within the sport arena. Help me to encourage all the athletes on my child's team and the other team; remind me to be respectful of the officials; guide me in welcoming our opponents to the contest.

Lord, you are within me and within all around me. Give me the grace to be kind, loving and giving to all those in the athletic arena as I live and model justice for my child athlete. Amen.

In Thanksgiving for the Gift of Sport

Dear Lord, thank you for the gift of sport in our family's life. May we always be grateful for the opportunity our children have to be physically active and have a team experience to learn and grow from. Help me have the Fortitude to guide my child in setting Goals that develop physical skills as well as help my child to be a better person through sport. I pray that I have a deep sense of Justice in supporting the entire team that they may be safe and successful in their play while forming close Relationships with each other. Help me to have the Prudence to support my child as s/he has challenges and failures, allowing my child the Ownership to work through these circumstances independently with my love and your guidance Lord. Finally, help me to have Temperance in keeping sports in the proper perspective by honoring the game and my child's play as praise for our Creator. Amen.

A Blessing Before a Game

Bless this child, Lord, as he/she enters this competition. Defend him/her against injury and send your Spirit to guide him/her In playing his/her best. Strengthen his/her faith in your constant presence with us in both success and failure. Bring the team victory in praise of your glory, now and forever Amen!

<http://blaa.bishopleiboldeagles.com/Forms/Prayer%20Guide.pdf>

PRAYERS FOR PARENTS

A Sports Dad's Prayer

Thank you Father, for the gift of my son/daughter(s),
and the opportunity to watch them play these games they love.
May I always be aware of the important role I play in these activities.
May I be for them a source of support, to lend an ear when they need to talk,
to encourage them when things are difficult, or simply to be their biggest fan.
Grant that I may have the grace to be for them a source of wisdom and strength,
a positive example and a welcomed face in the crowd.
More than that, grant that I might play with them as often as I can,
understanding that our time together is one of your greatest gifts.
Father in Heaven, You give us the greatest example of what it means to be a father.
May I imitate this for my own children, and through support of their athletic
endeavors, help them always to grow closer to you. Amen.

A Sports Mom's Prayer

Lord, help me to remember I'm having fun ---
The chaos, the rushing, the meals on the run.
Don't let us forget the equipment we need,
and not get delayed so we don't have to speed.
May I cheer even if my child is benched,
or it's raining or snowing, and I'm cold and drenched.
And may I not right in mid-game stop to think,
"Oh, no, I forgot it's May Day for drinks!"
For I know it's important to show my support,
to be there for my kids, as their youth is so short.
I thank you for having this time with them Lord,
for being a Sports Mom is its own reward.
Amen.

Prayer by an Unknown Sports Mom

PRAYERS FOR PARENTS

Growing in Humility

Lord, help my child to grow in humility and service through their sports experience. Help him (her) to be a good sport as he plays. May he always encourage others with a kind word and help others up when they fall. Help him to use his talents to bring you glory and to lead others closer to you. May he be gracious in defeat and humble in victory, always putting the good of others and the team ahead of himself. And help me as a parent to model this humility and service, that I may teach him how to set this example on his team. I ask this through Christ, our Lord, who made the ultimate sacrifice for us on the cross. Amen.

All Praise to You, Lord Jesus

All praise to You, Lord Jesus, Lover of children: Bless our family, And help us to lead our children to You. May the gift of sport in which our children participate, Be for our family a source of fun and a way to glorify You. May we support our children in all the efforts, And help make sports a path to grow in holiness. Give us light and strength, And courage when our task as parents is difficult. Let Your Spirit fill us with love and peace, So that we may help our children to love You. All glory and praise are Yours, Lord Jesus, For ever and ever. Amen.

Adapted from A Prayer for Parents, Catholic Online. www.catholic.org.

Joining a New Team

Heavenly Father, as our child embarks upon this journey with a new team, we ask your protection and blessing. We thank you for this opportunity. Please calm his/her nerves and give him/her courage. We pray that he/she might embrace this new team, as the team embraces him/her. May he/she make new friends, learn new skills, and have fun. May this new environment bring all the benefits of sport and joys of competition. Be with us also as we interact with other parents, that this community may be one where You are always present. May this experience bring joy to our child and family. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR PARENTS

A Prayer Ahead of a Season

Lord, I ask you to bless my son (daughter) as he (she) participates in this athletic season. Help him to have a safe and fun experience.
May he learn new skills and grow mentally, physically, morally and spiritually.
May both practices and games be full of joy and learning.
I pray that he may embrace his teammates as they embrace him,
Striving together to grow and to achieve their goals.
Keep him safe from injury and help him to have courage when the task is difficult.
Grant that I may have the graces I need as a parent to provide for him what he needs in this journey and to lovingly support him in this endeavor.
May he always use the gifts you have given him for the purpose you desire and may I do the same as his parent.
I ask all this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

A Prayer for Families

Grant us, O Lord Jesus,
The strength to imitate faithfully the example of your Holy Family
And to make our home another Nazareth.
May peace, love, and happiness prevail in all things and all games.
Grant us the grace to be the parents
We should be for our children.
Grant that our child may find solid support
For their human dignity
And for their growth in truth and love
Within the embrace of their team.
May Saint Sebastian watch and guide them in their efforts today,
As he guides us in support of our children.
Amen.

Adapted from: www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=835

PRAYERS FOR PARENTS

Help Me to Do Your Will

Father in Heaven,
Help me to do your will in my role as a sports parent.
May I be for my young athlete a source of encouragement and strength.
May I help my child to grow in their faith while supporting their development in skill.
May I be a positive partner to my child's coach,
Supporting them in their effort to teach and develop all the children on the team.
May I be positive in my support at practices and games,
Even when this is difficult.
And may my example lead other parents to do the same.
In all things may I strive to imitate the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph,
In their devotion and care for the child Jesus.
Through their intercession and in Jesus name I pray,
Amen.

A Prayer for Our Children

O God, the Father of humankind, who has blessed me with these my children and committed them to my charge to raise them and prepare them for eternal life:
Grant me the graces I need to fulfill this most sacred duty and stewardship. Teach me both what to give and what to withhold; when to reprove and when to forbear; make me to be gentle, yet firm; considerate and watchful; deliver me equally from the weakness of indulgence, and the excess of severity.
Help me also to teach them to play. That I might instill them with the joy and benefit of participation in the gift of sport and recreation. And grant that, both by word and example, I may be careful to lead them in the ways of wisdom and true piety, so that at last I may, with them, be admitted to the unspeakable joys of our true home in heaven, in the company of the blessed Angels and Saints.
Amen.

PRAYERS FOR PARENTS

The Giver of All We Possess

Loving God, you are the giver of all we possess, the source of all our blessings.

We thank and praise you. Thank you for the gift of our children.

Help us to set boundaries for them and yet encourage them to explore their athletic abilities. Give us the strength and courage to treat each day and each game as a fresh start. May this sport help our children come to know you, the one true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. May your Holy Spirit help them to grow in faith, hope, and love, so they may know peace, truth, and goodness. May their ears hear your voice. May their eyes see your presence in all things. May their lips proclaim your word. May their hearts be your dwelling place. May their hands do works of charity. May the physical trials of the game help them to learn how to walk in the way of Jesus Christ, Your Son and our Lord. Amen.

Adapted from: <http://www.rc.net/arlington/stann/Teen%20and%20Parent%20Prayer%20Booklet.pdf>

Strong and Faithful God

Strong and faithful God,

As we come together for this contest,
we ask you to bless these athletes, our children.

Keep them safe from injury and harm,
instill in them respect for each other,
and reward them for their perseverance.

Lead us all to the rewards of your kingdom,
where you live and reign for ever and ever.

Amen.

Adapted from: <http://www.ncregister.com/blog/jimmy-akin/revealed-the-churchs-official-prayer-for-sports-events>

OTHER PRAYERS FOR SPORTS



A Prayer for Sports Officials

Dear God, we thank you for the gift of sport and the blessings it brings to all involved. Today, we especially lift up our sport officials. We are grateful for their presence, their careful decisions, and their guidance to help this game be played safely, fairly and respectfully. We implore the athletes, coaches and fans in this game to show respect and kindness to these officials, who are the keepers of the integrity of the game. We lift this prayer in gratitude for their service and their dedication. In Christ's name, we pray, Amen.

A Prayer for the Beginning of a New Year

Blessed are you, Lord God, Creator of body and mind and heart; you have sent the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge to guide your people in all their ways. At the beginning of this new year for school and sports, we implore your mercy: bless the athletes, parents, teachers, coaches and leaders of our community, that together we may grow in faith, hope and love as we learn from you and each other how to follow your Son Jesus. Expand the horizons of our minds, that we may grow in wisdom, understanding, and knowledge; deepen our commitment to seek the truth of your ways; help us to grow physically as we use the gifts and talents you have given us; and enliven our faith to reach out to those in need. Finally, keep us safe from illness and injury as we navigate the seasons ahead. Glory and praise to you, Lord God, forever and ever. In the name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

Adapted from Prayer for the Start of the School Year, Archdiocese of New Orleans
<https://nolacatholic.org/news/prayer-for-the-start-of-the-school-year>

OTHER PRAYERS

A Prayer to Begin an Athletic Board Meeting

Dear Lord, we pray that you will protect and bless all the children that this Athletic Board will guide during the academic year.

We pray as we head into another school year that you also guide the (Insert School/League Name) Athletic Board in the performance of our duties.

May we always remember... that our children are our most important priority ... and that we, at all times, do what is best for our athletes in a loving and Christian environment. May we always remember... that we shall first minister and serve these students' needs to learn, grow, and develop under our tutelage. May we always.... use Christ's teachings and example in all of our encounters with our athletes, coaches, officials and all those people that we will meet in the course of performing our duties.

And, may we always bring honor and dignity to (Insert School/League Name), the Catholic Church and all of the families we represent.

We thank you for the talents given each of us here today as well as those that have served here in the past. May we build on our collective experiences and knowledge as we approach each day.

In Christ's name,
Amen.

Blessings on an Athletic Event

Heavenly Father, we ask Your blessing on all those who Gathered here for this event. We trust the youth of our world to Your care. We ask Your unique blessing upon these young people here Tonight/today. We pray that they might live lives of courage and conviction; We pray that they might set and achieve a high standard of moral conduct. We pray that they might have goals that reach to Heaven. May they face up to disappointment, accept defeat with courage, and be truly humble in victory. We thank you for the vitality and vigor with which these young people are blessed. May we, (Insert School/League Name), be worthy hosts for our guests. We ask this in Christ, our Lord, Amen.

MEDITATIONS ON SCRIPTURE



David and Goliath

The story of David & Goliath is one that's familiar to most Christians and sports fans, as we regularly refer to "David beating Goliath" when a team upsets a favored opponent. Yet there's so much more to this story of faith and courage. Read the scripture below with your team and discuss it. Remind them that with God, anything is possible as an individual or team. Close with the prayer below.

A Reading from the First Book of Samuel:

1 Samuel 17:3-9, 11, 31-36, 42-43, 45-50

And the Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with a valley between them. And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. He had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze. And he had greaves of bronze upon his legs, and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders. And the shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron; and his shield-bearer went before him. He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why have you come out to draw up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us." When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

When the words which David spoke were heard, they repeated them before Saul; and he sent for him. And David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are but a youth, and he has been a man of war from his youth." But David said to Saul, "Your servant

MEDITATIONS ON SCRIPTURE

used to keep sheep for his father; and when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, I went after him and smote him and delivered it out of his mouth; and if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him and killed him. Your servant has killed both lions and bears; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God." And when the Philistine looked, and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, ruddy and comely in appearance. And the Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin; but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down, and cut off your head; and I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's and he will give you into our hand." When the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone, and slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead; the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground.

So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine, and killed him; there was no sword in the hand of David.

Prayer

Lord, in the story of David vs. Goliath you show us that with God, anything is possible. Help us to be like David by being faithful to God and praying for his help in difficult situations. May we use the gifts you have given each of us to glorify you and help our team. Help us all to be courageous in striving for our goals and bless us that we might grow in physical skill, mental fortitude and our relationship with You. Amen.

MEDITATIONS ON SCRIPTURE

Join us as we meditate on scripture verses that relate to competition and sport. We invite you to simply read the scripture in a spirit of prayer, considering how this relates to your own life and role as an athlete, parent, coach or administrator. Ask God to help you grow closer to Him through an understanding of his Holy Word and pray that this scripture may inspire you in the days to come. A short prayer follows each verse.

2 Timothy 4:7-8 “I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith. From now on the crown of righteousness awaits me, which the Lord, the last judge, will award to me on the last day, and not only to me but to all who have longed for his appearance.”

Prayer: Lord, be with me in my athletic and spiritual journey and give me the graces to lead a holy life. That like Saint Paul, on my last day of competition and at the end of my life, I may say that 'I have competed well'. Amen.

2 Timothy 2:5 “Similarly, an athlete cannot receive the winner’s crown except by competing according to the rules.”

Prayer: Lord, may I strive to follow your commands, to be obedient to you so that I may truly be free from sin. Amen.

1 Timothy 4:7-10 “Avoid profane and silly myths. Train yourself for devotion, for while physical training is of limited value, devotion is valuable in every respect, since it holds a promise of life both for the present and for the future. This saying is trustworthy and deserves full acceptance. For this we toil and struggle because we have set our hope on the living God, which is savior of all, especially those who believe.”

Prayer: Lord, be with us as we train not only for our sport, but in our faith. May we be steadfast in our resolve to strive for holiness. Amen.

MEDITATIONS ON SCRIPTURE

1 Timothy 6:11-12 “But you, child of God, avoid all this. Instead pursue righteousness, devotion, faith, love, patience and gentleness. Compete well for the faith. Lay hold of eternal life, to which you were called when you made the noble confession in the presence of many witnesses.

Prayer: Lord, help me to compete well for the faith, that I may train my heart and mind to love and serve you each and every day. Amen.

1 Timothy 1: 18-19 “I entrust this charge to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophetic words once spoken about you. Through them may you fight a good fight by having faith and a good conscience. Some, by rejecting conscience, have made a shipwreck of their faith.”

Prayer: Lord, Grant that we may be strong in the virtue of fortitude, that we may always fight not only to achieve our goals but to remain strong in our faith. Amen.

Hebrews 12:1 “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and persevere in running the race that lies before us while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus.”

Prayer: Lord, may we always keep our hearts, our eyes and our minds focused on you. Give us the graces we need this day to run the race that you call us to run. Amen.

1 Corinthians 9: 24-27

“Do you know that the runners in the stadium all run in the race, but only one wins the prize? Run so as to win. Every athlete exercises discipline in every way. They do it to win a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one. Thus, I do not run aimlessly; I do not fight as if I were shadowboxing. No, I drive my body and train, for fear that, after having preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.”

Prayer: Lord, help me to keep my own eyes on the imperishable crown. May I glorify you in all my endeavors and seek always the ultimate victory of eternity in heaven. Amen.

ST. SEBASTIAN NOVENA



St. Sebastian Novena

A novena is a traditional Christian prayer that takes place over the course of 9 days (the Latin novem translates to nine). The prayer is usually prayed for a particular intention, either directly to God or through the intercession of a particular saint. Novenas originated with Jesus, who asked the apostles, his mother Mary and other disciples to gather and pray for the nine-day period between Christ's Ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

Each day will follow the same simple format, with individual intentions/prayers on each day. If you're praying this with a team, you may also want to consider attending Mass together or creating a small prayer service at the end of the nine days. While not required, that may offer a fitting way to end these nine days of prayer and offer your intentions to Christ. As we begin the novena, simply follow along here each day and share this novena with children, parents and coaches!

Opening Prayer: St. Sebastian, Patron of Athletes, you lived in the early days of the church, when to be a Christian often meant to be persecuted for your beliefs and even die for your faith. As an Officer in the Roman Palace Guard, you are a shining example of strength and courage not simply through your physical presence but through your deep conviction in Christ. Your faithfulness stands as an example to athletes as we strive to grow strong not just in body, but also in mind and soul. We ask you to pray for our team (my child's team) (State a personal intention here).

Day 1: St. Sebastian extend your helpful protection upon all the athletes on my team and our opponent's team to play safely, free from injury and with a spirit of kindness as we compete with one another.

(See Page 82-83 for Days 2 - 9)

ST. SEBASTIAN NOVENA

Closing Daily Prayer: Merciful Father, may the glorious intercession of Your blessed martyr Saint Sebastian be our protection. Bless our team (name your school and team name), placed under his protection. Grant all that we ask for in these days of prayer in best preparation for our season, according to your will, through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, Who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Litany of St. Sebastian

(You may add this on the first and the last day of the Novena)

Lord, have mercy on us!

Response: Lord, have mercy on us!

Christ, have mercy on us!

R: Christ, have mercy on us!

Lord, have mercy on us!

R: Lord, have mercy on us!

Christ hear us!

R: Christ, graciously hear us!

God, the Father of heaven,

R: Have mercy on us!

God, the Son, Redeemer of the world,

R: Have mercy on us!

God, the Holy Spirit,

R: have mercy on us!

Holy Trinity, one God,

R: have mercy on us!

Holy Mary, Queen of Martyrs.

R: Pray for us.

Saint Sebastian.

R: Pray for us.

Invincible Martyr.

R: Pray for us.

Glorious warrior and martyr of Christ.

R: Pray for us.

Consoler of the afflicted.

R: Pray for us.

Saint Sebastian, perfect in virtue and wisdom. **R:** Pray for us.

St. Sebastian, servant of God and of his brothers and sisters. **R:** Pray for us.

St. Sebastian, who encouraged the doubting to persevere to the end.

R: Pray for us.

St. Sebastian, surrounded by celestial light. **R:** Pray for us.

St. Sebastian, instructed by the holy Angels. **R:** Pray for us.

(Continued on Next Page)

ST. SEBASTIAN NOVENA

St. Sebastian, who for defending the truth was wounded by arrows. **R:** Pray for us.

St. Sebastian, who was put to death with clubs. **R:** Pray for us.

St. Sebastian, who was crowned with eternal glory. **R:** Pray for us.

St. Sebastian, great intercessor for us with God. **R:** Pray for us.

Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world: **R:** Spare us, O Lord!

Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world: **R:** Graciously hear us, O Lord!

Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world: **R:** Have mercy on us, O Lord!

Christ, hear us! **R:** Christ, hear us!

Christ, graciously hear us! **R:** Christ, graciously hear us!

Amen.

Daily Prayers

Day 2: St. Sebastian, teach us to have courage in the face of adversity. As athletes, we encounter many obstacles, such as injury and set-backs. Help us to stand firm in our belief that you walk with us in our pain and that we can endure with your support.

Day 3: St. Sebastian, may we emulate your perseverance. Despite being wounded with arrows, you recovered and continued to share your faith. Help us to be persistent in our training for a strong body, a mind that glorifies you and a pure soul.

Day 4: St. Sebastian, support our coach(es) in leading our team. Help him/her/them to be positive and caring ministers who represent Christ.

Day 5: St. Sebastian encourage us to be compassionate to one another on our team, especially noticing when a teammate is struggling. Help us to reach out in empathy and provide a listening ear, a helping hand and thoughtful encouragement.

ST. SEBASTIAN NOVENA

Day 6: St. Sebastian guide us in making good decisions as we play, always taking responsibility for our actions and behaviors especially when we are tempted to blame others on our team or the officials.

Day 7: St. Sebastian help us to endure in the face of loss by channeling our disappointment into hard work as a team to come back with even greater determination in the next competition.

Day 8: St. Sebastian help us to have humility in the face of victory so that we never gloat when we are successful, but remember to give all the glory to God for our success.

Day 9: St. Sebastian support our team to be the best athletes that you have created us to uniquely be, the best team that we can be together and most importantly, loving people living as Disciples of Christ.

SPORTS-THEMED MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY



The Rosary is a form of prayer and devotion that refers to a series of prayers focused on the life of Christ from the scriptures. Dedicated to Mary and asking for her intercession through a repetition of prayers that include the Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be, the devotion is particularly popular in the tradition of the Catholic Church. Though not required, it is most often prayed using the strand of beads bearing the devotion's name, with each bead representing one of the prayers. The beads of the Rosary are divided into five sections (called "decades") and each decade represents an event from the life of Christ. These five events are grouped into a set of Mysteries, each with five events. The four Mysteries (Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious, Luminous) focus on an important part of the life of Christ. Those who pray these prayers can meditate on the individual mysteries and the life of Christ as a whole while connecting them to their own faith journey.

Play Like a Champion encourages teams to pray the rosary together. Looking for a special way to pray the Rosary? Try bringing a Living Rosary to your sport team. This beautiful prayer service takes some preparation and practice, but many find it makes for a powerful and prayerful tradition. A living rosary is when people are used to represent each bead of the rosary. Each person leads one prayer of the rosary. Gather your athletes (61 spots in all) to embody the Rosary. If you have fewer than 61 people, you may double-up duties.

Included here are meditations on all four sets of Mysteries of the Rosary, with a scripture verse related to each mystery and a reflection designed to connect that mystery to the athlete's individual and team experience. This can be a powerful way for teams to pray together and to help athletes reflect on God's presence in their sports experience.

SPORTS-THEMED MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY

The LUMINOUS MYSTERIES of the Rosary

Traditionally prayed on Thursdays throughout the year, these “Mysteries of Light” were added by Pope St. John Paul II in 2002. They focus on the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

1. The Baptism of Our Lord in the Jordan (Matthew 3:13-16)

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. 14 But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” 15 Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented. 16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him.

Reflection: Every athlete can have a “heaven opening” experience when you excel... work towards becoming the best version of yourself that God created you to be. Baptism is a cleansing of sin enabling a new birth into a deeper life with Christ. The heavens opened following Jesus’ Baptism. As an athlete, where are you right now in need of “cleansing” or re-imagining your game so that the heavens will open for you and deliver God’s spirit to you?

2. The Wedding Feast at Cana (John 2:1-11)

On the third day, a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus’ mother was there, 2 and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. 3 When the wine was gone, Jesus’ mother said to him, “They have no more wine.” 4 “Woman, why do you involve me?” Jesus replied. “My hour has not yet come.” 5 His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” 6 Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. 7 Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water”; so they filled them to the brim. 8 Then he told them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.” They did so, 9 and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside 10 and said, “Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had

SPORTS-THEMED MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY

too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.” 11 What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

Reflection: How will you “reveal your Glory”? God, who endowed us with gifts and attributes to serve our teams and our communities in order to bring about His Kingdom, uniquely creates each of us. What distinctive gifts “reveal your glory” as an athlete playing for the greater glory of God?

3. The Proclamation of the Kingdom of Heaven (Mark 1:14-15)

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

Reflection: God’s kingdom is not far away, above us in the heavens. The kingdom is up to us to create with justice, mercy, compassion, care, love, concern for all. How can we, individually as athletes and together as a team, bring the Kingdom to our team and the game?

4. The Transfiguration of Our Lord (Matthew 17:1-8)

After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2 There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. 3 Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. 4 Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” 5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!” 6 When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. 7 But Jesus came and touched them. “Get up,” he said. “Don’t be afraid.” 8 When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

Reflection: The athletic road has real challenges and clear difficulties. With Christ,

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anything is possible. Imagine Jesus looking directly at you and speaking directly to you: “You are my son/daughter with whom I am well pleased. How would Christ be pleased with you? How are you living God’s gifts on your team? Rest in the knowledge that you are spiritually protected so the words “Be Not Afraid” are believed in your heart.

5. The Institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper (Matthew 26)

On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?” 18 He replied, “Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, ‘The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.’” 19 So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover. 20 When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. 21 And while they were eating, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.” 22 They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, “Surely you don’t mean me, Lord?” 23 Jesus replied, “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. 24 The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.” 25 Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, “Surely you don’t mean me, Rabbi?” Jesus answered, “You have said so.” 26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.” 27 Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the[b] covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

Reflection: The Eucharist is the foundation of our faith – the bread that gives us real strength. It is the proof of Christ’s love and the most powerful means of fostering His love in us. As we receive the body and blood of Christ, we become Christ’s hands and feet in this world. How does the Eucharist nourish you to be Christ for your teammates? How can you be Christ for your opponents? For the Officials? For all in our sport community?

SPORTS-THEMED MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY

The JOYFUL MYSTERIES of the Rosary

Traditionally prayed on Mondays and Saturdays. These mysteries focus on the coming of Jesus into the world through the infancy narratives of Jesus and his youth.

1. The Annunciation of Gabriel to the Virgin Mary (Luke 1:26-38)

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." 29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." 34 "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" 35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called[a] the Son of God. 36 Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. 37 For no word from God will ever fail." 38 "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

Reflection: Remember a time you received news that filled you with anxiety. Perhaps your coach called you into a game at a critical time or when you learned you would be facing your toughest opponent in the play-off's. Believe that God is standing with you in the uncertainty and fear. Have the courage like Mary to say "Yes" to these difficult invitations, despite your fear.

2. The Visitation of Virgin Mary to Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-56)

At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. 41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with

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the Holy Spirit. 42 In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! 43 But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. 45 Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!”

Reflection: Sport teams can be like a family. Think of a teammate who has become a trusted confidante, as close as a brother or sister. Like Mary and Elizabeth, in these close relationships, we can encourage each other, be there for one another in good times and times of challenge. This love for our teammates is reflective of God’s unconditional love for us. Express to a special teammate that s/he is “blessed.”

3. The Birth of Jesus (Luke 2:1-21)

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. 2 (This was the first census that took place while[a]Quirinius was governor of Syria.) 3 And everyone went to their own town to register. 4 So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. 5 He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. 6 While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, 7 and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. 8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” 13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 14 “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” 15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to

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one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” 16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. 17 When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. 19 But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told. 21 On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise the child, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he was conceived.

Reflection: Pope Francis reminds us that sports should be an opportunity for friendly encounters between peoples and contribute to peace in the world. Together with your team, praise God for the opportunity to play sport and make a commitment to create a team culture that is positive, joyful and contributes peace to all whom you encounter.

4. The Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple at Jerusalem (Luke 2:22-38)

When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord”[a]), 24 and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: “a pair of doves or two young pigeons.”[b] 25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. 26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. 27 Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, 28 Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: 29 “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss[c] your servant in peace. 30 For my eyes have seen your salvation, 31 which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.” 33 The child’s father and mother marveled at what was said about him. 34 Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: “This child is

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destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, 35 so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.” 36 There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37 and then was a widow until she was eighty-four.[d] She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. 38 Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

Reflection: Rituals are very important for athletes. Think of your pre-game meal or the music you play in the locker room to fire your team up. These customs are essential to your preparation and team experience. What do we already do, or what can we plan to do, to build team rituals dedicated to honoring God?

5. The Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple at Jerusalem (Luke 2:41-52)

Every year Jesus’ parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. 42 When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. 43 After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. 44 Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. 45 When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. 46 After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47 Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.” 49 “Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?”[a] 50 But they did not understand what he was saying to them. 51 Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

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Reflection: Think of a time you made a choice that made your coach unhappy. How did s/he react? Even when we feel justified for an action, healthy relationships mean we must communicate with the person in authority. Always show respect for coaches, administrators, officials and keep at the top of your mind that you represent your school community everywhere you go.

The SORROWFUL MYSTERIES of the Rosary

Traditionally prayed on Tuesdays & Fridays; often prayed daily during Lent. These mysteries focus on the passion and death of Jesus Christ.

1. The Agony of Our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-56)

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." 37 He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. 38 Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." 39 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." 40 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. 41 "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." 42 He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done." 43 When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. 44 So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing. 45 Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. 46 Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

Jesus Arrested

47 While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders

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of the people. 48 Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: “The one I kiss is the man; arrest him.” 49 Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed him. 50 Jesus replied, “Do what you came for, friend.”[a] Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. 51 With that, one of Jesus’ companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. 52 “Put your sword back in its place,” Jesus said to him, “for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. 53 Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? 54 But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?” 55 In that hour Jesus said to the crowd, “Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. 56 But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

Reflection: As an athlete, you may have felt betrayed by a coach, a teammate or a game situation. Perhaps you didn’t get the starting position when you felt you deserved the spot or maybe a teammate betrayed your trust and shared something with others that you wanted kept confidential or an official made a bad call. Pray for the fortitude to not react with anger or violence. In the example of Christ’s response in the Garden, pray to respond with forgiveness and acceptance.

2. Our Lord is Scourged at the Pillar (Matthew 27:26)

Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

Reflection: There are days when we feel “beat up” as an athlete...sore muscles, an exhausted will, or an injury that takes us out of play can be devastating. Pray for the strength to accept these pains by “offering them up” to God.

3. Our Lord is Crowned with Thorns (Matthew 27:27-31)

Then the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. 28 They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him,

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29 and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. “Hail, king of the Jews!” they said. 30 They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. 31 After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

Reflection: Have you or a teammate been mocked or insulted by an opponent? These experiences are humiliating, hurtful and unjust. They should never happen, but if they do, dedicate yourself to always play with fairness, never stooping to retaliate. As children of God, we are created to lift others up and never tear down. Dedicate your team to living the golden rule: do unto others as you have them do unto you.

4. Our Lord Carries the Cross to Calvary (Matthew 27:32)

They were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross.

Reflection: When we see someone struggling...a teammate who is challenged to complete conditioning or having a hard time learning a new play or an opponent who has been knocked down during a game, become Simon for him/her. Don't wait to be asked, jump in and lend a supportive hand to help him/her up, give a positive encouraging word or hug. When you do this for someone, you are extending this kindness to and for Christ.

5. The Crucifixion of Our Lord (Matthew 27:33-56)

And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, 34 They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. 35 And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. 36 And sitting down they watched him there; 37 And set up over his head his accusation written, This Is Jesus The King Of The Jews. 38 Then were there two thieves crucified with

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him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. 39 And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, 40 And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. 41 Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, 42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. 43 He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. 44 The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth. 45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. 46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? 47 Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. 48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. 49 The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him. 50 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. 51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; 52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, 53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. 54 Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God. 55 And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: 56 Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedees children.

Reflection: We all have felt the crushing agony of total defeat as an athlete....losing a race, missing the final shot at the game buzzer. Remember through Christ's darkest moment, his death, he created the most awesome act of all time – the Resurrection. Embrace St. Paul's words, "for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong." 1 Cor 12: 10. With the proper attitude, defeat can propel us to new heights of excellence.

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The GLORIOUS MYSTERIES of the Rosary

Traditionally prayed on Wednesdays and Sundays through the year. These mysteries focus on the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ into heaven, as well as the descent of the Holy Spirit and Mary's eternal place in heaven, where she intercedes for us as the "Queen of Heaven and Earth."

1. The Resurrection of Our Lord (John 20:1-29)

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. 2 So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" 3 So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. 4 Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, 7 as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. 8 Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. 9 (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) 10 Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

11 Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb 12 and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. 13 They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." 14 At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. 15 He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher"). 17 Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the

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Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” 18 Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that he had said these things to her.

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. 21 Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

Jesus Appears to Thomas

24 Now Thomas (also known as Didymus[a]), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.” 26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” 27 Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” 28 Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” 29 Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

Reflection: Mary does not recognize the Risen Christ until Jesus calls her by name. With deep respect and love, Mary responds, “Teacher.” Athletes have numerous teachers, coaches of the physical skills of sport, but also mentors of character and faith. Thank God for your coaches today and pray for them to model the Ultimate Teacher, Jesus.

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2. The Ascension of Our Lord into Heaven (Luke 24:36-53)

While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." 37 They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. 38 He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? 39 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." 40 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. 41 And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate it in their presence. 44 He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." 45 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 46 He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

The Ascension of Jesus

50 When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. 51 While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. 52 Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. 53 And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

Reflection: "Believe" is a powerful sport word. Believe in your abilities, believe in your team, believe you can win. Full belief relies on faith and trust in each other. When you are struggling to believe in yourself and your team's potential, remember the disciples seeing the Risen Jesus ascend into heaven. Believe that with God, all things are possible.

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3. The Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Virgin Mary and the Apostles at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-41)

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues[a] as the Spirit enabled them. ⁵ Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶ When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. ⁷ Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? ⁹ Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,[b] ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ¹¹ (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” ¹² Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?” ¹³ Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”

Peter Addresses the Crowd

¹⁴ Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. ¹⁵ These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! ¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. ¹⁸ Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. ¹⁹ I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. ²⁰ The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. ²¹ And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’[c] ²² “Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you

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yourselves know. 23 This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men,[d] put him to death by nailing him to the cross. 24 But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.25 David said about him: "'I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. 26 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest in hope,27 because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, you will not let your holy one see decay. 28 You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.'[e] 29 "Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. 30 But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. 31 Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. 32 God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. 34 For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, "'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand 35 until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.'"[f] 36 "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah." 37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." 40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Reflection: When you need to talk to someone about something or you have a big decision to make, one that will affect not only you, but your team, you can turn to the Holy Spirit. Jesus calls the Holy Spirit the "Advocate". Turn to the Third Person

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of the Holy Trinity to receive seven gifts to empower athletes: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and wonder of the Lord.

4. The Assumption of the Virgin Mary into Heaven (Munificentissimus Deus, Pope Pius XII 1950)

God, who from all eternity regards Mary with a most favorable and unique affection, has "when the fullness of time came" put the plan of his providence into effect in such a way that all the privileges and prerogatives he had granted to her in his sovereign generosity were to shine forth in her in a kind of perfect harmony. And, although the Church has always recognized this supreme generosity and the perfect harmony of graces and has daily studied them more and more throughout the course of the centuries, still it is in our own age that the privilege of the bodily Assumption into heaven of Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, has certainly shone forth more clearly... She, by an entirely unique privilege, completely overcame sin by her Immaculate Conception, and as a result she was not subject to the law of remaining in the corruption of the grave, and she did not have to wait until the end of time for the redemption of her body. Thus St. John Damascene, an outstanding herald of this traditional truth, spoke out with powerful eloquence when he compared the bodily Assumption of the loving Mother of God with her other prerogatives and privileges. "It was fitting that she, who had kept her virginity intact in childbirth, should keep her own body free from all corruption even after death. It was fitting that she, who had carried the Creator as a child at her breast, should dwell in the divine tabernacles. It was fitting that the spouse, whom the Father had taken to himself, should live in the divine mansions. It was fitting that she, who had seen her Son upon the cross and who had thereby received into her heart the sword of sorrow which she had escaped in the act of giving birth to him, should look upon him as he sits with the Father. It was fitting that God's Mother should possess what belongs to her Son, and that she should be honored by every creature as the Mother and as the handmaid of God."

Reflection: Our time in this life should be focused upon serving others lovingly, in particular our teammates. Our actions on earth, prepare us to join Jesus, Mary and

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all those who have gone before us in eternal life. Our salvation is freely given, but we must be mindful of the legacy we are leaving behind. How have I served my teammates and how will they remember me?

5. The Coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven and Earth (Revelation 12:1)

A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head.

Reflection: We can seek spiritual help through the intercession of Mary. As a caring divine Mother, Mary can be a source of comfort in an often hurtful earthly life. Invite Mary to envelop you in her caring mantle, confident in the knowledge that you are deeply loved.