

## WHY ISTROUMA DOES SPORTS - TO DEAL WITH THE BROKENNESS IN SPORTS

### FOR COACHES:

The effect of brokenness in sports isn't limited to just the players. It happens with coaches, too. Your influence on your team will never be neutral. Your words, your attitudes and your actions will impact them. Will your words encourage or discourage a struggling or novice player? Will they build them up so that they are motivated to give their best or will they tear them down and defeat them? Are your attitudes the same toward all players and families or are some favored and given preferential treatment while others miss out on opportunities? Do your attitudes reflect a respect for the game and those who officiate, or do they show disregard for the rules motivated by the desire to win at all costs? Will you set firm boundaries for your team's expectations for play and for behavior or will you allow complacency to grip your team? Do your words and actions show that you honor God in your coaching?

This week think about the brokenness in sports. Below are some reflective questions, a discussion point, and questions to ask your team (and families):

#### Personal Reflection - Questions to ask yourself:

- Are there areas of brokenness as a coach I need God's help to deal with? In my life?

#### Discussion point to talk about with your team and their families:

- God wants to heal the brokenness of sports.

#### Questions to ask your team/families:

- Why is it important to understand that there is brokenness in sports?
- What are areas that we need God's help as a team to deal with this brokenness? As individual players?

### FOR PLAYERS

In the early 1960's when the internet was invented, it was designed as a way to share information which is a good thing. But we know sometimes it impacts people in ways that are not good. Like the internet God designed sports to be a good thing, but sometimes sports impact players in ways that are broken. Maybe they start think they are better players than others and that they deserve special attention and rewards. Or maybe they ignore the directions of coaches or officials or don't follow the rules. This season, your coaches and the Istrouma Sports leaders want to help you to avoid or change some of those wrong behaviors and honor God by the way you play and the way you treat your teammates, coaches, officials and even your opponents.

- What are some of the ways that I see brokenness in sports?
- Are there areas that I need God's help so I can be a better player and teammate?

### FOR PARENTS:

Criminal behavior, financial ruin, assaults on officials, mistreatment of players and ejection of parents from a game or even the season – all evidence of the brokenness of sports. You saw your decision to enroll your child(ren) in Istrouma sports as a good thing, but you probably never considered the idea that you were enrolling your child in something that was broken. But like so many of the good things God has given us in this world, there is the potential for brokenness because of the impact of sin; sin that shows up in poor attitudes, bad choices, and damaging actions. But God is not content to leave sports, or your child or your family in a broken state. He has provided His Son Jesus to deal with the sin that caused the brokenness in the first place. And, He has provided Istrouma sports to help your child learn that He wants him/her to recognize and deal with any areas of brokenness as they participate in sports and other areas of their lives.

As a family, below are some things to talk about and questions that may be useful in helping your family discuss how God can deal with the brokenness of sports:

- What are some of the things we've seen where there is brokenness besides in sports?
- Have there ever been times when our family has experienced brokenness?
- How can God help us if we are experiencing brokenness?

## WHY ISTROUMA DOES SPORTS – TO USE THE GIFTS GOD HAS GIVEN

### FOR COACHES:

In the movie, “It’s a Wonderful Life,” George Bailey discovers what the lives of those closest to him would have been like without him. He realizes that his contributions and unselfish giving were gifts that enriched others but also filled his own life with abundance. While you may not think you would be on the short list for “Coach of the Year”, your gifts and contributions to Istrouma sports matter. Imagine what might happen if you don’t use those gifts. Your players would not thrive or learn the game and skills needed to play well. Gifts that might encourage a new or struggling family if left unused might leave them wondering if anyone cares about them. Novice or even seasoned coaches would not have the benefit of all of your experiences and knowledge of the game. Gifts used are gifts valued – not just by you but by those whose lives you impact.

This week think about why we do sports and what it means to use the gifts God has given us. Below are some reflective questions, a discussion point, and questions to ask your team (and families):

#### Personal Reflection - Questions to ask yourself:

- What gifts has God given me? How am I using them?
- How willing am I to share the gifts I’ve been given?

#### Discussion point to talk about with your team and their families:

- God wants us to share the gifts He has given us as we play sports.

#### Questions to ask your team/families:

- What gifts has God given us in sports? Why should we use them?
- How can we use the gifts God has given us?

### FOR PLAYERS

Did you ever get a gift that you couldn’t wait to share with your friends? Even before you finished unwrapping it, you were thinking of the fun you would have using it when you and your friends got together. Imagine what it would feel like if you selfishly kept that gift to yourself. Do you think you would have enjoyed or benefited from it as much as you would have if you shared it? Did you know that God has given you gifts in the form of talents or skills and that He wants you to share them with your friends and others? When you share your gifts, you enjoy them more, others benefit, and you honor God because He is the one that gave them to you.

When you practice and play this week, think about these questions:

- What are some of the gifts I think God has given me?
- Why is it important for me to use them and share them with others?

### FOR PARENTS:

As an adult, you may never take advantage of the gift of playing on one of the basketball courts or have the gift of a coach who volunteers to help you learn how a game is played and teach you skills to make you a better player. But there are gifts that God designed for families in Istrouma sports such as the prayer team. Each season, a group of Istrouma Sports partners joins together to pray for families. They pray for your child’s safety, for them to learn how to play their sport well, to comprehend what it takes to be a Godly teammate and opponent and that they will understand how much God loves them. But they are also praying for you – praying that God will give you strength and energy as you manage family schedules and activities, for your well-being, and for His peace and comfort especially in difficult times. If you request, your child’s coach or a member of the Istrouma sports ministry staff will be happy to convey to this team any needs (always kept confidential) your family is experiencing that you want prayer for. What a gift!

As a family, below are some things to talk about and questions that may be useful in helping your family discuss how God gives us gifts and how He wants us to use them through sports:

- What tangible gifts has God given us as a family? Intangible gifts? How are we using them?
- What happens when we aren’t willing to use the gifts God has given us? What happens when we are?
- What can we do to show our appreciation for the gifts others share with us?

## WHY ISTROUMA DOES SPORTS - TO BE A BRIDGE TO SHARING THE GOSPEL

### FOR COACHES:

No seminary degree? God can still use you. Absolutely no experience coaching at the high levels of the sport? God will still use you. Not a preacher, Bible study teacher, deacon, or church committee member? God still wants to use you. Don't even know how the game is played? God will still be glorified as He uses you. God delights in using ordinary people and things in extraordinary ways. Istrouma sports and your service as coach is proof of that. This season, your players and families may or may not attend church, regularly if at all. They may not know anything about God's plan to redeem us through His Son Jesus. Maybe their knowledge of scripture is limited to one or two of the ten commandments. Maybe prayer is reserved for when trouble comes knocking. But they do know they want to play sports, and so God will use sports and your service in ways that no other avenue or method could. You may not possess the qualifications of an NBA head coach or the credentials of an ordained pastor, but God wants to use you this season as a bridge to sharing His love and the message of redemption through Jesus.

This week think about how God uses sports as a bridge or a way to share the gospel. Below are some reflective questions, a discussion point, and questions to ask your team (and families):

#### Personal Reflection - Questions to ask yourself:

- How can God use me this season to tell my team and their families about Jesus?

#### Discussion point to talk about with your team and their families:

- God uses many ways including sports as a bridge to tell people about His Son Jesus.

#### Questions to ask your team/families:

- What are some ways that we learn about God and His love for us?
- How can sports be a bridge to sharing the gospel?

### FOR PLAYERS

The first bridges were built by man nearly 4,000 years ago, and even though most often were made of wood and stones, they were important in moving people and goods. Bridges are essential because they help us make connections from one thing or place to another. God uses sports just like a bridge by connecting what you do on the basketball court with knowledge about His Son Jesus. This season, He will use sports to help you learn about Him when you memorize your scripture verse. He will help you to know what it means to be like Jesus as you listen to the devotionals. He will use sports to give you an opportunity to pray and get to know Him better.

- What are some ways that I've learned about God's love for me?
- Why does God use different ways or bridges to tell us about His Son, Jesus?

### FOR PARENTS:

Your route requires passage across the bridge. Good news until you approach the on-ramp and realize it is closed due to repairs. You back up and find another route. The next bridge is shaky, and you are afraid to cross it, so you move on to find another course. Then, finally you reach a bridge that will connect you to your desired location. Success. All of the bridges would have taken you to your destination but only the one was a viable option to getting there. This season, God is giving you and your family an opportunity to see how He uses sports as a bridge or a way to share the message of redemption through His Son, Jesus. He doesn't limit the gospel to the walls of a church or Bible study class but delights in finding unique ways and methods for messaging His love for all of us. You will see this evidenced in the scriptures that your child is encouraged to memorize each week. You'll hear it through the devotional messages, and you'll experience it during times when your child's team prays. You'll find it in compassionate staff and volunteers who want to walk alongside you and your family.

As a family, below are some things to talk about and questions that may be useful in helping your family discuss how God uses sports as a bridge to share the gospel:

- What are some ways we have heard about God's love for us?
- How are we hearing of God's love for us as we participate in Istrouma sports?

## WHY WE PLAY SPORTS – WE PLAY FOR JOY

### FOR COACHES:

Name the things that brings you joy, and sports most likely would not make the top 5 on the list. And yet, sports for many is a source of great joy – whether participant or spectator. We know that God gives us sports as a gift not only because it builds relationship with Him and others, but because it fulfills His promise of an abundant life that includes those things we do for enjoyment. In your role as an Istrouma Sports coach, ask God to give you joy as you build your team and guide them and grow them.

This week think about the concept of playing sports for the joy they bring. Below are some reflective questions, a discussion point, and questions to ask your team (and families):

#### Personal Reflection - Questions to ask yourself:

- What are the things in my life that God has given me that bring me joy? Am I thanking Him for these?
- How can I learn to see the joy in the gifts and opportunities that God has given me?

#### Discussion point to talk about with your team and their families:

- Sports are a gift from God, and He uses sports to bring us joy

#### Questions to ask your team/families:

- How can sports bring us joy? What do you most enjoy about playing sports?
- Why do you think God gave us sports to enjoy?

### FOR PLAYERS:

Joy is the feeling we experience when we get something we want or achieve something that is important to us. When you think of times when you are joyful, what comes to mind? Christmas? End of the school year? Birthdays? Acing a test? In Istrouma Sports, we learn that God gives us sports as a gift because He loves us. But He also gives us sports because He likes to do things that bring us joy. He gives us joy in sports through being with friends. He gives us joy in working together to accomplish team and individual player goals. He helps us experience joy because of the benefits that come from our efforts.

When you practice and play this week, think about these questions:

- What are the things that bring me joy? How do sports bring me joy? Do I thank God for them?
- How can I be a better friend? How can I work with them to meet our goals as a team?

### FOR PARENTS:

As a parent, you could probably spend hours listing the things about your child that bring you joy: when he/she was born, his/her first words or steps, watching him/her learn how to ride a bike to name a few. And you could probably list as many ways that you do things that bring joy to your child. One of the most rewarding things parents do is to provide experiences that make their children joyful. Did you know that as our good, loving Heavenly Father, God desires to do the same for you as a parent and for your family? He delights in giving us things that produce joy in our lives because it reflects His nature and character and His deep love for us.

As a family, below are some things to talk about and questions that may be useful in helping your family discuss how God gives us joy through sports:

- What are some of the things that bring our family joy? Why?
- What are some ways we can work together as a family that will be joyful?
- What are some of the benefits we enjoy as a family?
- What are ways we can show God that we appreciate the ways He brings joy in our lives?

## WHY WE PLAY SPORTS – WE PLAY FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAME

### FOR COACHES:

If you took a tally of what things you spend time on other than work and where your money goes other than for bills, what would your life show that you are most dedicated to? When we love something, we invest in it whether it is our time, our energies, or our money. There are so many things to love about the game and so many benefits to playing. God uses competing, connecting with others, and celebrating to grow our love for the game.

This week think about the concept of playing sports for the love of the game. Below are some reflective questions, a discussion point, and questions to ask your team (and families):

#### Personal Reflection - Questions to ask yourself:

- What is it that I love most about the game?
- How do my investments of time, energy, and money show what I love the most? How does God invest in me?

#### Discussion point to talk about with your team and their families:

- We pour, or invest ourselves, into the game because we love it. God pours Himself into us because He loves us.

#### Questions to ask your team/families:

- What is it about the game that you love? Why?
- How has God shown He loves us? What investments does He make in us?

### FOR PLAYERS:

People say they love things a lot. They love their families and friends, they love sports, they love pizza, they love the color red. We say we love things because they have meaning to us or benefit us in some way. When we love something or someone, we are willing to sacrifice our time, our energy and maybe even some of our money. God takes His love of you very seriously. He was willing to sacrifice His Son, Jesus for us to be our Savior. He loves us because we have meaning to Him and not just because we benefit Him.

When you practice and play this week, think about these questions:

- What do I love most about the game? What sacrifices do I make or does my family make so I can play?
- What are some things God has done to show me that He loves me?

### FOR PARENTS:

Think back to the last NBA, high school or college game (or last big sporting event your family attended or watched). What investments in time and money did you have to make to be there? Be honest; just how many snacks did you and your family consume or team jerseys did you buy? Think about the sacrifices you are making so that your child can participate and enjoy playing during this Istroma Sports season. You do it because you love your child and you want what is good for them. Just like the opportunities to compete, connect with others and celebrate foster our love of the game, God wants us to recognize the benefits we have when we trust Him. He has given us that which is dearest to Him – His Son, Jesus, and His desire is that we will grow to love Him in return.

As a family, below are some things to talk about and questions that may be useful in helping your family discuss what benefits God gives us because He loves us:

- We pour ourselves or invest in things that are important to us.
- What are some of the things that our family loves to do and spends time and money on? Why?
- What does our family love most about the game?
- How does God bless our family and show us He loves us?

## WHY WE PLAY SPORTS – WE PLAY TO COMPETE

### FOR COACHES:

You've heard the term, "In it to win it". As a coach, it is important to think about this simple phrase. Within it you can unearth your own attitude about how you view competing and how you want your players to compete. Like the two sides of a coin example, your motivation to compete might fall in the 'win at all cost' camp, or perhaps in the 'competing well' side. Throughout this season, you will have an opportunity to flip the coin and call the side of how you compete and how you model the idea of competition to your players.

This week think about the concept of playing sports for the opportunity to compete. Below are some reflective questions, a discussion point, and questions to ask your team (and families):

#### Personal Reflection - Questions to ask yourself:

- How do I view competing? In other words, what do I really want out of it? What do I want for my team?
- What is God showing me about how I compete – Am I giving my best? Am I using my talents and abilities?
- What ways can I model 'competing well' to my team and my peer coaches?

#### Discussion point to talk about with your team and their families:

- God uses sports so that we have opportunities to compete well

#### Questions to ask your team/families:

- What do you like about competing with other players or other teams?
- How can we learn to compete well?

### FOR PLAYERS:

You have opportunities to compete every day. When you compete, you strive to gain or win something. At home, maybe you compete for time in the bathroom to get dressed in the morning or time on the computer. At school, you might compete for an award or special recognition. Sports gives you another opportunity to compete. Sometimes people think that competing in sports can be harmful because it makes a person act in ways that are not good in order to win. But God can use your opportunities to compete in good ways. He wants to help you compete well. He wants to help you use your talents and abilities, and He wants you to strive to do your best whether your team wins or loses.

When you practice and play this week, think about these questions:

- What do I like best about competing, and why is it important to compete well?
- Am I giving my best effort when I play?
- What talents and abilities do I have that can help me to compete?

### FOR PARENTS:

Think back to the trophies, medals, or other awards you have won over the years. Can you remember the thrill of what it felt like to compete? From childhood through our entire adulthood, life is crammed with competition. As an adult competition may take different forms. When you are the parent of a child playing sports, you experience competing in the form of demands on your time, energy, and finances in order to make practices and games, work, feed the family, keep the house running, and maybe even find some time for rest. Just like your child is learning about Godly competition in sports this season, God wants to help you compete well in your parenting. The prize may not be a trophy or medal, but the win will be in the benefits of His presence, grace, and blessings for you, your child, and your family.

As a family, below are some things to talk about and questions that may be useful in helping your family discuss how God helps us compete well sports:

- What are ways that our family competes?
- How can competing be healthy? How can it be harmful?
- What does it look like when we give our best when competing?
- How can we use our talents and abilities in competing? In our family routines?

## WHY WE PLAY SPORTS – WE PLAY TO GROW

### FOR COACHES:

When you signed up to be a coach, more than likely one of your motivations might have been to see your players grow starting from the very first practices all the way through the final games. Perhaps you wanted to see them get stronger and improve their ability to execute plays well so that your team would win. Possibly, you wanted to grow personally as a coach. One of the best aspects about sports being a gift from God is the way He designed their potential for growth. His design for sports includes the prospect of helping you and your players grow not just physically, but mentally and in relationships with others and with Himself.

This week think about the concept of playing sports as a way to grow. Below are some reflective questions, a discussion point, and questions to ask your team (and families):

#### Personal Reflection - Questions to ask yourself:

- In what ways do I need to grow as a coach? As a family member? As a person?
- In what ways can God help me to grow? Am I willing to do what He leads me to do so that I can grow?

#### Discussion point to talk about with your team and their families:

- God uses sports to grow us physically, mentally and in relationships with Him and others.

#### Questions to ask your team/families:

- Why is growing important?
- In what ways can we grow physically, mentally and in relationships with others and God in sports or at home?

### FOR PLAYERS:

As a baby you really couldn't do very much. As time went on, you grew bigger and learned how to walk and talk. Before long, you learned how to make friends and learned from your teachers and parents. You didn't stay a baby, you grew. Otherwise you wouldn't be playing sports. In this sports season, you will have many opportunities to grow more. You will learn what it takes to play the game well, and you may even grow stronger and more athletic. You will grow by becoming part of a team and learning how important it is to listen to your coaches and parents so that you can be a better player. You can even grow in your relationship with God through your play.

When you practice and play this week, think about these questions:

- Why is it important that I grow as a person or as a player? What happens if I don't grow?
- What are some ways I think God wants me to grow?

### FOR PARENTS:

Go ahead, drag out the baby pictures (especially if you are a grandparent). Compare those first photos to the child in front of you now. Think about all of the ways that he/she has grown in just these few short years. Growth is part of creation, part of our humanity and our existence here on earth. God designed us for growth. That design included plans for our physical, mental, relational, and spiritual growth. He uses the experiences and opportunities we have as the soil, water, and sunlight essential to our growing. This season, your child will have opportunities to grow in many ways. Did you know that God desires to use this sports season to grow you and your family as well?

As a family, below are some things to talk about and questions that may be useful in helping your family discuss how God has designed us to grow and how sports help us grow:

- Why is growing so important?
- How are we growing individually? How are we growing as a family?
- What happens when we grow? What happens if we don't?
- In what ways could God help us to grow even more?

## WHY GOD GIVES US SPORTS – TO REFLECT HIS IMAGE

### FOR COACHES:

Maybe you think your image feels more like Clark Kent than Superman, more the mild-mannered type than someone able to leap tall buildings and bend steel with your bare hands. Regardless of whether your image falls in the easy-going category or approaches super-hero status, your image is important to God, and it is important to the players and families you are coaching. Opportunities will come this season that will challenge you, inspire you, irritate you and encourage you. As you face each of these, your players, their families, other coaches, and officials will develop an image or impression of you. When you are challenged, will you allow God to help you respond with grace? When you are inspired, will you share how God gave you wisdom and discretion? When you are irritated, will you ask God's help to show forgiveness and love to those who are the cause? When you are encouraged, will you praise God openly for His good blessings? As you ask God to help you reflect His image, you'll be on your way to achieving super-hero status!

This week think about the concept of how God uses sports to help us reflect His image. Below are some reflective questions, a discussion point, and questions to ask your team (and families):

#### Personal Reflection - Questions to ask yourself:

- What is the image I have of myself? What does it mean to me that God created me in His image?
- How much of my image reflects God's hand on my life?

#### Discussion point to talk about with your team and their families:

- Sports give us an opportunity to reflect God's image in our words, our walk, and our wants.

#### Questions to ask your team/families:

- Why is the image of someone so important?
- What would reflecting God's image look like with our opponents? Our families? Our teammates?

### FOR PLAYERS:

There are probably kids at your school or in your neighborhood whose image is cool or tough. You might think others are geeky or brainiacs or class clowns. Their image is the impression you have of them because of the things they say and how they act. A person's image may not always mean that this is exactly what the person is like, but it does tell you a lot about them. It reflects what is going on in their heads and in their hearts. As we trust Him, God will give us the ability to have an image that reflects who He is. Think about what you know about God and what Jesus was like when He walked on earth, and that will give you a good idea of what that image would be like.

When you practice and play this week, think about these questions:

- What makes a person's image so important?
- How is my image like that of God? Of my parents? Of my friends?

### FOR PARENTS:

Have you ever noticed that the child who cannot pick up their own clothes off the floor can spend hours meticulously practicing a drill or a play in order to execute it just like the pros? Or how they could care less about the clean clothes you just washed because all they want to wear is the sweat-stained jersey of their favorite sports icon? Sure, it is all part of growing up, but it is also part of who we are as humans. When someone is worthy of our admiration, we want to be like them and to reflect their image. During this sports season, your child will have many opportunities to learn why God is worthy of our admiration and how He desires for us to reflect His image. Your child will learn that: He is worthy because He sent Jesus to pay the price for our sin; He is worthy because He has a plan for our welfare and our good; and He is worthy because we don't have to earn His love since He loves us just the way we are.

As a family, below are some things to talk about and questions that may be useful in helping your family discuss how God helps us to reflect His image through sports:

- Who are people that we admire and want to be like? Why?
- What are things that we admire about God?
- What would reflecting God's image look like in our home? At school or work? With friends?

## WHY GOD GIVES US SPORTS – TO GIVE HIM GLORY

### FOR COACHES:

You've stepped up, signed on the dotted line, took the leap of faith, and now you are a coach of a youth sports team. No award, plaque, or name on a hall of fame roster could ever live up to the measure of your worth. Just like you can honor God with the gifts He gives you, He has also given you opportunities in your leadership role to glorify Him. In that role you can honor Him through having patience as players learn the game and the skills required to play well. You will glorify God by when you model strong character and integrity with your team, their families, other coaches, and officials. You will bring glory to God when you manage your emotions, actions, and words particularly when things are not going as well as you want them to. God will receive honor if your mistakes or those of your team are opportunities for them to learn important life skills. And God will be glorified as you work to mold individual players into a team that works and plays well together.

This week think about the concept of how God uses sports to give Him glory. Below are some reflective questions, a discussion point, and questions to ask your team (and families):

#### Personal Reflection - Questions to ask yourself:

- Who are the things or people in my life that I give honor (or glory) to? Why?
- What gifts did God give me that I can use to honor Him? How am I using my gifts to honor God? My gaffes?

#### Discussion point to talk about with your team and their families:

- Sports give us an opportunity to give glory to God by using our gifts, our mistakes, and opportunities as a teammate.

#### Questions to ask your team/families:

- Why does God deserve glory or honor?
- How can we give glory to God in playing sports? At home? At school or work?

### FOR PLAYERS:

Have you ever received some type of honors or award? There were probably certain things that you had to do to deserve it. Maybe there were special skills you needed to reach this accomplishment but when you did, it probably felt pretty good to be recognized for your hard work and effort. Did you ever think about giving God an honor? Not anything like a certificate, or a medal, or a trophy, but honoring Him by using your talents and abilities in ways that are pleasing to Him and by helping others. You can also honor Him when you admit your mistakes. And you can give Him honor when you work hard to be a good member of your team.

When you practice and play this week, think about these questions:

- Why do we like to be honored for the things that we try to accomplish?
- How am I using the gifts God has given me to honor Him? How can I honor Him when I make a mistake?

### FOR PARENTS:

Your list of things deserving of honor might include God, country, our flag, and perhaps those things on God's list like parents, life, truth, worship, and property of others. Outwardly, honoring something or someone might look like an award or special recognition. Or respectful treatment. Perhaps a gift or a service. But what might honoring God look like? Honoring Him would begin by trusting in Him and recognizing His great sacrifice for us when He sent His Son Jesus to pay for our sins. Obedience to His commands is another way we honor God. As a parent (or grandparent) we have the opportunity to give Him glory through our words, serving Him and in how we treat others. Most of all, we should remember that God is deserving of our honor even when we are not deserving of His love and generosity toward us.

As a family, below are some things to talk about and questions that may be useful in helping your family discuss how God helps us to give Him glory through sports:

- Who or what are things that we honor as a family? Individually?
- What does it mean when we give our gifts to honor God?
- How can we honor God as a family? Individually?

## WHY GOD GIVES US SPORTS – TO HELP US PERSEVERE

### FOR COACHES:

After the rush of the first few practices and games, maybe things are not as exciting as they were in the beginning. Or maybe there have been problems with players or their families that you didn't see coming. Perhaps your own schedule has become more demanding making it harder and harder to motivate yourself much less your team. You might be looking at the end of season calendar and wishing it were sooner than later. It's tempting to just let things slide or even want to throw in the towel and give up. This week you and your team have been focusing on perseverance, staying committed even when quitting seems oh so desirable. Keep in mind that God has a purpose for your perseverance and its ability to build your character and confident hope in Him.

This week think about the concept of how God uses sports to help us persevere. Below are some reflective questions, a discussion point, and questions to ask your team (and families):

#### Personal Reflection - Questions to ask yourself:

- What are some examples of times when I've persevered? When I've seen others persevere?
- Why is it important to me to persevere? To my family and friends? To my players and their families?

#### Discussion point to talk about with your team and their families:

- God uses sports to help us persevere in order to build our character and give us hope

#### Questions to ask your team/families:

- Who are some examples of people you have heard of that have persevered?
- Why should we want to persevere?

### FOR PLAYERS:

Sometimes people start things and have trouble finishing them, so they want to quit. Maybe it was because they ran out of time or didn't realize how much work was going to be involved. Or maybe they realized they didn't know how to do something or didn't have all of the materials they needed. Maybe there was a problem like getting sick or hurt. Or it might be because it wasn't as much fun as they thought it would be. It wasn't as exciting as it was in the beginning. When a person finishes something in spite of challenges, that is called persevering. God wants you to persevere and will help you to stay committed to the things you start including sports. He will help you in overcoming or working through the challenges that might come your way.

When you practice and play this week, think about these questions:

- Who are people I can think of that have persevered when they had problems?
- Why is it important for me to persevere? At home? At school? In sports?

### FOR PARENTS:

Your child's involvement in sports this season probably feels like boot camp training in perseverance. Time gets away from you, and before you know it the kids have to be at practice or games not to mention dinner prepared for the hungry mob. Your job or other responsibilities demand 24/7 attention at a time when you long to concentrate on watching your child play. Maybe there are pressing family, health, or financial issues that keep your heart and mind divided. You feel like erasing your name where you signed on the dotted line when you committed to this. But take hope because these troubles, tribulations and terrors have some advantages. The Bible tells us that tribulation (or pressure) can bring about good in us and for us when we persevere. Persevering has a way of building us and strengthening our character, and without it, we have no hope of accomplishing those things we desperately desire.

As a family, below are some things to talk about and questions that may be useful in helping your family discuss how God helps us to persevere through sports:

- What are ways that our family has persevered when we have faced problems?
- What would happen if we all decided to quit everything we started?
- What does persevering look like in our actions when we face problems?
- Why does God want us to learn to persevere?

## WHY GOD GIVES US SPORTS – TO TRANSFORM US

### FOR COACHES:

Transformations is the true star of some reality TV shows. The TV personality guides the viewer through the challenges of remaking rust bucket cars, dilapidated homes or even men and women. Of course, there are always the expected bumps in the road that seem to have the potential to derail the transformation. But in the end, the viewer can't help but 'oooooh' and 'aaaah' over the spectacular results which are all wrapped up within a 60-minute episode. Each of these transformations are all spectacular, but they are typically external. God's greatest desire is to transform us to the image of Jesus His Son by transforming us on the inside. This season, God will put opportunities in your way for your transformation. They may come in the form of mental challenges in learning the game and how to best get your team to perform as a unit to the best of their ability. They may come in the form of spiritual challenges where God is calling you to reach out to Him for guidance, help and strength to learn dependence on Him. Take joy in knowing that His 'ooohs' and 'aaaahs' over your transformation will continue for your lifetime.

This week think about the concept of how God uses sports to transform us. Below are some reflective questions, a discussion point, and questions to ask your team (and families):

#### Personal Reflection - Questions to ask yourself:

- What transformations have I experienced in my life?
- How is God transforming my life now? Are there other areas that need transforming?

#### Discussion point to talk about with your team and their families:

- Sports give us an opportunity to be transformed so that we are more like God.

#### Questions to ask your team/families:

- Have you ever known anyone who was transformed or changed because of events in his/her life?
- What kinds of transformations might God want to make in my life?

### FOR PLAYERS:

You've probably studied the process of metamorphosis that caterpillars go through as they are transformed into one of the earth's most beautiful creatures, a butterfly. The transformation process isn't an easy one; the caterpillar outgrows its skin several times and the butterfly struggles to come out of its pupa. But it is all necessary to fulfill the purpose God intended for it. Though your life isn't like that of a butterfly, God designed you for transformation. Of course, you'll be transformed on the outside as you grow, but He also wants to see you transformed on the inside so that you become more and more like Him. The process may challenge, but He will use everything that you encounter in life to make that transformation process work for your good.

When you practice and play this week, think about these questions:

- Why is transformation so important?
- Are there ways that God is working to transform me?

### FOR PARENTS:

You've had a front row seat to one of the greatest transformations ever, the transformation of your child from baby to toddler to preschooler and now to a member of a sports team. Transformation is a necessary part of life even when the process is painful or difficult. This sports season take time to applaud the ways in which your child's life is transformed as he/she rises to the challenge of the physical demands of practices and games. Take advantage of opportunities to acknowledge transformations in their relationships as they make new friends and learn how to be a part of a team. Most importantly, celebrate the ways God is working to transform your child's life to make him/her more like Himself.

As a family, below are some things to talk about and questions that may be useful in helping your family discuss how God uses sports to transform us:

- Who are some people we know whose lives have been transformed for good? What happened?
- What ways has God transformed each one of us? Our whole family?