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The 360 Progression

As an Upward Basketball Coach, you play a major role in building your participants into total athletes through the exclusive 360 Progression – a uniquely designed sports experience that develops players mentally, athletically, spiritually and socially as they participate on your team. This unique approach is based on Luke 2:52 - "And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man."
**360 Coaching Keys**

To be a 360 Coach, there are some practical keys to coaching that are necessary for success

1. *Teach the game through drills* – The ability to execute proper drills enhances skill level and improves athletic foundations. Your practices should utilize drills that enhance skill development.

2. *Teach the rules of basketball* – For players to grow in the sport they must understand and apply the rules of the game. Take time to explain rules and why they are important.

3. *Instill sportsmanship with a competitive spirit* – In sports, winning and losing are a part of the game, just as it is for life. Knowing how to handle both in a positive way builds character in young athletes. Teach your players to play hard and play to win, but also teach them to put others before themselves with a positive attitude and sportsmanship.

4. *Communicate effectively* – In order to teach the rules, explain drills and teach sportsmanship, you have to be an effective communicator. Likewise, good communication and organizational skills are crucial in keeping parents informed throughout the season. This includes keeping them up to date on practice and game times and having a plan in place each and every practice.
Practice
Upward Basketball Coach App

As a coach, it’s important to stay organized and prepared for both practices and games. Upward Sports has a way to make coaching easy through the Upward Basketball Coach App. With this app, you will be able manage your team in a simple, paperless way throughout the season.

Here you will able to:

› Manage player/guardian information
› View practice plans
› Substitute players on game day
› Assign and track star distribution on game day

This FREE app is available on iPhone (iPad compatible) and Android phones. To utilize the app, you should receive an email from your league director that includes a link to MyUpward.org. Here you can log into the site using your username (which is your email address) and a password that you create. This login will not only give you access to the coach app, but also the coach resources at MyUpward.org.

Some of the many benefits of the coach app include:

› No data entry for your players! The coach app automatically imports all of your players’ and contact information into the app.

› The app will automatically import the practice plans (Coach’s Sidelines) for the age group you are assigned to coach. Also, once practice plans are downloaded to the app the first time, no internet connection is needed to access them from that point forward.

› You will be able to send a group email to all parents straight from the app.
## Suggested Practice Chart

Below is a suggested practice chart to help you organize your practices. This chart can be used in conjunction with the Coach’s Sidelines or it can be used independently. Either method will help you plan an organized practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Practice Focus</th>
<th>Team Meeting</th>
<th>Rules to Cover</th>
<th>Skills &amp; Drills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1        | - Get to know each other  
  - Evaluate skills  
  - Set practice rules | - Teammate introductions  
  - Discuss practice ground rules  
  - Introduce basic footwork, dribbling, and shooting skills | - Practice rules | - Footwork (see page 10)  
  - Dribbling (see page 13)  
  - Shooting (see page 20) |
| 2        | - Continue skill evaluation  
  - Teach passing fundamentals  
  - Teach positions and responsibilities | - Re-introduce players and coaches  
  - Discuss some common violations | - Traveling  
  - Double Dribbling  
  - Palming or Carrying the Ball | - Footwork (see page 10)  
  - Ball Handling (see page 15)  
  - Dribbling (see page 16)  
  - Shooting (see page 20) |
| 3 week of first game | - Review re-start situations  
  - Teach shooting fundamentals | - Review traveling double dribble, and palming the ball  
  - Discuss game format and substitution system | - No double-teaming  
  - No pressing in the backcourt | - Passing and Receiving (see page 17)  
  - Defense (see page 27)  
  - Rebounding (see page 24) |
| 4        | - Teach 3-second violation  
  - Discuss positions on the court  
  - Skill developments | - Review defensive rules  
  - Games situations and court spacing | - Three-second violation  
  - Common fouls  
  - Help defense | - Rebounding (see page 24)  
  - Defense (see page 27)  
  - Scrimmage or more drills |
| 5        | - Teach offensive movement  
  - Continue to teach court spacing | - Discuss practice focus  
  - Review the last game  
  - Review basic rules | - Review all rules as a fun quiz | - Offensive plays (see page 29)  
  - Areas the need improvement from the game |
| 6-11 through last practice | - Continue skill development  
  - Analyze game performances, coach through improvements | - Review the last game and improvements that need to be made  
  - Discuss practice focus | - Continue to review rules for clear understanding | - Work on both offense and defense  
  - Areas that need improvement |
Warm-Up Activities

Use the first five minutes of practice to get the players moving. This can be done by incorporating athletic development exercises like the examples below or by incorporating a drill from an earlier practice.

› *Leg and shoulder stretches* - With players sitting on the floor, have them stretch out their legs and touch their toes. For shoulder stretches, have players roll their arms forward and then backwards.

› *Donkey kicks* - With players in a standing position, have them jump up and kick their heels toward their backs.

› *Power jumps* - With players in a standing position and their arms above their heads, have them jump up and down.

› *Feet on fire (running in place)* - This drill helps players get their feet moving.

› *Jumping jacks* - Instruct players to count out loud.
**Skills and Drills**

This section reviews the fundamental skills of basketball, explains why each is important and emphasizes the skill’s basic teaching points. Each skill is followed by a basic drill that reinforces the skill. This drill is acceptable for any age group as it introduces the concept of the skill.

*For more drills for each skill, as well as complete practice plans, go to MyUpward.org.*

Many of the drills described in this playbook require one ball per player. If you are limited in the number of balls you have for practice, you will need to modify the drill by creating lines based on the number of balls you have available.

**KEY TO DIAGRAMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Player movement without the ball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dribble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Shoot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Rebound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Screen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COACH</td>
<td>Coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>Sequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Use this key for the drills located on pages 9-30.*
Footwork

Proper footwork promotes balance, quickness, and readiness to make something happen on the court. Being proficient at this skill will improve a player’s performance both offensively and defensively. Here are the three basic footwork skills:

Triple Threat Position

› Provides a player the option to pass, shoot, or dribble
› Position the basketball in the “shooting pocket” with shooting elbow over knee
› Have “strong hands” with possession of the basketball so that defenders cannot easily knock the ball away

Jump Stop

› Allows a player to establish a pivot with either foot off a dribble or pass
› Leap/jump should be low to the floor (like sitting in a chair), not a high jump
› Both feet hit floor at the same time – good balance
› Land on floor in triple threat position
› Use when catching a pass; teach “ball in air/feet in air” concept

Front Pivot and Reverse Pivot

› Lift heel, protect ball, stay low, and lead with elbow
› Allows a player to pivot in one or more directions by keeping one foot planted on the ground
› Allows an offensive player to move away from defenders while protecting the basketball
› Skill is also important for setting screens and rebounding

**Footwork Drills**

**Footwork Line Drills (no basketball required)**

1. Players form lines on baseline or sideline – two players deep
2. Use cones or mark the court for starting/stopping spots – minimum 3 spots
3. No basketball necessary – players dribble and hold imaginary basketball
4. Players will start/stop on voice command or whistle
5. Players should stop at each spot with jump stop and land in triple threat position
6. Pause between stops/starts to check for proper balance
7. The second player in line starts as the preceding player leaves the first spot
**Rotate the following footwork line drills:**

› Jump Stop/Triple Threat
› Jump Stop/Triple Threat/Right Front Pivot
› Jump Stop/Triple Threat/Left Front Pivot
› Jump Stop/Triple Threat/Right Reverse Pivot
› Jump Stop/Triple Threat/Left Reverse Pivot

Have each player raise his or her hand in the air that coincides with the desired pivot direction. This will help each player pivot in the correct direction.

**Variation:** Add basketballs after your players understand the above concepts. Allow them to practice the above skills after picking up their dribble and receiving passes.

**Pivot Drill (no basketball required)**

› Players should spread out in your practice area – no basketball necessary
› Players start in triple threat position, protecting an imaginary basketball
› Instruct players to establish a pivot foot
› Practice half-turns and front/reverse pivots
› Repeat with opposite foot established as the pivot

**Variation:** Add basketballs and defenders after your players understand the above concepts. Allow them to practice the above skills after picking up their dribble and receiving passes.
Ball Handling and Dribbling

An adept ball handler and dribbler can make things happen on the court. Mastering these skills can help create open shots, obtain better passing angles, and lead to fewer turnovers. A great offensive player must be able to handle the ball!

› Dribble with fingers, not palms – similar to typing on a keyboard
› Proper body position, with knees bent and body flexed at the waist
› Keep head up – see the court
› Protect the basketball – use your non-dribbling arm as an “arm bar”, meaning sticking it outward with the elbow slightly bent to protect the dribble from defenders reaching in
› Work both hands – be able to go right and left
› When picking up a dribble, end in triple threat position
Basic Dribbling Skills:

Control Dribble (Use against defensive pressure)

› With body turned to the side, dribble basketball near the back knee
› Keep the dribble low and compact, below the knees
› Non-dribbling arm should be held out in front of the body to protect the ball from defenders - arm bar

Speed Dribble (Use to push the ball up the court and on fast break situations)

› Dribble is pushed out in front of the body but controlled
› Dribble is higher and softer

Retreat Dribble (Use to avoid defensive pressure and to keep dribble alive)

› Dribble backward (hop back) to avoid pressure
› Dribble requires a change in speed and change in direction
› Dribble teaches players not to habitually pick up their dribble when heavy, defensive pressure is applied

Crossover Dribble (Use to break down a defender; good penetration move)

› Dribble must be kept low when crossing over from one hand to another, keeping it away from the defender
› Use head and shoulder fakes to help “sell” the move
› Goal is to get the defender on his or her heels
› Explode to the basket with speed dribble after the crossover
Whirl Pivot Dribble (Use to avoid defensive pressure and to dribble by defender)

› Pull the basketball through low during the pivot
› Keep the basketball in the same hand until completing the pivot
› Pivot should be low and quick with head up
› Explode to the basket with speed dribble after the whirl pivot

Behind the Back Dribble (Use to break down a defender; good penetration move)

› Use head and shoulder fakes to help “sell” the move
› Swing the basketball behind your waist, turning the hips and driving the ball down with a snap of the wrist
› Slap opposite back thigh during the exchange

Ball Handling Drills (team drills)
(one basketball per player or divide your team into two groups)

› **Ball Slams** – With feet shoulder-width apart, have players slap the basketball with fingers spread wide. Players should “slam” the ball by alternating their right and left hands.

› **Fingertip Drill** – With feet shoulder-width apart, players pass the basketball from hand to hand in front of the body using only the fingertips. Move ball from ankles, to knees, to waist, to chest, to head, and to above head using the fingertips. Encourage players to keep their arms straight.
**Dribbling Drills**

**Dribbling Line Drills (three to five basketballs required)**

During all dribbling line drills, you should stand in front of the players to teach, encourage, and evaluate each player’s performance.

1. Players form lines on baseline or sideline (two players deep) – one basketball per line
2. Use cones or chairs to represent stopping/starting points or change - of-dribble spots
3. Players will begin the drills in triple threat position
4. Players will start/stop/change dribble on voice command or whistle
5. Pause between stops/starts to check for balance, arm bar, and if head is up
6. At the turnaround point, require jump stops with pivots
7. Work opposite hand on return dribble
8. Players should end drills with a jump stop, giving the basketball to the next player in line

**Rotate the following dribbling line drills:**

1. Speed Dribble
2. Speed Dribble/Control Dribble - on command, stationary control dribble
3. Speed Dribble/Retreat Dribble - on command, two to three dribbles backward against imaginary defender followed by speed dribble
Passing and Receiving

Passing and receiving a basketball allows a team to effectively move the ball quickly around the court. A team that has players with strong passing and receiving skills will spread the defense and be hard to guard.

Passing Teaching Points:

› Two hands on the basketball, with fingers on the sides of the ball
› Ball in middle of body
› Step toward target
› Push thumbs through ball and snap wrists, creating backspin on the basketball
› Extend arms completely as you follow through toward target

Receiving Teaching Points:

› Both hands up in ready position – show a target
› Step toward the ball when passed – meet the pass
› “Ball in air/feet in air” concept – leads to jump stop, triple threat position, and ability to pivot with either foot
› Look the ball into the hands

Basic Passing Skills

Two-Hand Chest Pass

› Basketball is held with two hands at chest level
› Keep elbows out and wide
› Passer targets the receiver’s chest area
› Passer steps toward their target with either foot as the ball is thrown
› Snap the thumbs down extending the arms
Two-Hand Bounce Pass
› Basketball is held with two hands at chest level
› Passer aims for a spot on the floor about two-thirds (a little more than halfway) of the way to the receiver
› Passer targets the receiver’s chest area from the bounce

Overhead Pass
› Basketball is held with two hands above head
› Passer targets the receiver’s chest area

Passing and Receiving Drills
Distance Passing (one basketball for each pair of players)
Be sure to incorporate all three basic passes into this drill.
1. Pair up players and have them face each other six to eight feet apart
2. Instruct players to pass the basketball back and forth using a chest pass
3. After several repetitions, have each player take one to two steps backwards and continue passing
4. Continue moving players back until they are passing from a challenging distance
Two Line Passing (two basketballs required)

Two pairs of players can perform this drill at one time.

1. Pair up players and have them face each other six to eight feet apart
2. Establish a starting and turnaround point
3. One player in each pair needs a basketball
4. Using defensive slides, players move up and then back down the court
5. While sliding, instruct players to pass the basketball back and forth using a chest pass
6. Players pass the ball immediately upon receiving the ball

Variations: Both players running up and down the court, rather than sliding. You may also require the receiver to perform a jump stop upon catching the basketball and immediately passing it to his or her moving partner.
**Shooting**

*Shooting Teaching Points:*

› Square up shoulders to the basket
› Ball on fingertips, not palms
› Opposite hand should be lightly placed on side of ball (balance/weak hand)

*Practice BEEF principles:*

› **Balance** – Learn to prepare for the shot by stopping with the feet set, knees slightly bent, ready to jump (good triple threat position)
› **Elbow** - Proper shooting alignment; ball should be directly over the elbow with the wrist cocked
› **Eyes** - Pick a spot (front of the rim, back of the rim, etc.) and focus on that target as the shot is being attempted
› **Follow through** - Release the ball smoothly, completely extend the arm, and snap the wrist, which should create good backspin on the basketball
**Shooting Drills**

*Lay-Up Steps (no basketball required)*

Instruct your players to shout “STEP-HOP-SHOOT” when performing this drill. Mirror this drill to practice left-handed lay-ups.

1. Allow players to spread out in your practice area, at least four to five feet apart
2. Players start in triple threat position, holding imaginary basketballs with heads up and eyes on the target
3. On the STEP command, players step with their left foot (right-handed lay-ups)
4. On the HOP command, players raise their right knee and right arm toward the basket (visualize a string connecting a player’s right arm and right leg)
5. On the SHOOT command, players extend their right arm as they shoot an imaginary ball

*Wall Shooting (one basketball per player or divide your team into two groups)*

This is a great drill to keep idle players busy while running a drill on the court that may not involve your entire team.

1. Player stands about four to five feet away from the wall
2. Help the player find a reasonable shooting target on the wall
3. Player assumes triple threat position
4. Player shoots the ball at the target, concentrating on elbow in and full extension
5. Player should finish the shot up on his or her toes with proper follow through, creating good backspin

**Variation:** If coaching third- through sixth-grade players, allow them to shoot using only their shooting/strong hand.
Two Line Shooting Drills
(one or two basketballs required)

Players rotate lines after each turn. After several repetitions shooting from one side of the goal, change the designation of both lines and shoot from the other side of the court.

1. Players form two lines opposite the goal in each corner of practice area: a shooting line and a rebounding line (use cones or chairs to mark a starting point)

2. Shooting line: Assume triple threat position, showing ready hands to receive a pass

3. Rebounding line: Players should block out an imaginary defender and rebound the ball above their head.

4. The player from the rebounding line secures the rebound and dribbles to a designated cone, makes a good jump stop landing in triple threat position, and uses proper passing techniques when passing to the next shooter in line

5. Shooter receives the basketball and performs the drill as instructed by a coach
Rotate the following two line shooting drills:

› **Lay-ups** – Stress jumping off the proper foot and using the backboard (STEP-HOP-SHOOT)

› **Pull-up Off the Dribble** – Set a cone at desired shooting spot (stress good jump stop and use of backboard when shooting from appropriate angle)


**Rebounding**

When discussing offensive rebounding, remind players that each shot taken by a teammate is a pass to them! Second chance points (put-backs) can be a big contributor to a team’s offensive production.

**Rebounding Teaching Points:**

› Defensive player stays between the opponent and the basket

› Using a front or reverse pivot, the defensive player pivots and makes contact with the opponent’s body when the ball is shot (“block out”)

› Defensive players should yell “shot” to signal a rebounding opportunity

› Hold the “block out” position momentarily, with the head up and body facing the goal

› Release the “block out” - be hungry for the basketball

› Secure the basketball

› Be strong with the basketball, keeping the ball at chin level with elbows out
Rebound Outlet Drill – no defender (one basketball required)

1. Facing the basket, players form two lines: one at the corner of the free-throw line (elbow), the other at the foul line extended (wing)
2. Coach stands at the other elbow with a basketball. Coach throws the ball off the backboard closest to him/her
3. The first player in line at elbow catches the rebound with strong hands, elbows out, and ball to the chin. He/she then pivots toward the first player in the wing line and throws a two-handed chest pass
4. Player from the wing line passes ball back to the coach
5. Both players swap lines and drill is repeated with second players in each line
Rebound Outlet Drill – with defender (one basketball required)

1. Facing the basket, players form two lines: one at each corner of the free-throw line

2. Place one player at each wing area to serve as an outlet receiver

3. The player in the front of each line will turn his back toward the basket (defensive player), facing the next player in line (offensive player)

4. When the coach shoots the basketball, the defensive players will yell “shot” and pivot into the offensive players to obtain a good “block out”

5. Offensive players cannot move

6. Once a defender secures the basketball, he or she will pivot and throw a crisp overhead outlet pass to an outlet receiver

7. Players rotate from offense/to defense/to outlet receiver/to back of the line

Variations:

› Use one line instead of two

› When the ball is shot, the offense can move and try to score off a missed shot
Defense

Defense Teaching Points:

› Proper defensive stance
  › Stand with feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart
  › Knees bent, with waist slightly bent forward
  › Good balance – ready to move and slide
  › Place weight on the inside front of the feet but not on the toes
  › Extend arms to the side, slightly bent
  › Open hands, so palms face the offensive player
  › Eyes on the offensive player’s chest or “head on the ball”

› Ball/you/basket principle: When the offensive player being guarded has the ball, the defensive player should stay between this assigned offensive player with the basketball and the basket

› See the ball at all times

› Sprint down the floor on a change of possession, stopping any fast breaks
Defense Drills

Defensive Slides (no basketball required)
Focus on players’ feet sliding (rather than hopping or skipping) and players maintaining a proper defensive stance. Have fun with this drill! Allow players to express enthusiasm and desire by slapping the playing floor and yelling “DEFENSE” on command. Drill should last 20-30 seconds. Allow short rest and repeat as desired.

1. Allow players to spread out in practice area, at least four to five feet apart
2. On command, players yell “DEFENSE” and freeze in the defensive stance
3. On command (either verbal or hand signals), players will slide left, right, up, and back

Zigzag (no basketball required)
Focus on players making a drop step each time they turn (rather than crossing their feet) and on players sliding correctly while maintaining a proper defensive stance.

1. Form a line of players at one end of your practice area
2. Set-up cones or chairs in a zigzag pattern, spaced 10-12 feet apart (minimum 3 spots)
3. On command, the first player in line will assume the correct defensive stance and will slide in a zigzag pattern as dictated by the cones or chairs
4. Next player in line starts as the preceding player leaves first spot
5. As each player reaches the final spot, he or she should sprint back to the end of the line
Offensive Plays

The following offensive plays are provided to help your team with floor spacing and floor balance. These plays are intended for Levels 3 and 4.

Reminder: View the Skills and Drills videos on the coach section of MyUpward.org for live demonstrations of the following offensive plays.

Half-Court Sets

Box Set – Motion

Scoring Options:

1. Player 5 posting up down on ball-side block
2. Player 4 coming off of low screen
3. Player 3 cutting to the free-throw line
   › Players 2, 3, 4, and 5 are in the “box” offensive set (diagram 1)
   › Player 1 (point guard) yells “MOTION” or “GO” to start the play (player 1 should keep dribble alive until making a pass)
   › Players 4 and 5, who are standing outside the lane area at the free-throw line extended areas, will screen down for players 2 and 3 (diagram 2)
   › Before the screens occur, players 2 and 3 will take two to three steps toward the lane area (to set up their defenders) and then make hard V-cuts to their respective wing areas (diagram 2)
› Player 1 will pass the basketball to player 2 or 3 (assume player 2 in this example) who will square up to the basket (diagram 3)

› Player 5, post player on the ball-side of the court, will post up for two seconds (diagram 3)

› After two seconds, player 5 will screen away for opposite post player - player 4 (diagram 3)

› As player 5 turns to screen away for the opposite post player, player 3 will cut toward the free-throw line and player 1 will “fill” his or her spot at the wing (diagram 3)

› If a pass cannot be made to player 4 coming off the low screen or to player 3 on the cut to the lane area, player 3 will move to the top of the key area to receive a pass from player 2 (diagram 4)

› If the pass is made to player 3 at the top of the key area, team will be in the “box” offensive set again (diagram 5)
**Box Set – (Double Down)**

**Scoring Options:**

1. Player 3 coming off of low screen
2. Player 2 coming off the double screen

**Procedure:**

1. Players 2, 3, 4, and 5 are in the “box” offensive set
2. Player 1 (point guard) yells “DOUBLE” or “GO” to start the play (player 1 should keep dribble alive until making a pass)
3. Player 1 dribbles to right-side of the goal - can go to right or left (diagram 1)
4. As player 1 dribbles to the wing area (attack zone), player 2 will screen away for player 3 (diagram 1)
5. Player 3 cuts to the ball-side block area hoping to receive a pass from player 1 (diagrams 1 and 2)
6. As player 3 cuts to the ball-side block area, players 4 and 5 will set a double screen in the middle of the lane for player 2 (diagram 2)
7. Player 1 looks for player 2 as he or she curls around the screen for an open jump-shot (diagram 3)
**Inbounds Plays**

**Stack (baseline)**

1. All four players line-up straight across from the player throwing in the basketball (diagram 1)

2. When the passer slaps the basketball or yells “break,” the players move simultaneously as follows (diagram 2):
   - First player in line breaks to ball-side corner
   - Second player in line cuts to opposite block
   - Third player in line moves straight down to block area toward the ball
   - Fourth player in line takes two to three steps back, serving as a safety valve

*Reminder: This play can also be used on the sideline, with players moving in the same pattern as above.*
Box (baseline)

› Each player takes a spot outside the lane area, with the post players (Players 4 and 5) at the block areas and the perimeter players (Players 1 and 2) at the free-throw line extended areas. Player 3 will throw in the basketball (diagram 1).

› When the passer slaps the basketball or yells “break,” the players move as follows:

Box Option #1:

1. Player 5 sets a diagonal screen for Player 1 (diagram 2)

2. Player 1 waits for the screen and moves toward the basketball to the opposite block (diagram 2)

3. If Player 1 does not receive the basketball, he or she continues to the ball-side corner (diagram 3)

4. Player 4 moves up to set a screen on Player 5, who cuts down toward the weak-side block (diagram 3)

5. Player 4 rolls toward the middle of the lane after setting the screen (diagram 4)

6. Player 2 serves as a safety valve (diagram 4)
Box Option #2:
1. Players 4 and 5 screen up for Players 1 and 2 (diagram 1)
2. If a pass cannot be made to either 1 or 2, they each move to the closest corner (diagram 2)
3. After setting the screens, Players 4 and 5 should roll back toward the ball (diagram 2)

Box Option #3:
1. All four players will take one to two steps toward the closest sideline to set up their defenders (diagram 1)
2. Players 5 and 2 will both cross-screen for Players 4 and 1 on the weak-side (diagram 1)
3. After setting a screen, Player 5 will turn around with ready hands (diagram 2)
4. Player 2 will roll back to ball-side, free-throw line extended area to serve as a safety valve (diagram 2)

Note: All inbounds plays - Players should use fakes and jab steps to set up their defenders and get open. Encourage players coming off a screen to rub shoulders with the screener. As the person throwing in the basketball can pass to any teammate, encourage ready hands.
**Mid-Practice Huddles (Devotions)**

The below chart is designed to assist you as you organize and prepare for your devotions known as the mid-practice huddle. It shows the virtues and verses for each group of practices. These will be the focus of your practice devotions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Number</th>
<th>Virtue</th>
<th>Verse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None (Scripture learning begins at Practice 2.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(&quot;Get to Know You&quot; time)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Weeks 2-4</td>
<td>Honor</td>
<td>Love one another deeply. Honor others more than yourselves.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Romans 12:10 (NIrV)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weeks 5-7</td>
<td>Endurance</td>
<td>Blessed is the person who keeps on going when times are hard.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>James 1:12a (NIrV)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weeks 8-10</td>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being certain of</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>what we do not see.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Hebrews 11:1 (NIrV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last practice of the season</td>
<td>Gospel Presentation</td>
<td>For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16 (NIV)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Mid-Practice Huddle – Devotion 1**

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Gather the players together and get them to sit in a circle.
- Toss a basketball to a player and have them share their name and the place they would go if they could go anywhere in the world for a week.
- Be sure each player gets a turn to share.

Once everyone has shared their name and where they would like to go, instruct players with the following:

We all have our favorite places to go. But I wonder what you think about a few other places you’d like to go for a week. I want you to give each a “thumbs up” if you like it, or a “thumbs down” if you don’t. Ready?...

- The jungles of Brazil
- The trash dump
- The Swiss Alps
- The Chocolate Factory
- The Moon
- The South Pole
- The Caves of New Zealand

That was fun! Getting to know each other better is something that we’ll do a lot of this season. As a team, we’ll work hard to encourage one another to do our best at practices and games!

At the end of each game, we will focus on five important attributes. You will be recognized for one of these attributes through your actions, attitude, and words during the game.

- The first attribute is *EFFORT*: What does it mean to show effort? It means working hard to try your best at all times.
· Next is **SPORTSMANSHIP**: What does it mean to show sportsmanship? It means treating the people you play with and against the same way you want to be treated. You show respect for yourself, your teammates, opponents, the referees and the coach. You play fair and follow the rules.

· The third attribute is **OFFENSE**: What should you do when you play offense? The offense is responsible for scoring points. This means doing your best while trying to move the ball forward together as a team to score a basket.

· There’s also **DEFENSE**: What should you do when you play defense? The defense is responsible for preventing points from being scored. This requires staying with the player you are guarding and moving your feet to stay in good position to prevent a basket.

· And finally, one of the most important attributes is **CHRISTLIKENESS**: What does it mean to be Christlike? Being Christlike means to do your best to imitate Jesus in every way – through words, attitude and actions. It means loving others and following God’s Word in the Bible; choosing God over the temptations in the world around you.

At each practice, we will stop to have a Mid-Practice Huddle. We will learn about God and learn virtues and Scripture verses together throughout the season.

Our team is going to have a great season! Let’s pray and then get back to practice. *(Lead the team in short PRAYER: as you thank God for all the players and a great season ahead.)*

**NOTES:**
Mid-Practice Huddle - Devotion 2

PRACTICE CARD REMINDER: IF INCLUDED IN YOUR COACH BOX, REMEMBER TO DISTRIBUTE THE PRACTICE CARDS ENTITLED “PRACTICE 2.”

INTRODUCE:

· **Virtue:** HONOR - Letting someone know you see how valuable they really are.

· **Scripture Verse:** Love one another deeply. Honor others more than yourselves. *Romans 12:10 (NIrV)*

*Bottom Line: Honor others by putting them first.*

(Peer example)

Have you ever hung out with someone who always had to win or get their way? Maybe they changed the rules in the middle of the game, or insisted it was their turn when it wasn’t. Is it fun to hang out with someone like that? Nope.

What would happen if everyone on our team did that? What if each of you tried to steal the ball all the time to make the shot and refused to pass to another teammate in a better position on the court? We wouldn’t win very many games if we didn’t play together as a team. When you always push to have things the way you want them, it doesn’t make you a very good brother or sister, son or daughter, teammate or friend.

For the next few practices, I want to talk to you about honor. Honor is letting someone know you see how valuable they really are. When it comes to honor, God has a thing or two to say about how we treat each other. One BIG way we can show honor is by choosing to put others first. Instead of always looking out for yourself, you first look around you to see how you can help someone else. It means that you think about others *before* you think about you.
So here’s my challenge to you this week. When you’re at home with your family or with a group of friends at school, just stop and listen to the people around you. Even if you think you have the best idea or you really want something for yourself, just stop and observe the people around you first. Maybe your idea will end up being the best idea. But maybe it won’t. When you choose honor, you’re showing the other person that he or she matters. So let’s honor others by putting them first this week.

Discussion Questions (3rd Grade and Up Only):

1. When you are most tempted to push your way to the front or be first? Is it when you play a game, line up at school or choose your dessert, etc?

2. Have you ever been around someone who always interrupts you when you’re talking or who NEVER lets you talk? How does that make you feel?

3. How does letting someone else go first show honor to the other person?

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, thanks for the reminder today to stop and listen to others. Before we push to get what we want, help us to remember to honor others and let them go first. We want our friends and family to know that they are important to us and that we care about what they have to say. Thanks for always listening when we ask for help. In Jesus’ name, amen.

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Mid-Practice Huddle - Devotion 3

COACH: DO NOT DISTRIBUTE PRACTICE CARDS AT THIS PRACTICE

REVIEW:

- **Virtue:** HONOR - Letting someone know you see how valuable they really are.

- **Scripture Verse:** Love one another deeply. Honor others more than yourselves. *Romans 12:10 (NIV)*

*Bottom Line:* Honor others by keeping your promise.

(Biblical Example: David and Mephibosheth – 2 Samuel 9)

Have you ever had someone make a promise that he didn’t keep? What if I made a promise that I would do the chicken dance in front of everyone if our team won three games in a row? But then after our third win, I refused to dance or acted like I’d never said that in the first place? It would be hard to trust me, wouldn’t it? The next time I made a promise, you probably wouldn’t believe me, right?

Part of being a good friend and honoring others is keeping your promises. There’s a great example of this from the Bible about a man named David. You may have heard of David and how he killed Goliath with a slingshot and one stone. After that crazy day on the battlefield, David became friends with King Saul’s son, Jonathan. In fact, they were best friends. David made a promise to Jonathan that no matter what happened, he would always take care of Jonathan’s family.

Fast forward to several years later. David is now the king and Jonathan has died. But David wanted to keep his promise to his friend. So he asked his servant if there was anyone left from Jonathan’s family. There was! Jonathan’s son was still alive. His name was Mephibosheth. That’s a crazy name, isn’t it? Can you say that with me? Mephibosheth. That’s a mouth full! Great job.
Mephibosheth had been in an accident when he was younger and now he was crippled. David told his servant to invite Mephibosheth to the palace. Mephibosheth was invited to eat from the King’s table, and King David provided a place for him to live and took care of him just as he’d promised he would.

Here’s what I love about this story. David didn’t have to do any of that. He’d made a promise to Jonathan long before he was the king. And Jonathan wasn’t there to see if David would follow through on what he said he would do. But still, David chose to show honor by keeping the promise he’d made.

We need to remember how important it is to say what we mean and mean what we say. If we want to show honor to others, we need to make sure the things we promise are the things we are really going to do. Because we honor others when we keep our promises. So, maybe I should work on my chicken dance skills, huh?

Discussion Questions (3rd Grade and Up Only):

1. Why do you think David kept his promise even after Jonathan had died?
2. Have you ever made a promise you didn’t keep? How do you think it made the other person feel?
3. How does keeping a promise show honor to someone else?

Let’s pray.

PRAYER:

Dear God, thank you for who you are – a God who ALWAYS keeps His promises. You show us how valuable we are to you by always doing what you say you will do. We aren’t perfect and we won’t always get this right. Help us to remember that the things we say are important and to honor others by keeping the promises we make. In Jesus’ name, amen.
Mid-Practice Huddle - Devotion 4

COACH: DO NOT DISTRIBUTE PRACTICE CARDS AT THIS PRACTICE

REVIEW:

- **Virtue:** HONOR - Letting someone know you see how valuable they really are.

- **Scripture Verse:** Love one another deeply. Honor others more than yourselves. Romans 12:10 (NIV)

Bottom Line: Honor others by giving them a chance.

(My World Example)

Raise your hand and name your favorite food. *(Pause and take a couple of answers from the team).* My favorite food is ____________ *(Pick a food that you really love but one that may seem unappetizing to a kid - like guacamole or some kind of casserole with lots of ingredients)* When you first look at this food, it might seem like it wouldn’t taste very good. In fact, I almost didn’t give it a try myself. But I’m so glad I did because now, it’s one of my favorite things to eat.

Sometimes, we look at something and decide it’s no good or we make a judgment about it before we have all the information. I’m not just talking about food, either. We can do this with people sometimes too. We look at someone and we decide that they’re not friendly or cool or smart or fast or funny.

Do you think it’s fair to judge someone before we know him or her? *(Pause for responses)* No way.

Remember, honor is letting someone know you see how valuable they really are. The Bible tells us in Romans 12:10 to “love one another deeply” and to “honor others more than yourselves.”
That means that you don’t just look at someone and decide what they’re like. It means you take the time to get to know them. Every person has value and worth because every person is made by God. So before you make a decision about what you think someone is like, remember that honor means every person is worth knowing. My challenge to you this week is to choose to honor others by giving them a chance.

You probably won’t be best friends with everyone. You’ll have more things in common with some kids more than others. But honoring others means that you do ask God to help you see every person the way He does. He loves each one of us and He wants us to love each other deeply too.

**Discussion Questions (3rd Grade and Up Only):**

1. When you hear the word “honor,” what does it make you think of?
2. Have you ever judged someone before you really knew them? What happened? Was your judgment right or wrong?
3. What do you think it means to honor others more than ourselves?

Let’s pray and ask God to help us remember to honor others by giving them a chance this week.

**PRAYER:**

Heavenly Father, thank you for loving each one of us just the way we are. Help us to choose words that honor others and to not make quick judgments before we have a chance to get to know someone. In Jesus’ name, amen.

**NOTES:**

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Mid-Practice Huddle - Devotion 5

PRACTICE CARD REMINDER: IF INCLUDED IN YOUR COACH BOX, REMEMBER TO DISTRIBUTE THE PRACTICE CARDS ENTITLED “PRACTICE 5.”

INTRODUCE:

· **Virtue:** ENDURANCE - Sticking with what you started even when it gets tough.

· **Scripture Verse:** Blessed is the person who keeps on going when times are hard. *James 1:12a (NIrV)*

*Bottom Line: I can stick with it even when things don’t go my way.*

(Peer Example)

When something doesn’t go your way, are you ever tempted to quit? What if every time something didn’t go your way on the basketball court you just gave up? How would that make the rest of the team feel? How would that affect our ability to play? The truth is, every single one of you is a valuable member of the team. I need each of you to make a choice to keep going, even if something not so awesome happens on the court.

That’s what endurance is all about. Endurance is sticking with what you started even when it gets tough. In James 1:12, it says, “Blessed is the person who keeps going when times are hard.” It doesn’t mean the hard things go away but it will mean, that in the end, you’ll be better off because you refused to give up.

When we’re down ten points or when the referee misses the foul or when you fall and think you can’t keep going, I want to challenge you to push yourself. You can keep going even if things aren’t going your way! But this isn’t just true on the basketball court.
Having endurance means finishing that project even when something breaks or doesn’t work the first time. It’s choosing to be kind even if the other person doesn’t return that kindness. It’s doing the right thing, even when everyone else is making a different choice.

I promise, you can keep going, even when you want to quit, even when it gets tough, even when things don’t go your way. I’m here to encourage you both on and off the court. As teammates, we can encourage each other too. But there is someone even greater, someone even stronger that can help us.

**Discussion Questions (3rd Grade and Up Only):**

1. When something doesn’t go your way, what do you usually do? Does it make you want to work harder or give in?
2. Can you think of a time when you saw someone keep going when you thought they would quit? What happened?
3. How do you think you might be “blessed” if you kept going with endurance and refused to quit?

Let’s pray and ask God for His help to keep going even when things don’t go our way.

**PRAYER:**

Heavenly Father, thank you for the chance to be a part of a team. Help us to remember to keep doing the right thing - the wise thing - on and off the court too. We want to stick with what we’ve started. Thanks for loving and for caring about each one of us. In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.

**NOTES:**
Mid-Practice Huddle - Devotion 6

COACH: DO NOT DISTRIBUTE PRACTICE CARDS AT THIS PRACTICE

REVIEW:

· **Virtue:** ENDURANCE - Sticking with what you started even when it gets tough.

· **Scripture Verse:** Blessed is the person who keeps on going when times are hard. *James 1:12a (NIrV)*

Bottom Line: *I can stick with it because it’s worth it.*

(Biblical Example – Galatians 6:9)

Can anyone raise your hand and tell me what we talked about at practice last week? I’ll give you a hint. It starts with an “e.” *(Pause for responses)* Yes! Endurance which is sticking with what you started even when it gets tough.

Check this out – in Galatians 6 verse 9, it says, “Let us not become tired of doing good. At the right time, we will gather a crop if we do not give up.” Did you catch that “gather a crop” part? What do you think this means? I’ll give you a little direction here – think about a farmer and how he plants and tends his crops.

*Give the kids a few minutes to talk about a farmer’s job – guide them to name all the things a farmer has to do (break up the ground, plant, provide water, watch out for pests, prune, etc.)*

Farmers don’t walk out into a field, throw out some seeds and then just wait to see what happens. They carefully tend to their crops, knowing that the care and time they put in will lead to a harvest later on. It takes work AND waiting.

The same is true when it comes to following God. Sometimes you might want to quit. Sometimes you might be tempted to do the wrong thing because it’s easier. When you’re tempted, think about that farmer who carefully tends
to his crop. Because doing the right thing isn’t just a one-time thing. It’s something we have to practice over and over again. It requires some sticking with it, even when the “sticking with it” gets hard. But when you do, it will be worth it! Think like a farmer and ask God to help you wait for that harvest.

Discussion Questions (3rd Grade and Up Only):

1. What would happen if you all decided to give up at our next basketball game once we were 10 or 15 points behind the other team?
2. Have you every helped plant a garden? What did you learn from that experience?
3. Have you ever kept doing the right thing even though no one else was? What happened?

Let’s pray and ask God to help us continue to do the right thing.

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, thanks for reminding us that we can keep doing the right thing and that it takes practice. Remind us that you are with us and that you will always help us. In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.

NOTES:
Mid-Practice Huddle - Devotion 7

COACH: DO NOT DISTRIBUTE PRACTICE CARDS AT THIS PRACTICE

REVIEW:

- **Virtue:** ENDURANCE - Sticking with what you started even when it gets tough.

- **Scripture Verse:** Blessed is the person who keeps on going when times are hard. James 1:12a (NIrV)

Bottom Line: I can stick with it because God is with me.

(My World Example)

For the last couple of weeks, we’ve been talking about endurance. What does endurance mean? *(Pause for responses)*

Yes! Endurance is sticking with what you started even when it gets tough. This is big in basketball. Basketball is a quick moving sport that requires lots of running. The game moves fast and the score can change quickly. You have to stay with it and keep moving and playing your hardest until that final buzzer. That’s why we run so many drills in practice to help build up your endurance.

I know that sometimes it’s hard to keep going. But one thing that will help is to remember that you’re not alone, you are part of a team! On the court, you can keep going because you can see your teammates working hard. You also have me, your parents and friends in the stands cheering you on.

Endurance isn’t just a basketball thing. Doing the right thing requires endurance too. It’s easy to do the right thing when everyone around you is making the wise choice. But the truth is, most of the time, doing the right thing isn’t what the rest of the group is doing.

Here’s the really cool thing: even if you’re the only one choosing to do the right thing, you aren’t alone. God is with you. You can keep making wise choices, you can continue
to be kind, you can tell the truth and be honest even when lying seems like the easy way out because God is on your side. He is right there with you, ready to help you even if it gets tough. Remember, you can stick with it because God is with you.

Discussion Questions (3rd Grade and Up Only):

1. Tell me about a time in one of our games or practices when you were tempted to quit.
2. What does endurance mean to you?
3. How does it help you to know that when you do the right thing, you are never alone? What is one way you can help yourself remember that God is with you?

Let’s pray.

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, thank you for reminding us that we are never alone. We can stick with it and keep doing the right thing because You are with us. Help us to remember that this week. In Jesus’ name, amen.

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Mid-Practice Huddle – Devotion 8

Practice Card Reminder: If included in your coach box, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled “Practice 8.”

*If this is your next to last practice, be sure distribute a copy of “The Second Chance” DVD (if included in your coach box) to each of your players. Encourage them to watch it with their parent(s) before the last practice of the season. The story in the video will be reviewed at the last practice as you present the gospel to your team. It’s also very important that you watch the video prior to your last practice as well. You can view it by logging into the Upward Coach website and clicking on ”The Second Chance” tab. Also, at your last practice, be sure to use the last practice devotion guide found on MyUpward.org.

INTRODUCE:

- **Virtue:** FAITH - Believing what Jesus did can change me.

- **Scripture Verse:** Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being certain of what we do not see. Hebrews 11:1 (NIrV)

Bottom Line: The story of Jesus changes how I forgive others.

(Peer Example)

For the next few practices, we’re going to talk about what it means to have faith. You may not realize it but you put your faith in things all the time. You have faith that your mom or dad will wake you up in the morning for school. You have faith that the school bus will show up to get you there on time. You even have faith that I’ll show up to teach you a thing or two about basketball each week!
Faith is believing what Jesus did can change me. You might be thinking, “Change? What do I need to change?” Well, I’m not talking about changing your hair or eye color or changing the things you like or don’t like. Actually, this “change” refers to a problem. And the Bible calls that problem “sin.” Sin is basically anything you do, say or think that’s wrong. And because God is perfect, our sin separates us from Him. So God sent Jesus to take the punishment for our sin so that you and I could be forgiven. That means that when you choose to trust Jesus and what He did for you on the cross, you’re forgiven.

Let’s think about forgiveness for a minute. Have you ever done something wrong, something that maybe hurt someone else and you felt really bad about it? Did you say you were sorry and ask for forgiveness? I know what that feels like too.

Share an example of a time as a kid when someone forgave you and the Scripture you have of how it felt to be forgiven.

In Ephesians 4:32, it says, “Be kind and tender to one another. Forgive each other, just as God forgave you because of what Christ has done.” This verse reminds us that because of what Jesus did for us on the cross, we are forgiven. And forgiven people should forgive others.

Think about how you felt when you realized the person you had hurt had forgiven you. Think about how it feels to know that God has forgiven you too. He sent Jesus to the cross so that you and I could be forgiven. So the next time someone hurts or disappoints you and you feel yourself getting angry or wanting to hold a grudge, remember that forgiven people should forgive people. The story of Jesus and what He’s done for you should change how you forgive others.
Discussion Questions (3rd Grade and Up Only):

1. What are some things that you can see that you put your faith in everyday?

1. How does it feel when someone forgives you?

2. Does knowing that you are forgiven help you to forgive others? Why or why not?

It’s a lot easier to talk about than it is to actually do, so let’s pray and ask God to help to us to forgive others as He's forgiven us.

PRAYER:

Dear God, thank you for sending your son Jesus so that we could be forgiven for the wrong things we’ve done. Help us to remember this week that because we’ve been forgiven, we need to forgive others too. In His name, we pray, amen.

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Mid-Practice Huddle – Devotion 9

Coach: Do NOT distribute practice cards at the end of this practice.

*If this is your next to last practice, be sure distribute a copy of “The Second Chance” DVD (if included in your coach box) to each of your players. Encourage them to watch it with their parent(s) before the last practice of the season. The story in the video will be reviewed at the last practice as you present the gospel to your team. It’s also very important that you watch the video prior to your last practice as well. You can view it by logging into the Upward Coach website and clicking on “The Second Chance” tab. Also, at your last practice, be sure to use the last practice devotion guide found on MyUpward.org.

REVIEW:

- **Virtue:** FAITH - Believing what Jesus did can change me.
- **Scripture Verse:** Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being certain of what we do not see. Hebrews 11:1 (NIrV)

Bottom Line: The story of Jesus changes everything.
(Biblical Example: Jesus’ Life on Earth - The Gospels)

You will need paper and markers/ pencils this week!

Select 3 players to help you. Without letting the rest of the team hear you, instruct each volunteer to draw one of the images from the list below:

- A manger/ feed box
- 5 small loaves of bread and 2 fish
- A cross

Volunteers will hold up the images per your instructions

Today, I want to tell you the story of Jesus’ life on earth. One
day, an angel appeared to a young girl named Mary. The angel told Mary she would have a baby and that she would name him Jesus. Mary was confused but she chose to trust God and His plan. Mary and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem and the time came for Jesus to be born.”

Motion for the first player to hold up his manger/ feed box drawing

Because there was no place to stay, Jesus, the one and only son of God, the Savior, was born in a stable, surrounded by animals. That same night, there were shepherds out in the field, watching their sheep when an angel appeared to tell them about Jesus’ birth. Then a whole crowd of angels appeared, praising God! The shepherds ran to Bethlehem and found baby Jesus lying in the manger. They were so excited and ran to tell everyone about what they had seen!

Motion for the second player to hold up his fish/ loaves drawing

But Jesus didn’t stay a baby. He grew up just like you’re growing up. As an adult, He taught others about God. He healed the sick and performed many miracles like feeding over 5000 people with one boy’s lunch.”

Motion for the third player to hold up his cross drawing

At the end of His time on earth, Jesus was wrongly accused and sentenced to die on the cross. He suffered and died, not because He’d done anything wrong but because He chose to take the punishment for our sin. But that wasn’t the end. Because three days later, Jesus rose again! He appeared to His followers and friends to prove that nothing, not even death, could stop Him. Jesus’ life, death, burial and resurrection changes everything! It means that you and I can put our faith and trust in Jesus and have a relationship with God forever. (to the volunteers) Thanks so much for your help.

Send the players back to sit with the rest of the team.
The story of Jesus changes everything. We can be sure that God is who he says He is, even if we can’t see Him. Because God sent his son, Jesus, to live on this earth as a real person, who experienced the same things we do.

Maybe you’ve heard the story of Jesus before. Maybe this is your first time to hear it. I want you to know that I have a relationship with Jesus and it’s made all the difference in my life. I am so thankful to know that Jesus died for me and that I am forgiven. I will spend eternity in heaven one day with God forever – not because of anything I’ve done but because of what Jesus did for me. The story of Jesus changes EVERYTHING.

It’s okay to have questions about this if you’re unsure. You can certainly ask me, your mom, dad or another trusted adult. And you can always talk to God.

**Discussion Questions (3rd Grade and Up Only):**

1. Is there any part of the story of Jesus that you’ve never heard before or that you find confusing?

2. If Jesus wasn’t guilty (meaning, He’d never done anything He shouldn’t have done), why do you think He was willing to die?

3. Has someone ever done something for you even though you’d been unkind or didn’t deserve it? How did that make you feel?

**PRAYER:**

Heavenly Father, thank you for the story of Jesus. Thank you for sending your only son so that we could know you. As we learn about His life on earth, help us to understand what it means to each one of us. Help us to see that Jesus’ death and resurrection means we are forgiven and can have a relationship with you forever. We love you. In Jesus’ name, amen.
Mid-Practice Huddle – Devotion 10

Coach: Do NOT distribute practice cards at the end of this practice.

*If this is your next to last practice, be sure distribute a copy of “The Second Chance” DVD (if included in your coach box) to each of your players. Encourage them to watch it with their parent(s) before the last practice of the season. The story in the video will be reviewed at the last practice as you present the gospel to your team. It’s also very important that you watch the video prior to your last practice as well. You can view it by logging into the Upward Coach website and clicking on ”The Second Chance” tab. Also, at your last practice, be sure to use the last practice devotion guide found on MyUpward.org.

REVIEW:

· **Virtue:** FAITH – Believing what Jesus did can change me.

· **Scripture Verse:** Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being certain of what we do not see. Hebrews 11:1 (NIRV)

**Bottom Line:** The story of Jesus is for everybody.

(My World Example)

Last week, we talked about the life of Jesus. We learned about how He came to earth as a baby, grew up to become an adult, taught others about God and then gave His life for us. Does anyone remember why Jesus gave His life? It’s a little word that starts with an “s”. *(Pause for responses.)* Yes, Jesus came to take the punishment for the wrong things we do which the Bible calls “sin.” We can put our faith in Jesus and what He did for us because the story of Jesus is for everybody.
John 3:16 says: “God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son. Anyone who believes in Him will not die but have eternal life.” Wow! God loves who? (Pause.) Yes. God loves the world.

Who is the world? (Pause.) Yes! That’s everyone. That’s people who go to church and people who don’t. That’s smart people, rich people, poor people, people of every race and color. That’s people who’ve hurt others and people who’ve spent all their lives helping others. God loves the strong and the weak, the healthy and the sick, the young and the old.

God loved the world SO much that He sent Jesus for everyone. Faith is the choice we make to believe that what Jesus did can fix that broken relationship. And that choice to trust Jesus in faith changes everything. I’m so thankful that God sent us Jesus and that His story – the story of Jesus – is for everyone.

**Discussion Questions (3rd Grade and Up Only):**

1. Why is sin such a big deal?
2. Why do you think it’s hard sometimes to put our faith in God?
3. Do you believe that the story of Jesus is for everybody? Why or why not?

Let’s pray.

**PRAYER:**

Heavenly Father, thank you for sending your only Son, Jesus to the earth. You loved the world – each one of us – so much that you sent Jesus to fix our sin problem. Help us to understand what this means so that we can put our trust in you. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.
**Mid-Practice Huddle – Last Practice of the Season**

**Practice Card Reminder:** At the end of practice, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled “Last Practice.”

*Coach: Prior to presenting this practice huddle, make sure you have watched “The Second Chance” (found by going to your coach webpage on MyUpward.org). The devotion below will present the gospel by reviewing the story of “The Second Chance”. Also, remember to invite the parents to join in with this week’s special devotion.*

**Scripture Verse:** For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. *John 3:16 (NIV)*

I hope you all have had the chance to watch the “The Second Chance” we told you about this past week. It’s actually a story that we actually can all relate to. Remember Scott? He was being punished for doing something wrong in a game. Do you remember what he did? *(Hold for responses)* That’s right. Because he got two technical fouls for pushing an opponent, showboating, and yelling at the referee. What did the coach tell Scott he would have to do as his punishment? *(Hold for responses)* Right again. He would have to sit out the championship game.

See, what Scott did was sin. Do you remember what the coach said that sin is? *(Hold for responses)* Sin is anything we think, say or do that displeases God. We know what those things are by reading the Bible. If you’ve ever been mean to a classmate, that’s sin. If you’ve ever disobeyed your parents, that’s sin. If you’ve ever cheated on a test, told a lie, or bullied someone, that’s sin.

Scott had to pay a price for the wrong that he committed. He had to follow the rules by sitting out the most important game of the year. But do you remember what happened after the coach broke the news to Scott? *(Hold for responses)*
Right! His friend and teammate, David, chose to give Scott a second chance by taking his place sitting out the game. Why do you think David did this? *(Hold for responses)* Right! Because he cared for his friend so much that they were willing to take the punishment for him so he wouldn’t have to. He wanted Scott to get a second chance.

Just like Scott, a penalty had to be paid for our sins before we could become part of God’s team. Instead of us having to pay it, Jesus did it Himself by dying on the cross. We read this in the Bible in John 3:16: “For God so love the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” *(NIV)*. His death was the payment for our sins. He loves us and wants us to be on his team! This could only happen because of what Jesus did on the cross. Jesus’ died and rose from the dead to allow us to be forgiven for our sins and live forever with Him in heaven!

**Discussion Questions (3rd Grade and Up Only):**

1. Have you ever sinned (or done something that displeases God)? Did you know that everyone that has ever lived has sinned, except for Jesus?

2. Because everyone has sinned, everyone needs forgiveness from their sin. Jesus died on the cross to forgive us of our sin. How does it make you feel knowing that Jesus stepped in to pay the price for sin that you couldn’t pay?

The bottom line is this - God wants each of you to be on His team by believing His son Jesus died in your place for your sins...and then came back to life! He wants you to believe in Him by asking Him into your heart. You can make this decision today by asking Him to forgive you for your sins and trusting Him to be the most important person in your life! When you do that, your life will never be the same. You’ll be living for a much bigger purpose.
If you are ready to trust Jesus with your life, you can do that right now. There are no magic words that can put you in God’s family, only your faith in Jesus can do that. However, a simple prayer can kick off your relationship with God. If you’re ready to start living your life for God, simply say this prayer quietly in your own mind after me:

“Dear Jesus, I know that I’m a sinner and I need a savior. I believe you took my place and died the cross for my sins. I ask you to please forgive me for my sins. Come into my life and help me start living for you. Thank you, Jesus. Amen.

If you prayed that prayer and asked Jesus into your heart, or if you just have questions about anything we’ve discussed, please come see me after practice. I’d love to talk with you more about how you can know and trust Jesus.

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, thank you for sending your only Son, Jesus to the earth. You loved the world – each one of us – so much that you sent Jesus to fix our sin problem. Help us to understand what this means so that we can put our trust in you. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

NOTES: 

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The Levels of Upward Basketball
The Levels of Upward Basketball

Upward Basketball uses a four-level age appropriate format that grows with each young athlete. Each level of Upward Basketball is tailored to meet athletes where they are in their playing ability, allowing them to reach their full potential.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL OF SKILL</th>
<th>AGE OF YOUR ATHLETE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEVEL 1</td>
<td>Introducing the game and basic skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEVEL 2</td>
<td>Develop basic skills while learning game rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEVEL 3</td>
<td>Refine skills and learn team concepts while preparing for the next level of competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEVEL 4</td>
<td>Implement middle school rules while competing at a high level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each level of Upward Basketball includes a specific game format and rules. Levels 1-3 use a set of common rules with modifications designed for each level. However, Level 4 uses an exclusive set of rules that follow a traditional middle school format.
Basic Rules for Levels 1-3

*Note: These rules do NOT apply to Level 4. Except where the following rules apply, play is governed by the National Federation of State High School Associations’ (NFHS) Rules Book (www.nfhs.org)

Game Format

1. Referees lead both teams in prayer at center court before every game. This sets the tone and focus for the game.

2. A coin flip or other impartial method determines which team receives possession first. In jump ball situations, possessions will alternate. This promotes fairness for both teams while adhering to the NFHS rule for jump ball situations.

3. Clock format: Running clock throughout the game, stopping only for pre-determined substitutions at the end of each segment and halftime.

4. At the end of each segment, the team that receives the ball next is based upon the direction of the possession arrow. This avoids the offensive team that may have possession in the next segment from stalling at the end of a period.

5. All coaches will adhere to the substitution system. The substitution system allows for equal playing time for all players.

6. There are no timeouts. This allows more playing time and keeps the games on time.

7. Teams switch goals at halftime. This rule is in compliance with NFHS Rules. It also evens any advantage that may occur because of the court.

8. Any game ending in a tie should remain in a tie. No overtimes are played so games stay on schedule.

9. Standings add unneeded pressure to the game and therefore will not be maintained.
Rules for Play

Defense

1. Man-to-man defense will be played at all times. Zone defenses are not allowed in Levels 1-3. In a man-to-man defense, players are only guarding the opponent that closely matches their ability and height. This allows for a more competitive system for every player on the court while creating an equal opportunity for each player.

2. Defensive players must stay within arm’s reach of the player they are guarding. This prevents defenders from sagging or crowding an area of the court to gain a defensive advantage.

3. Double-teaming is not allowed. However, help defense is strongly encouraged in the following instances:
   
   • **Lane Area:** If a defender is in the lane and the player he or she is guarding is within arm’s reach, the defender is allowed to provide help defense. Since many goals are scored in the lane, it provides the defense more opportunity to properly defend this area.

   • **Picks and Screens:** Defensive switching is allowed on offensive picks or screens. The non-screened defender can help his or her teammate by temporarily switching until the teammate recovers to defend their offensive player. This is commonly referred to as “help and recover.” This prevents the offense from continually setting screens to gain an advantage.

   • **Fast Breaks:** When an offensive player has beaten their defender, another defensive player may help. Upon stopping the fast break, defenders should return to guarding their assigned players. This rule is meant to prevent the defenders from helplessly watching the offensive player score without being able to help.
4. At the beginning of each segment, players will line up at half court and “match up” with whom they are guarding. This act is performed to promote equal player match-ups. Equal match-ups combined with man-to-man defense create five competitive pairings on the court.

5. Full court presses are not allowed. Defensive players may not guard their opponents in the backcourt. This will allow for more play to occur in the front court and create an equal opportunity for each child to participate both on offense and defense.

6. Due to the shortness of the court, backcourt violations will not be called. If playing on a regulation-size court (84 feet) as opposed to cross-court, backcourt violations should be called.

7. A player committing two fouls in one segment must sit out the remainder of that segment. The next player in the rotation comes in as the substitute and is rewarded some extra game time. This does not change the normal rotation as the fouled-out player does not re-enter the game until he or she is scheduled to do so. This rule allows the offending player time to regroup during the remainder of the segment while realizing that there is a consequence for the violation.

**Offense**

1. The offense must purposefully attack the defense in every situation – no stalling. After a warning from the referee, a violation will be called resulting in a turnover. This will prevent a team with the lead from running the clock out by staying in the backcourt.

2. Isolation plays will not be a part of Levels 1-3 because they take away the opportunity for improvement for all players and contradict the spirit of the rules.
3. Non-shooting fouls will result in the ball being in-bounded from either the baseline or sideline. All shooting fouls will result in free throws. By not administering “bonus” situation free throws, all players on the court can contribute to consistent game action.

4. No score will be given for a basket in the wrong goal. It will be treated as a turnover. This will prevent further embarrassing a player for making this mistake.

*All other rules have specific modifications for Levels 1-3. See the following charts for these modifications:*

**Level 1 Modifications**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rule</th>
<th>Explanation/Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal Height</td>
<td>7 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball Size</td>
<td>25”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games consist of six, 4-minute segments and an 8 minute halftime. One minute is allotted for substitutions between segments.</td>
<td>This keeps games to approximately a 45-minute time frame. It also allows each player to be in the game for shorter segments than older age divisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score is NOT kept</td>
<td>The focus of this age is to learn fundamentals, not winning and losing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-second violation is NOT called.</td>
<td>Referees should advise players of this potential violation but not penalize.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaches are allowed on the floor with players.</td>
<td>The focus is for coaches to instruct and encourage players at all times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealing the ball from the dribbler is NOT allowed.</td>
<td>To encourage the offensive player to dribble with correct form without the pressure of having the ball stolen.</td>
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*(Continued on next page)*
**Level 1 Modifications (continued)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rule</th>
<th>Explanation/Comments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stealing the ball off a pass is NOT allowed.</td>
<td>To encourage the offensive player to pass with correct form without the pressure of having the ball stolen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violation is NOT called for having two hands on the ball while dribbling.</td>
<td>Due to limited hand-eye coordination, this allows a player to establish correct dribbling form through rhythm and pressure on the ball.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violation for double dribbling is called but does NOT result in a turnover.</td>
<td>Players should learn the concept of double dribble but should be allowed the opportunity to correct it without penalty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violation for traveling is called but does NOT result in a turnover.</td>
<td>Players should learn the concept of traveling but should be allowed the opportunity to correct it without penalty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violation for traveling is NOT called when a player shuffles feet when trying to set up for a shot.</td>
<td>Because this age group is single skill focused, players will tend to shuffle their feet when focusing on setting up for a shot. This is corrected as the player develops in skill as he gets older.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast breaks are NOT allowed in any transition situation.</td>
<td>This promotes a controlled game. Players at this age learn better when the pace is controlled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shooting fouls do NOT result in free throw attempts.</td>
<td>A player who gets fouled while shooting gets to retry his/her shot from the spot of the foul without being defended. Ball is live after shot is attempted. This allows a player to attempt a shot that he was trying to take prior to the foul from the same spot.</td>
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### Level 2 Modifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rule</th>
<th>Explanation/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal Height</td>
<td>8 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball Size</td>
<td>25”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games consist of six, 6-minute segments and an 8 minute halftime. One minute is allotted for substitutions between segments.</td>
<td>This keeps games to approximately an hour time frame.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score is NOT kept.</td>
<td>Young athletes at this age should not focus on the score but rather the developmental skills being taught.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-second violation is NOT called.</td>
<td>Young athletes at this age should focus on offensive basics (dribbling, passing, shooting, and rebounding).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaches are allowed to walk the sidelines to encourage and instruct players.</td>
<td>The focus is for coaches to instruct and encourage players at all times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free throws are awarded on all shooting fouls.</td>
<td>Two shots are attempted by the fouled player at the 10’ line. Coaches may quickly come onto the court to line up remaining players in proper free throw positions. After the second shot, the ball will be inbounded by the opposing team regardless of shot result.</td>
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*Continued on next page*
### Level 2 Modifications (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rule</th>
<th>Explanation/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stealing the ball off a dribble or pass is allowed.</td>
<td>Players at this age should be taught and held to these basic basketball rules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double dribble violation is called in all circumstances.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traveling violation is called in all circumstances.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast breaks are allowed in any transition situation.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Level 3 Modifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rule</th>
<th>Explanation/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal Height</td>
<td>9 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball Size</td>
<td>28.5”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games consist of six, 6-minute segments and an 8 minute halftime. One minute is allotted for substitutions between segments.</td>
<td>This keeps games to approximately an hour time frame.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score is kept</td>
<td>Young athletes at this age should learn how to handle winning and losing after competition. This translates into life lessons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-second violation is called and results in a turnover.</td>
<td>At this age, young athletes should understand the concept of offensive movement by not allowing an offensive player to stay in the lane more than 3 seconds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaches allowed to walk the sidelines to encourage and instruct players.</td>
<td>The focus is for coaches to instruct and encourage players at all times.</td>
</tr>
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*Continued on next page*
### Rule Explanation/Comments

Clock runs continuously with special rules in effect with fewer than two minutes remaining in the game:

- Non-shooting fouls result in the offensive team getting one point and the ball.
- Shooting fouls result in the offensive team scoring two points. The opposing team then takes possession.
- Players fouled in the act of shooting and making the basket are credited with the basket plus one point. The opposing team then takes possession.

Because the clock does not stop, this rule keeps the game moving without wasting the running game clock on lining up for free throw attempts.

Free throws are awarded on all shooting fouls.

Two shots are attempted by the fouled player at the 12’ line. Remaining players assume proper free throw positioning. Ball is live if second shot is missed.

Stealing the ball off a dribble or pass is allowed

Double dribble violation is called in all circumstances

Traveling violation is called in all circumstances

Fast breaks are allowed in any transition situation

Players at this age should be taught and held to these basic basketball rules.
Level 4 Rules

*The following rules are exclusive to Level 4. They follow a more traditional middle school format and game play. Except where the following rules apply, play is governed by the National Federation of State High School Associations’ (NFHS) Rules Book (www.nfhs.org)

Game Format

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rule</th>
<th>Explanation/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Referees lead both team in prayer at center court before every game.</td>
<td>This sets the tone and focus for the game.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal Height</td>
<td>10 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball Size</td>
<td>28.5” (girls), 29.5’ (boys)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games consist of 4, six-minute quarters.</td>
<td>Follows middle school rules and allows game to begin and end within an hour timeframe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The clock stops at each whistle.</td>
<td>Stoppage of play includes violations, fouls, out-of-bounds play, timeouts, and injury.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overtimes are 2 minutes in length (regulation clock).</td>
<td>Gives both teams the opportunity to win the game with reasonable extended time. If still tied at the end of the overtime period, the game ends in a tie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teams are allowed one (1) 30-second timeout per half (1 per team per half).</td>
<td>This allows a coach to meet with players and adjust strategy during a game.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All games are played on a full-sized regulation court (no cross court).</td>
<td>This is appropriate floor size for players at this level.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Continued on next page
## Level 4 Rules for Play

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rule</th>
<th>Explanation/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A jump ball is used to start the game and overtime period.</td>
<td>Athletes at this age have the physical ability to jump for the ball to obtain possession. It also follows the NFHS rules for starting a game or overtime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zone and man defenses are allowed (both should be used throughout the season).</td>
<td>Players at this level possess the ability to defend and attack both zone and man principles. Zone and man defenses are a part of the game of basketball and should be understood by players as they prepare for the next level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press defense is allowed in the backcourt at all times except if a team has a 15-point advantage.</td>
<td>To promote fairness and integrity of the game, teams with a 15-point advantage should drop into a basic half-court defense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All players are allowed five (5) fouls each game. After the 5th foul is committed, the player is out for the remainder of the game.</td>
<td>These rules follow traditional middle school rules format.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the seventh team foul in each half, bonus free throws are awarded to the fouled team (1 and 1).</td>
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</table>

*Continued on next page*
## Level 4 Rules for Play (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rule</th>
<th>Explanation/Comments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three point shots are allowed only if the court features a three-point arc.</td>
<td>Courts without a 3-point line should not award 3 points no matter the shot distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing time requirements for each player in Level 4 are:</td>
<td>Level 4 does not use the substitution system found in Levels 1-3. This allows flexibility in managing playing time for each coach based on the game situation while promoting fair game participation for all players.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Each athlete plays a minimum of ¼ of each game.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Each athlete must play in both halves of each game.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of season tournaments are highly encouraged for Level 4</td>
<td>End of season tournament play adds excitement to your league. A minimum of 2 games per team in tournament play.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### WEEK ___

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLAYER'S NAME</th>
<th>18 MIN</th>
<th>12 MIN</th>
<th>6 MIN</th>
<th>18 MIN</th>
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<th>6 MIN</th>
<th>GAME DAY STARS</th>
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### WEEK ___

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<th>PLAYER'S NAME</th>
<th>18 MIN</th>
<th>12 MIN</th>
<th>6 MIN</th>
<th>18 MIN</th>
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<th>GAME DAY STARS</th>
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**Game Day Stars**
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# STAR DISTRIBUTION FORM

*Use a pencil to record the color of star that the players receive each day.*

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Blue (B): Effort  
Red (R): Defense  
Gold (G): Sportsmanship  
White (W): Christlikeness  
Gray (Gr): Offense
Use a pencil to record the color of star that the players receive each game.

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Blue (B): Effort        Gold (Go): Sportsmanship        Gray (Gr): Offense
Red (R): Defense        White (W): Christlikeness
COACHING THE

Mentally
Greet each player by name when they arrive.

Athletically
Teach skills through relevant drills.

Spiritually
In all of your interactions, put the gospel on display.

Socially
Teach sportsmanship while instilling a competitive spirit.