



Upward Flag Football Coach Playbook



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MISSION STATEMENT

To introduce children to Jesus Christ by creating opportunities to serve through sports.

VALUES

The Expectation of God Moments

We believe that God is at work all around us.

The Life of Integrity

We believe that how we live is more important than what we say.

The Discipline of Excellence

We believe in serving that exceeds expectations.

The Priority of Children

We believe that Every Child Is A Winner.



Introduction

Welcome to Upward Flag Football! This playbook is designed to provide you, a volunteer coach, with what you need to be successful in the Upward Flag Football Ministry. The information on the following pages is designed to guide you through the season and includes the weekly devotions and rules unique to Upward Flag Football.

For all Upward coaching needs, visit www.upward.org/upwardcoach. This page has been created to equip you as an Upward coach and is only accessible through this URL. You will find the weekly devotions, practice outlines, rules unique to Upward Flag Football and much more.





Section One:
Coaching Upward Flag Football





Section One: Coaching Upward Flag Football

Becoming an Upward Coach

The coach is the key component to fulfilling the mission of Upward: ***“To introduce children to Jesus Christ by creating opportunities to serve through sports.”*** This entire mission is in the hands of the coach.

As an Upward Flag Football Coach, you have a tremendous opportunity to make a positive impact in the lives of your players and their families. For this reason, it is important that you understand your responsibilities as a coach.

1. ***Share the love of Jesus Christ with each player.*** You may provide the only opportunity for children to know and hear about Jesus.
2. ***Recognize the “winner” in every child.*** Find ways to encourage and show each player that he or she is valued through Jesus Christ.
3. ***Prepare for practices and games.*** Be prepared to not only teach flag football skills, but also look for ways to instill confidence, boost self-esteem, and share Christ with your players.
4. ***Teach the fundamentals of flag football.*** Upward Flag Football is designed to teach fundamental flag football skills.
5. ***Know your role in the Circle of Affirmation.*** Remember, people care more about what you do than they do about what you say. The Circle of Criticism and the Circle of Affirmation are found on page 104.
6. ***Support the referee with positive comments.*** Choose to start the Circle of Affirmation. Your lead will instill respect for authority and create a positive atmosphere for all who participate or watch.
7. ***Distribute Upward Stars.*** The game day stars should be distributed at the end of each game, and the Scripture learning star should be distributed at the end of each practice. The game day stars can build the self-esteem of your players. Explain why the player is receiving a particular star. Be sure to include the parents. This should be a special time for parents and players. Encourage clapping and praise!



Section One: Coaching Upward Flag Football



The success of a coach is not based on wins and losses. The success of a coach is characterized by how he or she conveys Christ in actions and attitudes on and off the field as well as how he or she teaches and encourages within the sport of flag football. That is the Upward Experience. The Upward Experience is where solid ministry components and great sport instruction meet.

A great Upward coach is one that is equally strong in ministry components and sport components. An Upward coach that is strong with all ministry aspects but is weak in teaching the sport will leave many parents appreciative of his/her efforts, but unfulfilled in their child's sport development. Likewise, an Upward coach strong in sport but weak in the ministry components will leave parents frustrated and with an impression that this is "just another flag football league."

So what is it that creates a great ministry experience through an Upward coach?

› Connecting with each player as the season progresses

The coach should know each player's name and edify him or her at every opportunity. They need to communicate that they care about them as a person and not just as a player by their actions. Get down to their level and interact with eye contact and smiles. Showing an interest in each player goes a long way when connecting with them.

› Sharing Christ-centered devotions at each practice

This should be an important time for the coach. Preparation is key so that this time is not breezed through. Devotions are the most important time of each practice.





Section One: Coaching Upward Flag Football

› *Coaching with the 2 Corinthians 4:18 philosophy:*

“Don’t focus on the seen but the unseen.

The seen is temporary but the unseen is eternal.”

Winning and losing games is completely temporary. Most of the time, the results are forgotten within a few weeks. However, the ability a coach has to make an eternal difference in the life of a child by sharing their faith with players could make an eternal impact. Coaches should keep this perspective as the season progresses.

› *Sharing Christ through their actions*

It is not through sharing devotions alone that a child is impacted. It is through a coach showing Christ in their actions. Do players see Christ reflected through their coach?

So what is it that creates a great sport experience through an Upward coach?

› *Knowledge of the sport*

Coaches should know the sport well so they are able to teach it.

› *Teaches fundamentals*

Fundamentals are the building blocks to success in any sport. A great coach can build the fundamentals in each player. Coaches should place more emphasis on teaching fundamentals rather than strategy.

› *Applies life principles to sport moments*

Life lessons can be taught through sports. In many situations, you can tie in life principles. For example, how do you react when your team loses? We do not always win in life. So, how does a coach translate that to a life application to teach a child a lifelong lesson?

› *Promotes a love for the game*

At this young age, it is important to promote a love for the game. As kids grow up and stop playing organized sports, they should still be active and enjoy the opportunity to play the game.



Section One: Coaching Upward Flag Football



Communicating with Children

Being an effective coach means being an effective communicator. Here are a few guidelines on communicating with your players:

- › Create a positive environment by greeting each player as he or she arrives at practice each week. Greet players with enthusiasm and show them how glad you are to see them.
- › In all your interactions, talk on the child's level.
- › Remember that you are a coach, friend, and spiritual guide for each player.
- › When teaching flag football fundamentals, focus on a few skills at a time. Remember that too much, too fast, won't last.
- › When distributing stars, give specific reasons why each child earned a particular star.
- › Personalize the devotion. Be confident and remember that God is working through you. You can impact a child in your weekly 5-7 minute devotion, especially as these truths are reinforced by what you do and say.
- › Allow time for each player to participate in and respond to devotions.
- › Pray for each player by name throughout the season, both in group prayer times and by yourself.





Section One: Coaching Upward Flag Football

Communicating with Parents

Get to know the parents and family members of your players. Include parents in your first team meeting at the first practice. At that time, introduce yourself and share your excitement about the season. In addition, many parents and family members want to support you and the team and will offer to help throughout the season. Here are some ideas to keep parents and family members involved:

- › Give them a copy of the team roster and encourage them to get to know each other.
- › Look for ways outside of flag football to connect with players' parents.
- › Ask one parent to put together a schedule for families to rotate bringing snacks to games.
- › Look for parents to help run practice.

Upward Awards Celebration

Upward Awards Celebration is the highlight of the season. This celebration offers coaches the opportunity to demonstrate their love and support for their players. Every player will receive an award to serve as a reminder to be Christ-like and to remind them of their participation in the league. All coaches should attend this special time of fun and fellowship.

Section One: Coaching Upward Flag Football



An Extra Ministry Touch

Coaches are encouraged to develop relationships with players and their families as the season progresses. Be sensitive to their needs. Be prepared to answer any questions a child may have about beginning a relationship with Christ. When children make a decision to follow Christ, share this information with your follow-up commissioner. Here are some recommendations to consider:

- › Visit the child within that week.
- › If the family does not attend a church, invite them to your church.
- › Find out what Sunday school, small group, or Bible study class each family member would attend.
- › Make the family feel welcome at your church.

<i>Ministry</i>	<i>Sport</i>
<i>To Introduce Children to Jesus Christ</i> <i>To Serve</i> <i>Tools of the trade:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">› Scripture Learning Cards› Devotions› Gospel Magnet› Gospel Tool	<i>By Creating Opportunities</i> <i>Through Sports</i> <i>Tools of the trade:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">› Coach PlaybookRules Unique to Upward including the Upward Substitution System› Drills to reinforce skills› Coach DVD› Upward Website (www.upward.org/upwardcoach)› Take home drills (reverse side of Scripture Learning Cards)› Evaluation process to create equal teams





Section Two:
Practice





Section Two: Practice

Preparing for Practice

As a coach, it is essential that you come ready to practice. Laying out a detailed practice outline and being prepared for the practice devotion will make your practice focused, efficient, and meaningful.

Practice Format

1. ***Warm up activity (3-5 minutes)*** – This provides players the opportunity to practice individually and slowly warm up their muscles.
2. ***Team meeting (3-5 minutes)*** – Cover specific flag football rules and the basics of flag football. Teach and review proper techniques for each skill needed for practice drills. Continue to teach and review rules throughout the season. Teach no more than two skills per practice.
3. ***Practice skills and drills (20 minutes)*** – Take the skills that were taught during the team meeting and implement drills to reinforce learning. Each skill should be followed up with two or three drills.
4. ***Devotions (5-7 minutes)*** – Conduct practice specific devotion for each week.
 - › Prepare for object lessons – Some devotions require you to bring an object to add emphasis to the devotion.
 - › Review the devotion prior to practice – Become familiar with the devotion.
 - › Prepare a personal story – When players hear a personal faith story from a coach, the spiritual impact will be much deeper.
 - › Review Scripture learning – Know the Scripture learning verse that will be shared at practice.

Section Two: Practice



5. **Scrimmage (20 minutes)** – Game situations are a great way for players to practice skills they have been taught. This also gives you time to coach technique and strategy.
6. **Post-Practice meeting (5 minutes)** – Distribute Scripture learning stars and Scripture learning cards. Review the skills learned and instruct players to practice those skills at home. Make any necessary announcements. After practice is a great time to engage in conversation with players' parents.

Flag Football Positions

Teaching each player various positions on the field is important. Although Upward Flag Football does not have the same position requirements as traditional football, the opportunity to teach positions still exists. Below are the prominent positions to teach your players.

Offensive Positions

Center– Lines up over the football. Begins every play by snapping the ball to the quarterback. *Main responsibility: Snap the ball to the quarterback.*

Quarterback– Lines up behind the center, either up close or in shotgun formation. Receives the snap and hands the ball off to the running back or passes the ball to a receiver. *Main responsibility: Hand the ball off or pass the ball.*

Running Back– Lines up in the backfield and either takes a hand-off from the quarterback or goes out for a pass. *Main responsibility: Take the hand-off and run with the football.*

Receivers– Lines up on the line of scrimmage. Runs routes and catches passes. *Main responsibility: Run routes and catch passes.*





Section Two: Practice

Defensive Positions

Cornerback— Lines up near the line of scrimmage over the receiver nearest the sideline. Each team has a right and left cornerback. *Main responsibilities: Cover the receiver, protect the sideline, and pull flags.*

Safety— The last line of defense. Lines up as the deepest defender on the field. A team can have one or two safeties. *Main responsibilities: Don't let a receiver behind the safety position, and pull flags.*

Linebacker— Lines up near the middle of the field, a few yards behind the line of scrimmage. Protects the middle of the field and pulls flags. At times will cover running backs. *Main responsibilities: Pull flags and protect the middle of the field.*

Rusher— Lines up 7 yards behind the line of scrimmage. Rushes the passer on the snap of the ball. *Main responsibility: Rush the passer.*

Warm Up Activities

Running Techniques:

High Knees

Each player will run 20 yards up the field and back to the starting line, running quickly while moving gradually. Speed will be full speed, but not full strides. Emphasis will be on high knee kicks to the chest.

Agility work:

Quick Feet

The players line up in rows of three. On the coaches whistle, the first row will begin quick choppy steps laterally (running in place). On the second whistle from the coach, players will sprint out past the coach. Coach can be 5 yards in front of the row.

Section Two: Practice



Quarter Eagles

The players line up in rows of three facing the coach. On the coach's whistle, the players get in a good defensive stance and begin running in place. The coach will then signal left and right and each player will flip their hips in the direction the coach has signaled.

Skills and Drills

Snapping

Because each play begins with the snap of the ball to the quarterback, it is extremely important to have a successful snap on each play. Practicing this skill will promote successful offensive plays. Two types of snaps should be worked on: the under-center snap and the shotgun snap. Use the following directions to instruct players.

Under-Center Snap

- › Center begins in a two-point stance (feet shoulder-width apart, knees bent, elbows resting on knees, head up).
- › Reach throwing hand out to the football. Grip the football with the first knuckle of the thumb placed in-between the white line and the first lace. The palm of the hand should then rest on the outside of the ball, with the four fingers spread across the back. Lift head before snapping the ball.
- › As the ball is snapped, turn hand inward so the ball is delivered sideways to the quarterback.
- › Release the ball and run the play called.





Section Two: Practice

Shotgun Snap

- › Center begins in a two-point stance (feet shoulder-width apart, knees bent, elbows resting on knees, head up).
- › Reach throwing hand out to the football. Grip the football with the first knuckle of the thumb placed in-between the white line and the first lace. The palm of the hand should then rest on the outside of the ball, with the four fingers spread across the back. Lift head before snapping the ball.
- › On the snap, flick wrist as the ball leaves the hand.

**Depending on the player's ability to grip the football with one hand, a center may shotgun-snap the football with either one or two hands. If two hands are needed, a player should use his non-dominant hand to guide the football as it is snapped by placing that hand on the open side of the football.*

Passing Skills

Passing Techniques

The steps below will provide the foundation to becoming a good passer.

- › Gripping the football correctly improves the throwing mechanics and balance of the ball. An appropriate grip varies from one person to another. Size of hands and length of fingers always influence the placement of the hand. There is no one "right" way to grip the football. To provide enough control and pressure on the surface of the ball, hold the top half with one to three fingers spread across the laces. Practice different grips to find which one works best for you.
- › Turn sideways, with your non-throwing shoulder pointing toward the target.

Section Two: Practice



- › Pull your throwing arm back to an L position, with the football up by your ear.
- › Step toward the target with your front foot as you release the ball.
- › Follow through toward the target, with your thumb pointing to the ground and palm facing out.
- › To get the most control, speed, and distance on the ball, throw a spiral. A spiral is also easier for the receiver to catch. Proper release of the football will result in a spiral. Your index finger should be the last finger to leave the football.

Pass Drops

For quarterbacks, learning how to drop back properly is important.

- › As you receive the snap, turn sideways in the direction of your throwing arm.
- › The first step is a reach step. It is a powerful, quick, deep step with the back foot.
- › The next steps (middle steps) are crossover steps.
- › The last step is the plant step. It is a small reach step. As the plant step takes place, your front shoulder should dip down slightly to help maintain balance.
- › It is important to drop back quickly and keep looking downfield for an open receiver.





Section Two: Practice

Passing Drills

Distance Passing

Players will pair off and begin 5 yards from each other. Have players throw the ball back and forth. Make sure players use the appropriate touch on the pass, according to the distance they are from one another. After a few throws, have each player take a step back.

Hand Targets

Have players pair off and begin 10 yards from each other. The player receiving the pass should give a target with his hands for the passer to hit with the pass. Players should pass the ball back and forth, trying to hit the hand targets. Players should move the target to different areas.

Drop-Backs

Have players work on dropping back and getting their feet set and ready to throw. A football should not be used in this drill. Begin with a three-step drop, and work up to a five-step drop. Have players work on keeping their eyes downfield and keeping the imaginary football up in a secure position between the armpits.

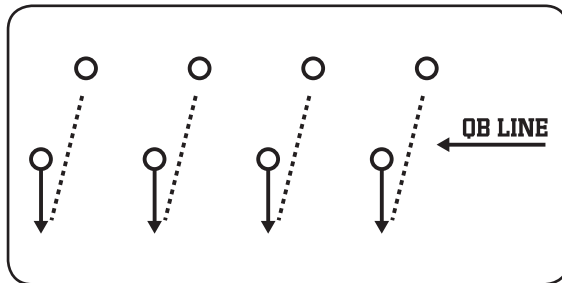


Section Two: Practice



Drop-Back-and-Throw

Have players pair up and face a partner, with 5 yards in between them. One side will be the quarterback side. When the coach gives the command, the quarterbacks will drop back, set up, and throw to their partners. Repeat the drill several times, then switch sides. Be sure quarterbacks are keeping the proper technique and keeping their eyes upfield.



Timing and Touch

Now that players have established their technique, they must now work on the proper timing and touch on a ball to lead a receiver. Have one player line up at quarterback and the remaining players line up in a single file line as receivers. At the quarterback's command, the receiver will run a predetermined route (work from the route tree) while the quarterback takes a 3-step drop and connects with the receiver. Goal is for each player at the quarterback position work on his or her timing of routes and their touch on the football to their receivers. Each player will work at the quarterback position and each week different routes from the route tree should be executed.





Section Two: Practice

Receiving Skills

Catching

The proper technique for catching a football needs to be taught. Most kids do not know how to catch a football properly.

- › Always catch the ball with your hands away from your body. Arms should be extended out about three-fourths of the way to allow room to cushion the catch.
- › To catch balls above waist-height, put your index finger and thumbs together to form a triangle. For a low ball, keep your little fingers and elbows together to cradle the catch.
- › Keep your eye on the ball. The most important part in catching the ball is to watch the ball all the way, until it's in your hands.
- › Once the ball is in your hands, secure it by quickly tucking it away, high under your armpit, clamping it tightly to your body. Cover the front tip of the football with your fingers. Use your free arm to maintain balance.

Routes

Running good pass routes will go a long way toward helping your team move the ball. A good route has four main parts: start, stem, break, and burst.

1. **Start**— A good route begins with a good stance and start. It's important to gain as much ground as you can as quickly as possible.
2. **Stem**— The receiver forces the defensive back up the field. Run toward the outside shoulder of the defender in an attempt to get him to turn his hips away from the line of scrimmage.

Section Two: Practice



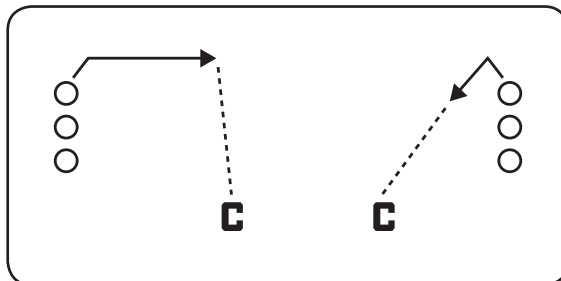
3. **Break**— The receiver transitions from the stem to the burst by making a direction-changing cut. In order to get in and out of a break quickly, stay low and maintain proper balance by keeping your shoulders directly over your feet.
4. **Burst**— The receiver comes out of the break and attempts to create additional separation from the defender. Different routes require different bursts. A curl requires the receiver to come off the break with two steps back to the quarterback and then stop. A post requires a full-speed, continued burst after the break.

**Teaching the importance of everyone running his/her assigned route will be a challenge. This is a good time to explain and teach the importance of teamwork. Remember to be patient with your players, especially the younger ones.*

Receiving Drills

Moving Catch

Players will line up, single file, on one side of the field. One at a time, players will begin to jog across the field, looking toward the coach. The coach will pass the ball to each player. Players should work on catching the ball away from their bodies, using their hands. Use the up, slant, curl, and out. This is a half-speed drill to work on catching the ball while in motion.





Section Two: Practice

Jog-Ups

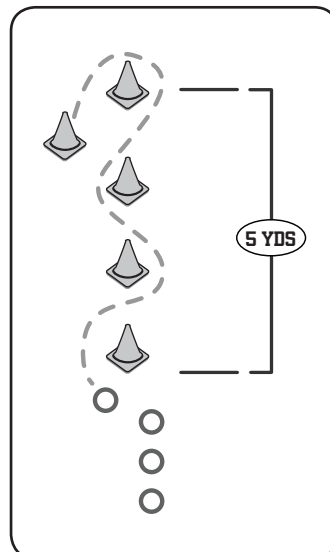
Players will line up, single file. One at a time, players will jog up the field. A coach will lob a pass over each player's outside shoulder. Players will adjust to the pass and work on catching the ball over their outside shoulder. Catching the ball this way will give players an advantage in the game because they can use their bodies to keep the defenders from getting to the football. This is a good warm-up drill. Be sure to switch sides occasionally.

Route Running

Players will line up, single file. One at a time, players will run a predetermined route. Begin with the curl and work up the passing tree (see page 36) from there. Coaches should watch each route and teach as players run the routes. After players feel comfortable with the route, add a pass from the coach.

Cone Weave

Line up four cones in a straight line, with about a yard and a half between each one. A fifth cone should be set up off the last cone to determine the route. Begin working on the curl route by setting up the fifth cone in the proper comeback angle to catch a curl. Move the fifth cone to different parts of the field based on the route (in, out, or post). After running through the drill a few times, add the catching part of the drill, in which a coach throws the ball on the break. Now players will have to take their minds off their footwork and concentrate on catching the ball. Players will develop their footwork and the ability to come out of a break to catch the football.

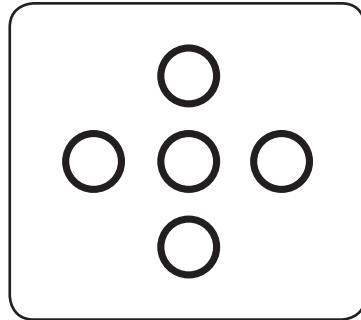


Section Two: Practice



Quick Turns

Four footballs are needed for this drill. This drill helps teach players to turn quickly and use their hands to catch the ball. Four players will make a small circle around a middle player. Each player should line up 3 yards from the middle player. Each of the four outside players will have a football. The drill starts when the person in the middle faces one of the outside players, and the ball is tossed to the center player. That player catches the ball, flips it back to the outside player, and turns quickly to his right. The next player tosses the ball to the center player, and the drill continues the same way. The middle player should go to the right a few times, then left.



Flag-Pulling Skills

Breaking Down

The best way to make a flag pull is to be in a good position to do so. Breaking down brings the defender under control and gives him the best chance of having a successful flag pull.

- › Shorten your steps. Use fast, choppy steps.
- › Be balanced and in control of your body. Be ready for the ball carrier to make a move.
- › Stay low, with your arms out slightly for balance and your shoulders above your feet.
- › Watch the player's belly, and move toward your target (the flags).





Section Two: Practice

Flag-Pull

Pulling flags is a skill that is developed only after ample practice, so go through the motions several times.

- › Sprint to the ball carrier.
- › As you approach the ball carrier, come to a good defensive position and shorten your strides into short, choppy steps (break down), getting ready for the ball carrier to make a move.
- › Reach for the top of the flag (near the plug). Firmly grab the flag and pull hard.

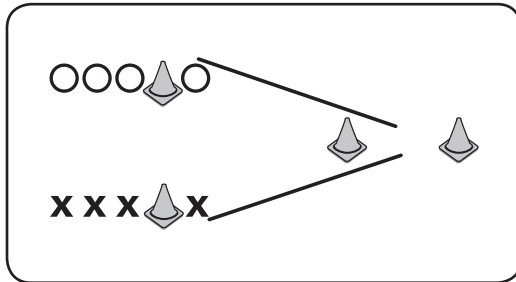
Flag-Pulling Drills

Break-Downs

This can be done with the entire group at once. Have players run half-speed toward you. On the command “break down,” players should come to a good breakdown position using the proper technique.

Angle Drill (basic)

Place two cones about 5 yards apart. Players will form two lines, one offensive and one defensive. One at a time, a ball carrier from the offensive line will run the football through the cones, attempting to juke and run past the defender without getting his flag pulled. The defender will practice taking good angles and trying to pull the ball carrier's flag.

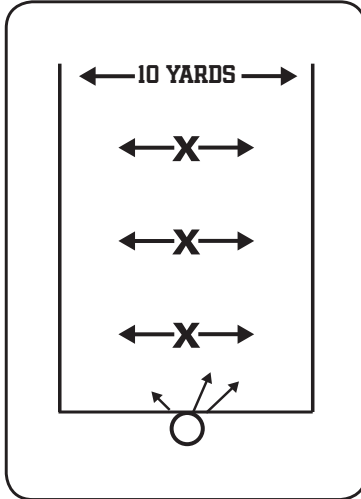
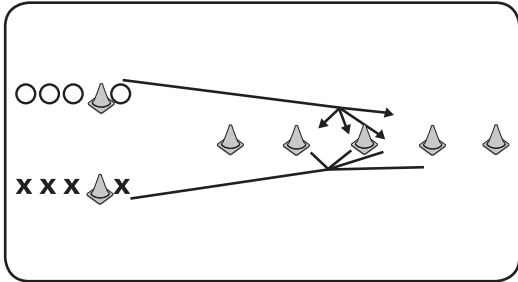


Section Two: Practice



Angle Drill (advanced)

Set up several cones, each 5 yards apart. The ball carrier will run down the line and choose a set of cones (zone) to run between. Once a zone is passed, the ball carrier may not run back through that zone. The defender needs to mirror the ball carrier and pull the flag once he commits to and enters a zone. The defender should be slightly behind the ball carrier until he cuts between two cones.



The Gauntlet

Three defenders will line up in a 10-yard alley, with 5 yards between them. The ball carrier will run through the alley, attempting to get past the defenders, one at a time, until the end line. This will help players develop open-field techniques on both the offensive and defensive sides of the ball. Be sure players rotate and play all positions.

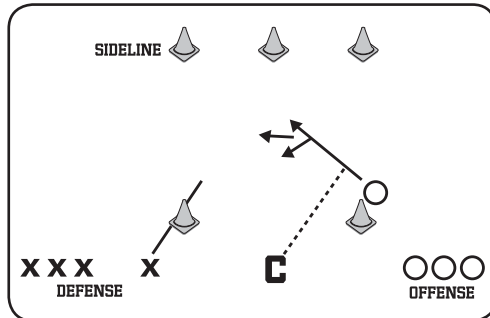




Section Two: Practice

Open-Field Flag Pull

Set up cones 5 to 7 yards apart, making a “box.” Designate a sideline with three cones. The offensive player will receive the pitch from the coach. The defender will take a proper angle to make the tackle on the ball carrier. Have the defender work on breaking down into a good defensive stance as he approaches the ball carrier. Teach defenders to use the sideline to their advantage by forcing the ball carrier toward it.



Pull Tag

This drill will help players get used to pulling flags and avoiding defenders. Have players spread out in a designated area (15 by 20 yards). On the coach's command, players will begin to pull others players' flags. The object is to see how many flags a player can pull. At the end of one minute, the player holding the most flags is the winner of that round. Flag-guarding is illegal.



Coverage Skill

Backpedaling

In order to play effective defense, all players must learn how to backpedal. Backpedaling is necessary to keep a defender in a position where he can make a play on the receiver while maintaining a cushion so he is not beaten on a deep pass.

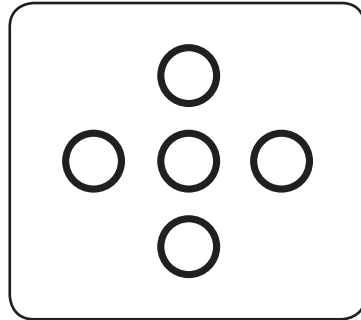
- › Begin in a good defensive stance (knees bent, back straight, head and shoulders over feet).
- › Push off the front foot and step with the back foot.
- › Shoulders should be parallel to the line of scrimmage.
- › When the receiver gets within three yards, the defensive back should turn to run with the receiver.

Coverage Drills

Backpedaling

All players will need to work on this move, and repetition is the best way to become comfortable with backpedaling.

- › Have players line up across a line.
- › On the coach's command, players will backpedal 10 yards, focusing on proper form.
- › Start slow, then encourage players to speed up as they become comfortable with backpedaling. The goal is to backpedal as quickly as the receiver runs forward.



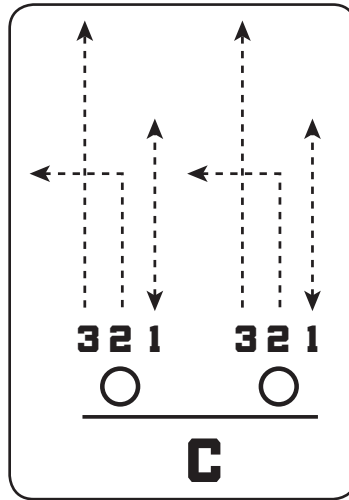


Section Two: Practice

Backpedal Break

This drill will work on players transitioning from the backpedal to a forward run. The quicker the transition, the better defender they will be.

- › Two players line up on a line facing the coach. The coach will command the players to backpedal by holding the football out in front of him. After backpedaling for about 6-8 yards, the coach will command players to break into a sprint by pulling the football in the direction he/she wants the player to go in. Each player should work through all three directions to improve their transition skills:



- › Direction 1 will be downhill
 - In this direction players make a plant step to transition from the backpedal to a forward sprint towards the LOS.
- › Direction 2 will be a 90° release
 - In this direction, players make a plant step opening up their stance 90° to sprint towards the sideline.
- › Direction 3 will be Deep upfield
 - In this direction, players make a plant step transitioning into a sprint down the field, stride by stride with the receiver.
- › Players need to work on staying low and coming out of the break quickly.

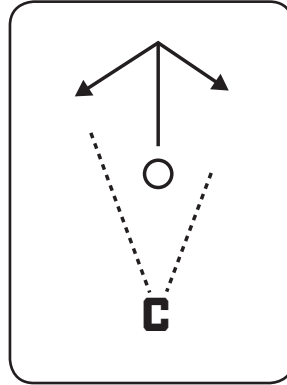
Section Two: Practice



Backpedal and React

Players will backpedal and react to the pass.

- › One player will begin by facing the coach, about 5 yards out in front of the coach. The coach will give the backpedal command by pulling the football up toward his chest. After the player backpedals for about 5 to 6 yards, the coach will turn 45 degrees to the left or right. The player should react by making a 45-degree break in that direction.
- › After the player breaks, the coach will throw the ball in the defender's direction.



Multipurpose Drills

One-on-One

Have players run one-on-one routes against each other. Players will get a chance to work on their technique at the receiver and defensive-back positions. Begin with the coach as the quarterback. Then work toward a player quarterback.

Two-on-Two

This is the same as one-on-one, but with two receivers and two defenders.

Three-on-Three

This is the same as one-on-one, but with three receivers and three defenders.

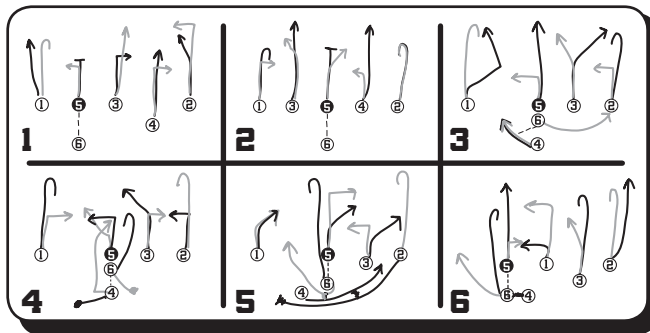




Section Two: Practice

Plays and Formations

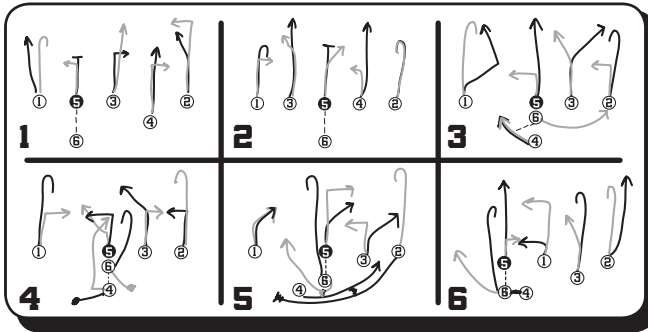
To assist you in play-calling, each player will receive a wristband with a play-calling window attached. As the coach, you can diagram your own plays and come up with your own play-calling system. Use this window to insert a play sheet of simple plays to run. The most important thing to remember is to keep this system as simple as possible for the players. The older the players are, the more advanced the plays and play-calling system can be. Below is one play-calling technique you can use. To print additional play-calling cards, visit www.upward.org/upwardcoach. A play-calling insert sheet will allow you to create six play windows.



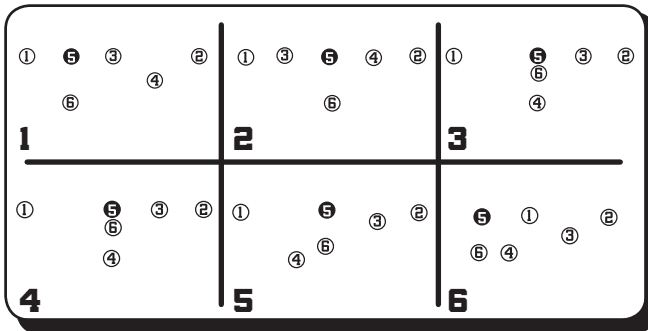
Section Two: Practice



To double your play-calling ability, you can use two different colors for each window.



Each player will be appointed a number at the beginning of the quarter. This number will represent his position for the quarter. That way each player knows where to line up on each play.



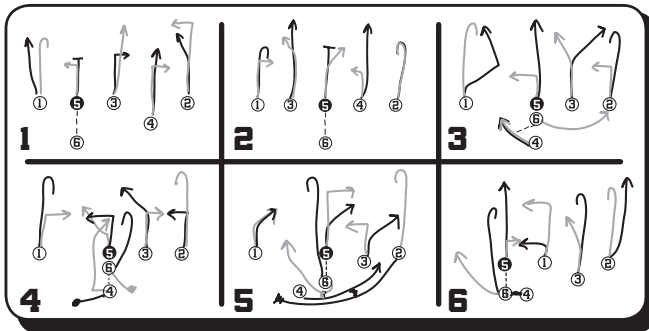


Section Two: Practice

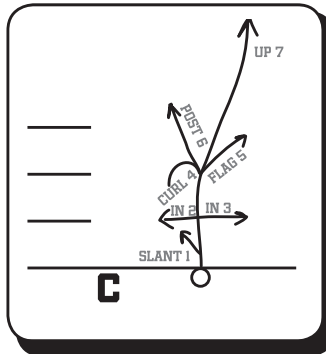
To call the play, the coach will announce the play window and then the color of the play to run.

Example: 1—Black

In this example, players will run the routes in black in play window 1.



A passing tree incorporates basic receiver routes in a sequential numbering system. Older players may use this system for play-calling.



Section Two: Practice



Practice Outline

This practice outline has been created as a guide as you develop your practice schedule. Adjust it as necessary, based on your team's needs.

PRACTICE	PRACTICE FOCUS	TEAM MEETING	RULES TO COVER	SKILLS & DRILLS
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate skills Learn basic offensive skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get to know each other through introductions Discuss practice ground rules Introduce offensive basics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passing rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passing and receiving Snapping
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue skill evaluation Learn basic defensive skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-introduce players and coaches Introduce defensive basics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defensive rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defensive coverage Flag-pulling
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue development of receiving and coverage skills Introduce play-calling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss practice focus Introduce play-calling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Running rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-on-one routes Two-on-two and three-on-three games
4 <small>week of first game</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue skill development Simulate game-type situations through a scrimmage Help players feel comfortable with game-day situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss substitution rule Re-introduce play-calling Talk about upcoming scrimmage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Game format Substitutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flag-pulling Practice routes One-on-ones Three-on-threes Scrimmage (against the opposing team, if possible)
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work on pass-rush and defensive calls Work on areas that need improvement from the game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss practice focus Discuss improvements that need to be made 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review all rules as a fun quiz 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pass rush All areas that need improvements from first game
6-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue skill development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review last game Discuss practice focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to review rules for clear understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both offense and defense Areas that need improvement





Section Two: Practice

Practice Plan

Use the blank practice plans at the beginning of each week's practice page to lay out your practice schedule. Reference the practice chart on page 37 for suggested practice outlines. When scheduling and practicing fundamentals, remember these key tips:

- › Carefully explain skills and drills in a manner that players can easily understand.
- › Always provide encouragement to each player.
- › Take time to demonstrate each drill.
- › Choose drills that involve the most players at one time to avoid a long wait between turns and touches on the ball.
- › Most importantly, have fun!

Devotions

At the midpoint of every practice, the head coach will lead a five- to seven-minute devotion. Use the age-appropriate devotion guide found in this playbook. Devotions are provided for each of these three age-group levels: K5 through second grade, third and fourth grade, and fifth and sixth grade. The goal of these devotions is to help players develop a biblical way of thinking and ultimately to lead them to personal application and spiritual growth. A child cannot acquire a biblical foundation in eight to ten practices. However, Upward's desire is to plant the seeds of truth in every child and coach who participates in Upward Sports.

Section Two: Practice



Remember, the devotions are written for specific age groups, so choose the devotion for the age group you coach. If your age groups are divided differently than the divisions in this book, share the devotion geared toward the youngest players on your team. Keeping it simple is better than sharing something that may not benefit all of your players.

During the first practice devotion, take time to get to know your players. Each subsequent devotion will teach a specific biblical principle or topic. These principles and topics will lead to sharing the Upward Gospel Tool with players.

Scripture Learning

The Scripture learning time is a group activity; children are not required to recite the verse individually at practice. Players will have the opportunity to learn a Scripture verse that corresponds with the biblical principle or topic taught in the devotion. Upward's desire is to place more emphasis on the learning of Scripture than on memorization of it. Each child who participates in the Scripture learning time will receive a Scripture learning sticker star at the end of practice. These stars are green and they are included in this playbook.

Scripture learning verses and Scripture learning stars begin with the second practice devotion. Coaches should encourage players to practice the verses throughout the season to help them learn God's word. Coaches will distribute Scripture learning cards at each practice. Each card includes the weekly Scripture verse and gives the players the opportunity to learn these verses before practice. Each Scripture learning card will be labeled as next week's Scripture learning verse. The practice number listed on the lower portion of the card represents the practice that the card should be distributed at.





Section Two: Practice

Each player will receive a Scripture learning card holder with his/her player items that will be used as a placeholder for each Scripture learning card. This holder will be a magnet and should be placed on the refrigerator.



Section Two: Practice



The Scripture learning verses for this season are as follows:

- › *Acts 17:24(a)* – He is the God who made the whole world and everything in it.
- › *Ephesians 5:1* – You are God’s children whom he loves.
- › *1 Timothy 2:4* – God wants all people to be saved. And he wants everyone to know the truth.
- › *Colossians 2:14 (a,b)* – We owed a debt because we broke God’s laws. That debt listed all the rules we failed to follow.
- › *Colossians 1:22 (a)* – But now Christ has made you God’s friends again.
- › *Philippians 3:9 (a)* – Now that I belong to Christ, I am right with God.
- › *Philippians 1:9* – This is my prayer for you: that your love will grow more and more; that you will have knowledge and understanding with your love.
- › *Philippians 4:13* – I can do all things through Christ because he gives me strength.
- › *Philippians 1:27(c)* – I will hear that you continue strong with one purpose and that you work together as a team.
- › *Colossians 1:25(b)* – My work is to tell fully the teaching of God.





Section Two: Practice

Weekly Practice and Devotion Guides

Team

Coach's Preview

Upward's programs are designed to introduce children to Jesus Christ. One of the best places for this to happen is during the devotion time that happens at each practice. During this Team Huddle, coaches have a chance to get their players thinking and talking about God and how they can be in a relationship with Him.

The devotions provide you with object lessons, discussion questions, and more information so that you can succeed during this time. Take time each week to review your lesson before going to practice. Some devotions will require the use of common items to illustrate the point being made. See the list of items provided below that you will need to bring to specific practices. Being prepared will make your job of leading the devotion easier and allow you to enjoy the devotion time even more.

Each devotion answers a question about God and life in a systematic yet simple manner. By the end of the season, your players will have a better understanding of God's plan for us. Devotions 2-6 cover questions about God, Jesus, and how God sees us. Devotion 7 will present the gospel in a clear way, and it will also begin our look at the Christian life. This look at the Christian life takes place using connections to Upward's stars and five "B" questions. In devotions 7-11, players will learn how we begin and build a relationship with God, how we become better as Christians, how we bond with others, and how we reach out to others by filling their buckets.

Scripture Learning verses shared during each week's Team Huddle can be found on the Scripture Learning Cards.

The Team Huddle will be centered on the theme of a team. Players will be taught how God is like our coach and wants us to be on his team.

Section Two: Practice

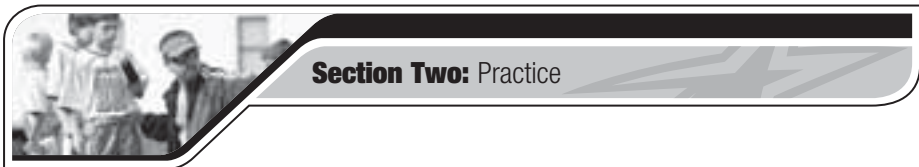


Below is this season's devotion plan. Each week is outlined with the main question, the point to be made and the picture to illustrate the point.

Here is what we will try to accomplish in each devotion. By keeping this in mind, you will know what point you need to make each week and how you can keep from making points for future weeks too soon.

WEEK	QUESTION	POINT	PICTURE
1	<i>WHO ARE YOU?</i>	<i>GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER</i>	<i>NAME GAME</i>
2	<i>WHO IS GOD?</i>	<i>COACH</i>	<i>COACH</i>
3	<i>WHAT DOES GOD DO?</i>	<i>LOVES HIS TEAM</i>	<i>RECRUITING/DRAFT</i>
4	<i>WHAT DOES GOD WANT?</i>	<i>ME TO BE ON HIS TEAM</i>	<i>PLAYGROUND GAMES</i>
5	<i>HOW DOES GOD SEE ME?</i>	<i>WE CAN'T BE ON HIS TEAM</i>	<i>JERSEY</i>
6	<i>WHY DID GOD SEND JESUS?</i>	<i>JESUS MAKES THE TRADE POSSIBLE</i>	<i>DRILLS</i>
7	<i>HOW DO I BEGIN A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?</i>	<i>JOIN A NEW TEAM</i>	
8	<i>HOW DO I BUILD A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?</i>	<i>PRACTICE</i>	<i>SKILLS PRACTICE</i>
9	<i>HOW DO I BECOME BETTER?</i>	<i>LEARN TO PLAY BETTER</i>	<i>PLAYING IN A GAME</i>
10	<i>HOW DO I BOND WITH OTHERS?</i>	<i>PLAY AS A TEAM</i>	<i>1-ON-5</i>
11	<i>WHOSE BUCKET CAN I FILL?</i>	<i>BE A MINI-COACH</i>	<i>MINI-COACH</i>





Section Two: Practice

Supplies needed for devotions:

Week Five: Clothing item (hat, t-shirt, jersey, etc.) of your favorite college or pro sports team.

Week Seven: Upward Gospel Tools (multi-colored bracelets) and Upward Gospel Magnets

WEEK ONE PRACTICE PLAN		
TIME	ACTIVITY	COACH'S NOTES
	Team Meeting	
	Warm-up	
	Skills & Drills 1	
	Skills & Drills 2	
	Skills & Drills 3	
	Practice Plays	
	Water break	
	Team Huddle	
	Scrimmage/Skills Game	
	Post-Practice Team Huddle	See <i>Page 50</i> for Practice 1 Post-Practice Huddle



Mid-Practice Huddle – Devotion 1 ***Who are you?***

K5 through 2nd Grade

Coach:

- › Gather the players together and get them to sit in a circle.
- › Go around the circle and have each player share his/her name and his/her favorite color.

Once everyone has shared their name and favorite color yell out each color and as you do, have the players jump up in the air if that was their favorite color.

We all have our favorite colors that are special to us.

In Upward there are stars which have colors that tell us that they mean something special.

After each game, each player on our team will receive a star. There are six colors of stars, and each color stands for something different. Your actions and attitudes on game day will help to determine what star you receive. Let's think about what these stars mean.

- › ***The blue star represents Effort.*** What does it mean to give your best effort? (*Giving your best effort means trying your best at all times on the field.*)
- › ***The gold star represents Sportsmanship.*** What does it mean to be a good sport? (*Being a good sport means that you treat others the way you want to be treated, including your teammates, the other team, your coaches, and the referee.*)





Section Two: Practice

- › *The gray star represents Offense.* What do you do on offense? (Offense means playing the way you are coached to play so that you and your teammates will be able to score.)
- › *The red star represents Defense.* What do you do on defense? (Defense means playing the way you are coached to play so that you can guard your assigned player and keep the other team from scoring.)
- › *The orange star represents Leadership.* What does good leadership look like? (Leadership is shown by the choices you make and how you treat others both on and off the field.)
- › *The white star represents Christlikeness.* What does it mean to be Christlike? (Being Christlike means that you imitate Jesus in your actions and attitudes.)

Our team is going to have a great season! We're going to have fun practicing together, playing games together, and learning about God together in our Team Huddles.

Coach: End your Team Huddle with a prayer in which you ask God to be with your team this year.

3rd and 4th Grade

Coach:

- › Gather the players together and get them to sit in a circle.
- › Go around the circle and have each player share his/her name and his/her favorite color.

Once everyone has shared their name and favorite color yell out each color and as you do, have the players jump up in the air if that was their favorite color.

We all have our favorite colors that are special to us.

Section Two: Practice



In Upward there are stars which have colors that tell us that they mean something special.

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- › **The blue star represents Effort.** What does it mean to give your best effort? (*Giving your best effort means trying your best at all times on the field.*)
- › **The gold star represents Sportsmanship.** What does it mean to be a good sport? (*Being a good sport means that you treat others the way you want to be treated, including your teammates, the other team, your coaches, and the referee.*)
- › **The gray star represents Offense.** What do you do on offense? (*Offense means playing the way you are coached to play so that you and your teammates will be able to score.*)
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- › **The white star represents Christlikeness.** What does it mean to be Christlike? (*Being Christlike means that you imitate Jesus in your actions and attitudes.*)





Section Two: Practice

During each practice, we will stop what we're doing and take a few minutes to have a Team Huddle. This is the most important part of practice because it is the time when we will learn together about God's game plan for each one of us. This year, we're going to talk about how God is like a coach who wants to put each of us on his team. During this time, you will be able to earn a green star for learning your Scripture verse. At the end of each practice, I'll give you a Scripture Learning Card that has each week's Scripture verse on it so that you can read it on your own and remember it after our Team Huddle each week.

Our team is going to have a great season! We're going to have fun practicing together, playing games together, and learning about God together in our Team Huddles.

Coach: End your Team Huddle with a prayer in which you ask God to be with your team this year.

5th and 6th Grade

Coach:

- › Gather the players together and get them to sit in a circle.
- › Go around the circle and have each player share his/her name and his/her favorite color.

We all have our favorite teams, and we know these teams by their colors.

What is your favorite team's color?

Colors are important because they help us identify our favorite teams. In Upward, there are different color stars that identify different skills and characteristics.

After each game, each player on our team will receive a star. There are six colors of stars, and each color stands for something different. Your actions and attitudes on game day will help to determine what star you receive. Let's think about what these stars mean.

Section Two: Practice



- › **The blue star represents Effort.** What does it mean to give your best effort? (*Giving your best effort means trying your best at all times on the field.*)
- › **The gold star represents Sportsmanship.** What does it mean to be a good sport? (*Being a good sport means that you treat others the way you want to be treated, including your teammates, the other team, your coaches, and the referee.*)
- › **The gray star represents Offense.** What do you do on offense? (*Offense means playing the way you are coached to play so that you and your teammates will be able to score.*)
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During each practice, we will stop what we're doing and take a few minutes to have a Team Huddle. This is the most important part of practice because it is the time when we will learn together about God's game plan for each one of us. This year, we're going to talk about how God is like a coach who wants to put each of us on his team. During this time, you will be able to earn a green star for learning your Scripture verse. At the end of each practice, I'll give you a Scripture Learning Card that has each week's Scripture verse on it so that you can read it on your own and remember it after our Team Huddle each week.





Section Two: Practice

Our team is going to have a great season! We'll have fun practicing together, playing games together, and earning stars. We're also going to have a great time learning about God together and making choices or picks about how we can follow God. I'm excited about what will happen in our Team Huddle this year.

Coach: End your Team Huddle with a prayer in which you ask God to be with your players this year.

Post-Practice Huddle (players and parents)

- › Introduce coaches to parents and distribute coach contact information
- › Review player items
 - Reversible jersey (Do not iron. Do not place in dryer)
 - Car Magnet
 - Wrist Coach
 - Flag Belt & Flags
 - Scripture Learning Cards (Coach will distribute at each practice)
 - Scripture Learning Card Holder (Magnetic place holder for Scripture Learning Cards – apply to refrigerator)
 - Parent Guide to Upward Flag Football
- › Explain star application to flags (*After each practice and game, the coach will award a star to each player. The star is applied to the flags on the flag belt.*)
- › Reference season's devotion theme (*Team – God is like a coach and wants us to be on his team.*)

Section Two: Practice



WEEK TWO PRACTICE PLAN

TIME	ACTIVITY	COACH'S NOTES
	Team Meeting	
	Warm-up	
	Skills & Drills 1	
	Skills & Drills 2	
	Skills & Drills 3	
	Practice Plays	
	Water break	
	Team Huddle	
	Scrimmage/Skills Game	
	Post-Practice Team Huddle	If players' kits were not available at the first practice, review player items (see page 50). Distribute Scripture Learning Cards. Reference drill on back of card.

Mid-Practice Huddle-Devotion 2

Devotion: Who is God?

*"He is the God who made the whole world and everything in it."
(Acts 17:24(a))*

K5 through 2nd Grade

Coach:

- › Review Scripture learning verse with players. Give players the opportunity to say the verse with you a few times.
- › Ask the players to each name their favorite athletes. Allow them to pick an athlete from any sport.





Section Two: Practice

- › Then ask the players if they can name the person who coaches that athlete. For some athletes this will be easy; for others (such as golfers, swimmers, runners, etc.) there may not be an obvious answer. That's OK. Either way, use this interactive discussion to emphasize how all athletes have coaches. Try to use local examples whenever possible.

Examples:

Kobe Bryant (Phil Jackson)

Donovan McNabb (Andy Reid)

Tiger Woods (Hank Haney)

We love to watch athletes play their sports. It's fun to see a great quarterback throw a pass or a great track star run super fast. But what we don't usually see is how a coach has helped an athlete become his or her best. These coaches play a huge role in allowing athletes to do their best.

A great coach is someone who can get the best out of his or her players. Their leadership makes an athlete want to give his or her very best to play well.

Today's Bible verse tells us about who God is. It tells us that God is the one who made the world and everything in it. Like a coach, God is in charge of his team that he created, which is everything in the world. Since we live in this world, that means he is in charge of all of us too.

As we talk about God in our Team Huddles, we will talk about how we can join God's team. Just as great players have great coaches, God is the greatest coach we could ever have.

We should be thankful that we have a coach like God.

Coach: As you close your Team Huddle, tell your players that God is the best coach we will ever have.

Section Two: Practice



3rd and 4th Grade

Coach:

- › Review Scripture learning verse with players. Give players the opportunity to say the verse with you a few times.
- › To begin your Team Huddle, play a game in which you name the athlete and see if players can name that athlete's coach.
- › Allow your entire team to work together to come up with the answer so that the game is collaborative instead of competitive. Start with easy answers, which will generally be players in team sports. (examples – Tony Romo (Wade Phillips); Ben Roethlisberger (Mike Tomlin); Kobe Bryant (Phil Jackson); Tiger Woods (Hank Haney)
- › Focus on local superstars wherever possible. Then you can move to individual-sport athletes such as golfers, swimmers, etc. These may be very difficult for your team to guess, so be prepared to jump in with the answers. Use this interactive guessing game to emphasize how all athletes have coaches. Try to use local examples whenever possible.

We love to watch athletes play their sports. It's fun to see a great quarterback throw a pass or a great track star run as fast as the wind. But what we don't usually see is how a coach has helped an athlete become his or her best. These coaches play a huge role in allowing athletes to excel. In fact, in a lot of ways coaches are just as important to a player becoming great as the player himself or herself is. We love watching these players play, but if they didn't have coaches, they would not be nearly as good as they are.

A great coach is one who gets the best out of his or her players. This person is able to lead in a way that makes an athlete want to give his or her best to play well and succeed.





Section Two: Practice

Today's Bible verse tells us about who God is, It tells us that God is the one who made the world and everything in it. Like a coach, God is in charge of his team that he created, which is everything in the world. Since we live in this world, that means he is in charge of all of us too.

As we talk about God in our Team Huddles, we will talk about how we can join God's team. Just as great players have great coaches, God is the greatest coach we could ever have. We should be thankful that we have a coach like God.

Do you think that God is a good coach? Why? (examples: teaches us, gives us good examples through the Bible)

Coach: As you close your Team Huddle, tell your players that God is the best coach we will ever have.

5th and 6th Grade

Coach:

- › Review Scripture learning verse with players. Give players the opportunity to say the verse with you a few times.
- › Ask the players to name the most famous athletes in the world.
- › Allow them to give several responses, but guide them to two specific athletes: Tom Brady and Tiger Woods. You may need to ask questions like, "Who is the best quarterback out there? Who's the best golfer in the world?"

How do you think Tom Brady got to be such a great quarterback? How do you think Tiger Woods got to be such a good golfer?



Section Two: Practice



It's interesting to think about how Tom Brady and Tiger Woods got to be so good at their sports. Do you think it's all based on talent? Is it all about athletic ability? What else helps them become their best? Of course, we know that it takes dedicated practice and a great coach to be great. Bill Belichick coaches Tom Brady and helps him and the whole team get better. Hank Haney is Tiger Woods' coach, and he does a lot to help Tiger become the best golfer he can be.

We love to watch athletes play their sports. It's fun to see a great quarterback throw a pass or a great track star run as fast as the wind. But what we don't usually see is how a coach has helped an athlete become his or her best. These coaches play a huge role in allowing athletes to excel. In fact, in a lot of ways coaches are just as important to a player becoming great as the player himself or herself is. We love watching these players play, but if they didn't have coaches, they would not be nearly as good as they are.

How do coaches help athletes? What makes a coach great?

A great coach is one who gets the best out of his or her players. This person is able to lead in a way that makes an athlete want to give his or her best to play well and succeed.

Today's Bible verse tells us about who God is. It tells us that God is the one who made the world and everything in it. Like a coach, God is in charge of his team that he created, which is everything in the world. Since we live in this world, that means he is in charge of all of us too.

As we talk about God in our Team Huddles, we will talk about how we can join God's team. Just as great players have great coaches, God is the greatest coach we could ever have. We should be thankful that we have a coach like God.





Section Two: Practice

Do you think that God is a good coach? Why? Why is it important that God is a good coach? (Examples: teaches us, gives us good examples through the Bible)

All season in our Team Huddles, we're going to talk about how God is like a coach, and how we are like his players. Today, let's pick some ways God is like a coach.

Pick one quality about God that makes him a good coach. How does it make you feel to know that God has this characteristic?

Coach: As you close your Team Huddle, tell your players that God is the best coach we will ever have.

WEEK THREE PRACTICE PLAN		
TIME	ACTIVITY	COACH'S NOTES
	Team Meeting	
	Warm-up	
	Skills & Drills 1	
	Skills & Drills 2	
	Skills & Drills 3	
	Practice Plays	
	Water break	
	Team Huddle	
	Scrimmage/Skills Game	
	Post-Practice Team Huddle	





Mid-Practice Huddle-Devotion 3

Devotion: What does God do?

Builds a team he loves

“You are God’s children whom he loves.” (Ephesians 5:1).

K5 through 2nd Grade

Coach:

- › Review Scripture learning verse with players. Give players the opportunity to say the verse with you a few times.

What do you think I would do if I showed up for practice and none of you players were here? What can a coach do without a team? What if all the Upward coaches showed up for our game day, but none of us had any players? What would a field full of coaches do?

Coaches need a team. That’s why I was excited to get to meet each one of you. Each player on our team adds something special that no one else could add. As a coach, I love seeing how all my different players can bring all their special talents to make one big team.

God is our coach, and we see today that he is putting together his team. Our Bible verse today tells us that God loves each one of us. God is at work bringing special players, like each of you, to be on his team.

Coach: Lead your players in a prayer to close your Team Huddle. Focus this prayer on thanking God for putting together a team and for wanting to bring us to his team. You can pray, “God, we know you’re putting together your team and we thank you for inviting us to be a part of it. We are glad that you want to choose us to be on your team.”





Section Two: Practice

3rd and 4th Grade

Coach:

- › Review Scripture learning verse with players. Give players the opportunity to say the verse with you a few times.
- › Get your players to name their favorite teams. Once several players have named their favorite teams, ask the players how teams get their players.
- › Name your favorite professional team and use it as an example to talk about how professional teams draft players.
- › Explain that they scout players all around the country, searching for the best talents. Then they use their picks to select the best players that they want to add to the team.

OR

- › Name your favorite college team and use it as an example to talk about how college teams recruit players.
- › Mention how coaches go around the country searching for the best talents and then try to convince those players to decide to play for their team.
- › Talk about the different steps that a college coach must take to convince a player to come to his school – visiting the player, writing letters, offering a scholarship, making phone calls, etc.
- › Help your team understand how important recruiting and/or drafting are to putting together a great team.

What are some other things a coach needs to do to put together a team?
List as many things as you can think of.

Section Two: Practice



God is our coach, and he is putting together his team. Our Bible verse today tells us that God loves each one of us. In the same way that coaches see special qualities in players they are recruiting, God sees something very special in each one of us. He is at work recruiting players like us. He wants to draft players like us to be on his team.

Coach: Lead your players in a prayer to close your Team Huddle.

Focus this prayer on thanking God for putting together a team and for wanting to recruit us to his team. You can pray, “God, we know you’re putting together your team and we thank you for inviting us to be a part of it. We are glad that you want to choose us to be on your team.”

5th and 6th Grade

Coach:

- › Review Scripture learning verse with players. Give players the opportunity to say the verse with you a few times.
- › Get your players to name their favorite teams. Once several players have named their favorite teams, ask the players how teams get their players.
- › Name your favorite professional team and use it as an example to talk about how professional teams draft players.
- › Explain that they scout players all around the country, searching for the best talents. Then they use their picks to select the best players that they want to add to the team.





Section Two: Practice

OR

- › Name your favorite college team and use it as an example to talk about how college teams recruit players.
- › Mention how coaches go around the country searching for the best talents and then try to convince those players to decide to play for their team.
- › Talk about the different steps that a college coach must take to convince a player to come to his school – visiting the player, writing letters, offering a scholarship, making phone calls, etc.
- › Help your team understand how important recruiting and/or drafting are to putting together a great team.

What are some other things a coach needs to do to put together a team? List as many things as you can think of.

God is our coach, and he is putting together his team. Our Bible verse today tells us that God loves each one of us. In the same way that coaches see special qualities in players they are recruiting, God sees something very special in each one of us. He is at work recruiting players like us. He wants to draft players like us to be on his team.

Coach: Lead your players in a prayer to close your Team Huddle.

Focus this prayer on thanking God for putting together a team and for wanting to recruit us to his team. You can pray, “God, we know you’re putting together your team and we thank you for inviting us to be a part of it. We are glad that you want to choose us to be on your team.”

Section Two: Practice



WEEK FOUR PRACTICE PLAN		
TIME	ACTIVITY	COACH'S NOTES
	Team Meeting	
	Warm-up	
	Skills & Drills 1	
	Skills & Drills 2	
	Skills & Drills 3	
	Practice Plays	
	Water break	
	Team Huddle	
	Scrimmage/Skills Game	
	Post-Practice Team Huddle	

Mid-Practice Huddle-Devotion 4 ***Devotion: What does God want?*** ***Me to be on His team***

*"God wants all people to be saved. And he wants everyone to know the truth."
(1 Timothy 2:4).*

K5 through 2nd Grade

Coach:

- › Review Scripture learning verse with players. Give players the opportunity to say the verse with you a few times.
- › Before everyone sits down for the devotion, divide your players into two teams by having each player count off – 1,2,1,2,1,2,etc.
- › Once everyone has counted off, have them divide in their teams and sit in two lines, facing each other and you (you will be at the top of the lines).





Section Two: Practice

We just divided into two teams. Was anybody left out? Did anyone get picked last? No. This was a way for everyone to be picked for a team at the same time.

We all want to be chosen to play on the team. Nobody wants to be left out or picked last. Thankfully, we don't have to worry about that when it comes to the team God is putting together. God, our coach, He chooses you! He wants you to be on His team. You are not His last pick – you are His first pick. God wants all of us to belong to Christ's team.

Coach:

- › Tell each of your players by name that God wants them on his team. Say something like, "Johnny, did you know that God wants you on his team? He does. Bill, God really wants you on his team."
- › After you have done this with each player, close your Team Huddle with a prayer in which you thank God for wanting us to belong on his team.

3rd and 4th Grade

Coach:

- › Review Scripture learning verse with players. Give players the opportunity to say the verse with you a few times.

What are your favorite games to play at recess?

We all love to play games at recess. Whether it's kickball or capture the flag, it's fun to take a break from the school day and compete against our friends. Sometimes choosing teams can be stressful because someone gets picked last. Let me show you a way that everyone gets picked for a team at the same time.

Section Two: Practice



- › Divide your players into two teams by having each player count off – 1,2,1,2,1,2,etc.
- › Once everyone has counted off, have them divide in their teams and sit in two lines, facing each other and you.

When we're making teams we all want to be chosen. Nobody wants to be left out or picked last. Thankfully, we don't have to worry about that when it comes to the team God is putting together. God, our coach, He chooses you! He wants you to be on his team. You are not his last pick – you are His first pick. God wants all of us to belong to Christ's team.

Today's verse tells us that God wants everyone to be on his team and in the game. This means he doesn't want to leave anyone out or on the bench, because he loves each and every one of us the same. What makes his team great is that it is always a winning team.

Coach:

- › Tell each of your players by name that God wants them on his team. Say something like, "Johnny, did you know that God wants you on his team? He does. Bill, God really wants you on his team."
- › After you have done this with each player, close your Team Huddle with a prayer in which you thank God for wanting us to belong on his team.

5th and 6th Grade

Coach:

- › Review Scripture learning verse with players. Give players the opportunity to say the verse with you a few times.





Section Two: Practice

Have any of you ever watched the NFL Draft on television before? Many players are able to be in the draft. In fact, around 250 players are chosen in seven rounds each year over a two day period. Usually the best players are picked first, while many others have to wait to find out if they are even chosen. This is obviously a very stressful time for these players. Could you imagine being the very last person to be picked out of 250 players? Even worse, could you imagine being a player that never got picked at all?

Like these athletes, we all want to be chosen. Nobody wants to be left out or picked last. Thankfully, we don't have to worry about that when it comes to the team God is putting together. God, our coach, chooses you! He wants you to be on his team. You are not his last pick – you are his first pick. God wants all of us to belong to Christ's team.

Today's verse tells us that God wants everyone to be on his team and in the game. This means he doesn't want to leave anyone out or on the bench, because he loves each and every one of us the same. What makes his team great is that it is always a winning team.

Pick one word to describe how you feel to know that God wants to pick you for his team. Is this a new realization for you?

Coach:

- › Tell each of your players by name that God wants them on his team. Say something like, "Jeremy, did you know that God wants you on his team? He does. Derek, God really wants you on his team."
- › After you have done this with each player, close your Team Huddle with a prayer in which you thank God for wanting us to belong on his team.

Section Two: Practice



WEEK FIVE PRACTICE PLAN		
TIME	ACTIVITY	COACH'S NOTES
	Team Meeting	
	Warm-up	
	Skills & Drills 1	
	Skills & Drills 2	
	Skills & Drills 3	
	Practice Plays	
	Water break	
	Team Huddle	
	Scrimmage/Skills Game	
	Post-Practice Team Huddle	

Mid-Practice Huddle-Devotion 5 ***Devotion: How does God see me?*** ***We are not on God's team.***

"We owed a debt because we broke God's laws. That debt listed all the rules we failed to follow." (Colossians 2:14(a,b)).

K5 through 2nd Grade

Object needed:

Bring in a clothing item (hat, t-shirt, jersey, etc.) of your favorite college or pro sports team. Any item in any sport will work. You can also bring in a picture of a fan wearing their team colors if there is no way for you to find any other item.





Section Two: Practice

Coach:

- › Review Scripture learning verse with players. Give players the opportunity to say the verse with you a few times.

What is your favorite team to cheer for? Do you wear your favorite team's colors?

Coach:

- › Put on the item and start talking about how much you like the archival of the team you are wearing. For example, if you are wearing a Dallas Cowboys jersey, talk about how much you love the Washington Redskins.
- › Go on and on until one of the players asks why you're wearing an item from the wrong team. Your goal during this time is to get a player to say that you are wearing the wrong item. This example will work best if you use two teams that are local to your area, whether they are pro teams, college teams, or high school teams.

What's wrong with me wearing this? Why do you think I'm wearing something from the wrong team?

It doesn't make sense for somebody to wear a hat or jersey of one team if he cheers for another team. And it makes even less sense for a player to wear the jersey of one team if he plays for another team. Kobe Bryant shouldn't wear a Suns jersey, because he plays for the Lakers. Peyton Manning shouldn't wear a Bears jersey, because he plays for the Colts. These players would look like they were on the wrong team if they wore the wrong jerseys.

Section Two: Practice



All season in our Team Huddles, we've talked about how God is like a coach who is putting together a team and looking for players. When he looks at each of us, he sees people who could be on his team. But he also sees people who are not on his team yet. Today's Bible verse tells us that we all have broken God's rules any time we do, say or even think the wrong things. The Bible calls this sin. Because we are born as people who naturally do and say and think wrong things, we are on sin's team, not God's.

This is a sad situation for us to be in. We have the opportunity to be on a great team, but we find ourselves on the wrong team. Thankfully, God sees our problem, and He makes a way for us to begin a relationship with Him and join a new team. We'll talk about how this happens next week in our Team Huddle.

Prayer

Coach:

- › Have your players form a circle, and put the item you brought in for this Team Huddle on the ground in the center of the circle.
- › Have the players on your team join hands and say a prayer in which you confess to God that you and all your players begin life on the wrong team.
- › Ask God to help your players learn over the next week how they can join God's team.

3rd and 4th Grade

Coach:

- › Review Scripture learning verse with players. Give players the opportunity to say the verse with you a few times.

Bring in a clothing item (hat, t-shirt, jersey, etc.) of your favorite college or pro sports team. Any item in any sport will work. You can also bring in a picture of a fan wearing their team colors if there is no way for you to find any other item.





Section Two: Practice

What is your favorite team to cheer for? Do you wear your favorite team's colors?

Coach:

- › Put on the item and start talking about how much you like the archival of the team you are wearing. For example, if you are wearing a Dallas Cowboys jersey, talk about how much you love the Washington Redskins.
- › Go on and on until one of the players asks why you're wearing an item from the wrong team. Your goal during this time is to get a player to say that you are wearing the wrong item. This example will work best if you use two teams that are local to your area, whether they are pro teams, college teams, or high school teams.

What's wrong with me wearing this? Why do you think I'm wearing something from the wrong team?

It doesn't make sense for somebody to wear a hat or jersey of one team if he cheers for another team. And it makes even less sense for a player to wear the jersey of one team if he plays for another team. Kobe Bryant shouldn't wear a Suns jersey, because he plays for the Lakers. Peyton Manning shouldn't wear a Bears jersey, because he plays for the Colts. These players would look like they were on the wrong team if they wore items from a different team.

All season in our Team Huddles, we've talked about how God is like a coach who is putting together a team and looking for players. When he looks at each of us, he sees people who could be on his team. But he also sees people who are not on his team yet. Today's Bible verse tells us that we all have broken God's rules any time we do, say or even think the wrong things. The Bible calls this sin. Because we are born as people who naturally do and say and think wrong things, we are on sin's team, not God's.

Section Two: Practice



This is a sad situation for us to be in. We have the opportunity to be on a great team, but we find ourselves on the wrong team. Thankfully, God sees our problem, and he makes a way for us to begin a relationship with him and join a new team. We'll talk about how this happens next week in our Team Huddle.

Prayer

Coach:

- › Have your players form a circle, and put the item you brought in for this Team Huddle on the ground in the center of the circle.
- › Have the players on your team join hands and say a prayer in which you confess to God that you and all your players begin life on the wrong team.
- › Ask God to help your players learn over the next week how they can join God's team.

5th and 6th Grade

Coach:

- › Review Scripture learning verse with players. Give players the opportunity to say the verse with you a few times.

Bring in a clothing item (hat, t-shirt, jersey, etc.) of your favorite college or pro sports team. Any item in any sport will work. You can also bring in a picture of a fan wearing their team colors if there is no way for you to find any other item.

What is your favorite team to cheer for? Do you wear your favorite team's colors?





Section Two: Practice

Coach:

- › Put on the item and start talking about how much you like the archival of the team you are wearing. For example, if you are wearing a Dallas Cowboys jersey, talk about how much you love the Washington Redskins.
- › Go on and on until one of the players asks why you're wearing an item from the wrong team. Your goal during this time is to get a player to say that you are wearing the wrong item. This example will work best if you use two teams that are local to your area, whether they are pro teams, college teams, or high school teams.

What's wrong with me wearing this? Why do you think I'm wearing something from the wrong team?

It doesn't make sense for somebody to wear a hat or jersey of one team if he cheers for another team. And it makes even less sense for a player to wear the jersey of one team if he plays for another team. Kobe Bryant shouldn't wear a Suns jersey, because he plays for the Lakers. Peyton Manning shouldn't wear a Bears jersey, because he plays for the Colts. These players would look like they were on the wrong team if they wore the wrong jerseys.

All season in our Team Huddles, we've talked about how God is like a coach who is putting together a team and looking for players. When he looks at each of us, he sees people who could be on his team. But he also sees people who are not on his team yet. Today's Bible verse tells us that we all have broken God's rules any time we do, say or even think the wrong things. The Bible calls this sin. Because we are born as people who naturally do and say and think wrong things, we are on sin's team, not God's.

Section Two: Practice



This is a sad situation for us to be in. We have the opportunity to be on a great team, but we find ourselves on the wrong team. Thankfully, God sees our problem, and he makes a way for us to begin a relationship with Him and join a new team. We'll talk about how this happens next week in our Team Huddle.

Prayer

Coach:

- › Say a prayer in which you confess to God that you and all your players begin life on the wrong team.
- › Ask God to help your players learn over the next week how they can join God's team.

WEEK SIX PRACTICE PLAN		
TIME	ACTIVITY	COACH'S NOTES
	Team Meeting	
	Warm-up	
	Skills & Drills 1	
	Skills & Drills 2	
	Skills & Drills 3	
	Practice Plays	
	Water break	
	Team Huddle	
	Scrimmage/Skills Game	
	Post-Practice Team Huddle	





Section Two: Practice

Mid-Practice Huddle-Devotion 6 ***Devotion: Why did God send Jesus?*** ***Jesus makes the trade possible***

“But now Christ has made you God’s friends again.” (Colossians 1:22(a)).

K5 through 2nd Grade

Coach:

- › Review Scripture learning verse with players. Give players the opportunity to say the verse with you a few times.
- › Tell your players that you are going to play Freeze Tag.
- › Ask if someone wants to be ‘it’.
- › Involve the coaches!

‘Freeze Tag game rules:

- › The person who is ‘it’ will chase everyone else in an effort to tag them.
- › When someone is tagged, they must stop running. They must “freeze.”
- › You can unfreeze a frozen player if you are not ‘it’ by touching them as you run by. (Another variation is to crawl through the frozen friend’s legs to unfreeze them).
- › Play Freeze Tag for 3-5 minutes.

Let’s all sit down now. We’ve been talking about how God wants all of us to be on his team. But we are not on God’s team because we all sin. Does anyone remember what sin is? (Listen for ‘everything we say, do and think that is wrong’) At the end of Team Huddle last week we said that God provided a way for us to get to his team. God sent Jesus to make a way for us to get to God’s team. Jesus ‘unfreezes’ us so we can be on God’s team, even though we don’t deserve it. This is known as grace – receiving something we do not deserve. Our Bible verse for this week is Colossians 1:22 (a) - But now Christ has made you God’s friends again.

Section Two: Practice



Prayer

Coach:

- › Close your Team Huddle with a prayer thanking God for sending Jesus to make a way for us to join his team.
- › Acknowledge that Jesus is the only one who can break the line that keeps us blocked from joining the team.
- › Ask God to help your players understand that God wants us to be his team even though we don't deserve it.

3rd and 4th Grade

Coach:

- › Review Scripture learning verse with players. Give players the opportunity to say the verse with you a few times.
- › Tell your players that you are going to play Freeze Tag.
- › Ask if someone wants to be 'it'.
- › Involve the coaches!

'Freeze Tag game rules:

- › The person who is 'it' will chase everyone else in an effort to tag them.
- › When someone is tagged, they must stop running. They must "freeze."
- › You can unfreeze a frozen player if you are not 'it' by touching them as you run by. (Another variation is to crawl through the frozen friend's legs to unfreeze them).
- › Play Freeze Tag for 3-5 minutes.





Section Two: Practice

Let's all sit down now. We've been talking about how God wants all of us to be on his team. But we are not on God's team because we all sin. Does anyone remember what sin is? (Listen for 'everything we say, do and think that is wrong') At the end of Team Huddle last week we said that God provided a way for us to get to his team. God sent Jesus to make a way for us to get to God's team. He sent Jesus so that he could die for each one of the sins we have done in the past or will ever do in the future. By doing this, it means we don't have to be separated from God. This is how Jesus was able to make us friends with God again. But the amazing part of the story is that Jesus came back to life from being dead! By dying and being raised from the dead, Jesus 'unfreezes' us and makes a way for us to be on God's team, even though we don't deserve it. This is an example of grace - something that is freely given to us when we don't deserve it. Our Bible verse for this week is Colossians 1:22 (a) - But now Christ has made you God's friends again.

Prayer

Coach:

- › Close your Team Huddle with a prayer thanking God for sending Jesus to make a way for us to join his team.
- › Acknowledge that Jesus is the only one who can break the line that keeps us blocked from joining the team.
- › Ask God to help your players understand that God wants us to be his team even though we don't deserve it.

5th and 6th Grade

Coach:

- › Review Scripture learning verse with players. Give players the opportunity to say the verse with you a few times.

Section Two: Practice



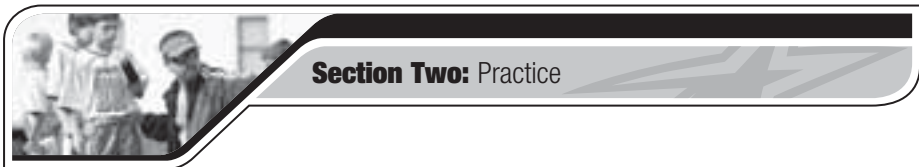
Let's all think about the following situation. Imagine that there was an amazing football team that you really want to be a part of. Each player on the team is an excellent athlete and you feel intimidated to even try out for the team because you don't think you're good enough to make it. But then something amazing happens. The best player on the team comes up to you with the coach and tells the coach that he is going to give up his spot for you to play on the team. You don't have to try out and prove your ability or play better than any of the other athletes. He has given you his spot freely and you don't have to do anything in return. Jesus has done this for us.

In last week's Team Huddle, we talked about how we have all done wrong things that are not pleasing to God; we called this sin. Because we have sinned, we deserve to be punished by God. The punishment we deserve is to be separated from God for forever. But, our Scripture learning verse for today tells us that it is Jesus that makes us God's friend again. Jesus died for each one of the sins we have done in the past or will ever do in the future, so we don't have to be separated from God for eternity. But the amazing part of the story is that Jesus came back to life from being dead! He took our place by taking the punishment that we deserved. This is an example of how God has given us grace – he has given us a gift that we in no way deserve and can in no way pay back.

Prayer

Close your Team Huddle by leading your players in a prayer thanking God for sending Jesus to take our punishment for all the sin that we do. Ask God to continue to teach your players more about who Jesus is in the Team Huddles.





Section Two: Practice

WEEK SEVEN PRACTICE PLAN		
TIME	ACTIVITY	COACH'S NOTES
	Team Meeting	
	Warm-up	
	Skills & Drills 1	
	Skills & Drills 2	
	Skills & Drills 3	
	Practice Plays	
	Water break	
	Team Huddle	
	Scrimmage/Skills Game	
	Post-Practice Team Huddle	See <i>Page 80</i> for Practice 1 Post-Practice Huddle

Mid-Practice Huddle-Devotion 7

Devotion: How do I begin a relationship with God?

Join God's team

"Now that I belong to Christ, I am right with God." (Philippians 3:9(a)).

K5 through 6th grades

Coach:

- › Review Scripture learning verse with players. Give players the opportunity to say the verse with you a few times.

Section Two: Practice



This season we have been talking about how:

1. God loves us
2. God wants to have a relationship with us
3. We have sin in our life and that keeps us separated from God
4. God loves us so much that he sent his son Jesus to die for us so that we can choose to have a relationship with him

Today we're going to talk about how we can begin that relationship.

(Pass out Gospel Tool – bracelet)

Let's all put our bracelet on. What do these colors remind you of? *(Listen for someone to mention the Upward Stars)* We are going to use this bracelet to talk about how the Upward Stars can help us remember how we can have a relationship with Jesus.

Let's begin with the color BLUE. Who remembers what our blue stars are for? *(Listen for 'effort')* That's right – the blue star is for effort and we receive it for giving our very best during our game.

In our life we try and give our very best effort, but we all say and do wrong things. Who remembers what this is called? *(Listen for 'sin')* That's right - sin. Now can someone tell me who has sinned? *(Listen for 'everyone has sinned')* That's right. The Bible says that, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23).

The next color on our bracelet is GOLD. What does the gold star stand for? *(Listen for 'sportsmanship')* Yes, the gold star is for sportsmanship. God's grace is the perfect example of sportsmanship. God has the greatest sportsmanship because he has shown us grace. This season we talked about how God has shown us grace by sending Jesus, his son, to die on the cross for us, even though we don't deserve it. Because Jesus died for us, he has taken away our sins. The Bible says in John 3:16, "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." The Bible tells us that we have to believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sins. So what did Jesus do for us? *(Listen for 'Died on the cross for our sins')*





Section Two: Practice

What's the next color on our bracelet? GRAY. We get the gray star for the great offense we play during our game. The best offense in our life is to ask Jesus into our heart. We must ask God to forgive us for the things we say and do and think that are wrong, and we must believe that Jesus is alive. In Romans, the Bible tells us, "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." What must we ask God to do? (*Listen for something similar to 'Forgive us of our sins or all the things we've done wrong'*)

The next color is RED. The red star stands for defense. Because Jesus loved us enough to die for our sins, we need to repent. To repent means to turn away from our sin and run to God. The Bible says, "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord" (Acts 3:19). So, how do we repent of our sins? (*Listen for something like 'We turn away from our sins and live for God'*)

What does the WHITE star stand for? (Listen for 'Christlikeness' or 'To be like Christ') That's right, Christlikeness. We are like Christ when we try to live as Jesus lived and allow him to live through us. In Galatians, the Bible tells us, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me." So, as others see our lives, they should be able to see Jesus in us.

The last color on our bracelet is GREEN. Each week during practice we receive a green star that stands for the Scripture we have been learning. By learning Scripture, we come to know more about God and he teaches us how to grow in our relationship with him.

So how do we begin this relationship with Jesus and become a part of God's family? To be in God's family, we need to understand that we have sinned. Then we must believe that Jesus took the punishment for our sins when he died on the cross and that God raised him from the dead. To be in God's family, we need to understand that we have sinned and believe that Jesus took the punishment for our sins when he died on the cross. We need to ask His forgiveness and then turn away from our sin.

Section Two: Practice



If you are ready to place your faith in Jesus, you can talk with your parents or one of your coaches. There are no exact words that can place you in God's family – only your faith in Jesus can do that. But a prayer will start that relationship.

Wear your bracelet so that every time you see it, you can remember what Jesus has done for you.

Coach:

Here are some more tips to keep in mind as you talk individually with a child who has further questions about what it means to be a Christian:

- › Ask the child if they understand what they have to do in order to begin a relationship with Jesus.
- › If that answer is yes, ask them to explain to you what it means. Listen for them to say that they have sinned, they believe that Jesus took their place, and that they want to ask forgiveness.
- › If the answer is no, ask the child to tell you what part was unclear.
- › Always keep parents informed on questions a child may have and encourage them to talk further with the child at home.
- › If parents are uncomfortable with leading a child to Christ, be prepared to do this yourself. If you sense that there is an understanding of this message, encourage the child to tell God in prayer the things that they told you (they are a sinner, they believe Jesus died on the cross for them, they want to be forgiven).
- › If a child is uncomfortable or unsure how to pray, offer to lead them in the sample prayer found on their Upward Gospel Magnet: *“Dear Jesus, I know I am a sinner and I need a savior. I believe you took my place and died on the cross for my sins. I ask that you please forgive me and I repent from my sins. Come into my life and help me to allow you to live through me. I love you, Jesus. Thank you for loving me first. Amen.”*





Section Two: Practice

After the child prays, pray for him or her, thanking God that a new person is in His family.

Post-Practice Huddle (players and parents)

- › Distribute Upward Gospel Magnet to players.
 - Explain the center cut out that fits around their Scripture Learning Card Holder.
 - Explain that this magnet shares the Gospel message that was shared during the Team Huddle.
- › Be available for any players or parents who may have specific questions about what it means to begin a relationship with Jesus.
- › If a player makes the decision to begin a relationship with Jesus, notify your League Direction.

WEEK EIGHT PRACTICE PLAN		
TIME	ACTIVITY	COACH'S NOTES
	Team Meeting	
	Warm-up	
	Skills & Drills 1	
	Skills & Drills 2	
	Skills & Drills 3	
	Practice Plays	
	Water break	
	Team Huddle	
	Scrimmage/Skills Game	
	Post-Practice Team Huddle	





Mid-Practice Huddle-Devotion 8

Devotion: How do I build a relationship with God?

Practice

“This is my prayer for you: that your love will grow more and more; that you will have knowledge and understanding with your love.” (Philippians 1:9).

K5 through 2nd Grade

Coach:

- › Review Scripture learning verse with players. Give players the opportunity to say the verse with you a few times.

As you begin your Team Huddle, get one player to demonstrate a skills drill for your sport. This could be something like backpedaling. As this player demonstrates this drill, ask the following questions.

Why do we do this drill? How does it help us on the field? Do we ever stop a game to do this drill? Why not?

Drills are important, because they help us learn skills that help us to play well during games. But we don't stop games to do these drills. You would never call timeout to do a backpedaling drill in the game. These drills are for practice, and they help us become better players.

Last week in our Team Huddle, we talked about how we can begin a relationship with God. It's great news that we can join God's team. Just like joining an Upward team is only the first step in the season, joining God's team is the first step in the adventure God has for us to live.

So what do we do next? We need to do drills and practice playing like Jesus. Jesus wants our love to grow more and more, as today's Bible verse says. Reading our Bible, praying and going to church are just a few drills that can teach us more about how to be like Jesus and how to love more. This means learning about what Jesus said and what Jesus did so that we can follow his example. We can call this practice for being a Christian. By doing this, we are being Christlike. When you see a white star, like the star we receive on game days, remember that we are supposed to be like Christ.





Section Two: Practice

Prayer

Coach: End your Team Huddle with a prayer thanking God for the opportunity to learn more about him and growing in your relationship with him.

3rd and 4th Grade

Coach:

- › Review Scripture learning verse with players. Give players the opportunity to say the verse with you a few times.

As you begin your Team Huddle, get one player to demonstrate a skills drill for your sport. This could be something like backpedaling. As this player demonstrates this drill, ask the following questions.

Why do we do this drill? How does it help us on the field? What is your favorite drill? How has the skill you learned from that drill helped you in a real game this season?

Drills are important, because they help us develop skills that help us to play well during games. These drills are for practice, and they help us become better players.

Last week in our Team Huddle, we talked about how we can begin a relationship with God. It's great news that we can join God's team. Just like joining an Upward team is only the first step in the season, joining God's team is the first step in the adventure God has for us to live.

So what do we do next? We need to do drills. Earlier this season, we talked about how Jesus shows us how to play, kind of like how I showed you how to do drills before you started doing them. But it's not enough for Jesus to show us how to play – we need to practice playing like Jesus. We need to do this in groups like we have at church, and we also need to do it on our own.

Section Two: Practice



Jesus wants our love to grow more and more, as today's Bible verse says. Reading our Bible, praying and going to church are just a few drills that can teach us more about how to be like Jesus and how to love more. This means learning about what Jesus said and what Jesus did so that we can follow His example. We can call this practice for being a Christian. By doing this, we are being Christlike. When you see a white star, like the star we receive on game days, remember that we are supposed to be like Christ. A few ways that we can practice being like Jesus is to read our Bible, talk to Jesus by praying and go to church.

Prayer

Coach: End your Team Huddle with a prayer thanking God for the opportunity to learn more about him and growing in your relationship with him.

5th and 6th Grade

Coach:

- › Review Scripture learning verse with players. Give players the opportunity to say the verse with you a few times.

As you begin your Team Huddle, get one player to demonstrate a skills drill for your sport. This could be something like backpedaling. As this player demonstrates this drill, ask the following questions.

Why do we do this drill? How does it help us on the field? Do we ever stop a game to do this drill? Why not? What is your favorite drill? How has the skill you learned from that drill helped you in a real game this season?

Drills are important, because they help us develop skills that help us to play well during games. But we don't stop games to do these drills. You would never call timeout to do a backpedaling drill in the game. These drills are for practice, and they help us become better players.





Section Two: Practice

Last week in our Team Huddle, we talked about how we can begin a relationship with God. It's great news that we can join God's team. But whether you joined God's team for the first time last week or you've been a part of God's team for a while now, your story doesn't end there. Just like joining an Upward team is only the first step in the season, joining God's team is the first step in the adventure God has for us to live.

So what do we do next? We need to do drills. Earlier this season, we talked about how Jesus shows us how to play, kind of like how I showed you how to do drills before you started doing them. But it's not enough for Jesus to show us how to play – we need to practice playing like Jesus. We need to do this in groups like we have at church, and we also need to do it on our own.

Jesus wants us to love him more as we know more about him; this is what today's Bible verse says. This means learning about what Jesus said and what Jesus did so that we can follow his example. We can call this practice for being a Christian. By doing this, we are being Christlike. When you see a white star, like the star we receive on game days, remember that we are supposed to be like Christ. And one of the best ways we can practice this way is by studying Scripture.

Learning scripture is the kind of drill that can help us live like Christ and love him more and more. This is an important way that we can learn how to be better members of God's team.

What are some other ways besides learning about Scripture that you can grow in your relationship with God? How can you do these things? Pick one of these things you can do this week. How will you do that thing before our practice next week?

Prayer

In addition to closing your Team Huddle with a prayer this week, challenge the players to follow through on the pick they just made this week, and tell them that you will be praying for them this week as they take this challenge.

Section Two: Practice



WEEK NINE PRACTICE PLAN		
TIME	ACTIVITY	COACH'S NOTES
	Team Meeting	
	Warm-up	
	Skills & Drills 1	
	Skills & Drills 2	
	Skills & Drills 3	
	Practice Plays	
	Water break	
	Team Huddle	
	Scrimmage/Skills Game	
	Post-Practice Team Huddle	

Mid-Practice Huddle-Devotion 9

Devotion: How do I become better?

Learn to play better

*"I can do all things through Christ because he gives me strength."
(Philippians 4:13).*

K5 through 2nd Grade

Picture

Coach:

- › Review Scripture learning verse with players. Give players the opportunity to say the verse with you a few times.





Section Two: Practice

- › Call on the player who has improved the most over the season. Ask that player to stand up.
- › Then begin bragging about how you've seen that player get better. Talk about what that player is able to do in games now that he or she could not do in the first game of the season. Mention that he/she may have felt like they couldn't get better at the beginning of the season. Don't focus on what that player couldn't do at first; instead, concentrate on what that player can do now.
- › Then talk about how you've seen other players improve this season.

What can you do in a game now that you couldn't do in the first game of the season?

It's fun to think about how much better we play now than we did at the beginning of the season. Today, I want us to think about how we've gotten better. Of course, the drills we do in practice help. But the thing that helps even more is learning how to use the skills we're developing in games. To get better, we must keep playing in games, because that's where everything we're learning with drills and at practice comes together.

This season, we've been talking about how God is like a coach who wants us to be on his team. Some of us have decided to play on God's team. That's exciting!

Last week in our Team Huddle, we started talking about what we need to do after we join God's team. Whether you joined God's team a couple of weeks ago or a couple of years ago, these are important things for us to do. Last week, we talked about how we should practice living like Jesus. But we can't stop there. We have to get in the game and play!

Today's Bible verse tells us we can do anything with God as our coach. This means that, if we put our full trust in him, he can get us through anything we may face. It also means that we don't have to be afraid because God is always there to help us be better.



Section Two: Practice



Prayer

Coach:

- › Tell your players that you've enjoyed learning how to trust God this year through your Upward team.
- › Then say a prayer in which you ask God to help each of your players continue to become better by trusting him more.
- › Finally, close your Team Huddle by telling your players that everyone gets to play in Upward, and everyone gets a chance to play on God's team as well. Get the players to huddle up, and have each of them put one hand in the middle of the huddle. Count to three, and then have everyone shout, "God's team" together as they bring their hands out of the huddle.

3rd and 4th Grade

Picture

Coach:

- › Review Scripture learning verse with players. Give players the opportunity to say the verse with you a few times.
- › Call on the player who has improved the most over the season. Ask that player to stand up.
- › Then begin bragging about how you've seen that player get better. Talk about what that player is able to do in games now that he or she could not do in the first game of the season. Mention that he/she may have felt like they couldn't get better at the beginning of the season. Don't focus on what that player couldn't do at first; instead, concentrate on what that player can do now.
- › Then talk about how you've seen other players improve this season.





Section Two: Practice

What can you do in a game now that you couldn't do in the first game of the season?

It's fun to think about how much better we play now than we did at the beginning of the season. Today, I want us to think about how we've gotten better. Of course, the drills we do in practice help. But the thing that helps even more is learning how to use the skills we're developing in games. To get better, we must keep playing in games, because that's where everything we're learning with drills and at practice comes together.

What was your favorite game this season? Are you excited to keep playing so that you can have even better games?

This season, we've been talking about how God is like a coach who wants us to be on his team. Some of us have decided to play on God's team. That's exciting!

Last week in our Team Huddle, we started talking about what we need to do after we join God's team. Whether you joined God's team a couple of weeks ago or a couple of years ago, these are important things for us to do. Last week, we talked about how we should practice living like Christ. But we can't stop there. We have to get in the game and play!

Today's Bible verse tells us we can do anything with God as our coach. This means that, if we put our full trust in him, he can get us through anything we may face, no matter how difficult it may seem. It also means that we don't have to be afraid when we face something difficult because he is always with us. Doing this helps to make us better team members!

Prayer

Coach: Tell your players that you've enjoyed trying to live like Christ with them this year through your Upward team. Then say a prayer in which you ask God to help each of your players continue to become better by putting their trust in him in everything they do.

Section Two: Practice



5th and 6th Grade

Picture

Coach:

- › Review Scripture learning verse with players. Give players the opportunity to say the verse with you a few times.
- › Call on the player who has improved the most over the season. Ask that player to stand up.
- › Then begin bragging about how you've seen that player get better. Talk about what that player is able to do in games now that he or she could not do in the first game of the season. Mention that he/she may have felt like they couldn't get better at the beginning of the season. Don't focus on what that player couldn't do at first; instead, concentrate on what that player can do now.
- › Then talk about how you've seen other players improve this season.

What can you do in a game now that you couldn't do in the first game of the season?

It's fun to think about how much better we play now than we did at the beginning of the season. Today, I want us to think about how we've gotten better. Of course, the drills we do in practice help. But the thing that helps even more is learning how to use the skills we're developing in games. To get better, we must keep playing in games, because that's where everything we're learning with drills and at practice comes together.





Section Two: Practice

Point

This season, we've been talking about how God is a coach who wants us to be on His team. Some of us have decided to play on God's team. That's exciting!

Last week in our Team Huddle, we started talking about what we need to do after we join God's team. Whether you joined God's team a couple of weeks ago or a couple of years ago, these are important things for us to do. Last week, we talked about how we should practice living like Christ. But we can't stop there. We have to get in the game and play!

Today's Bible verse tells us we can do anything with God as our coach. This means that, if we put our full trust in him, he can get us through anything we may face, no matter how difficult it may seem. It also means that, we don't have to be afraid when we face something difficult because he is always with us. Doing this helps make us better team members!

What are some things that you can do to become better by trusting in Christ? Pick one of these things and commit to trying it before our practice next week.

Prayer

Coach: Tell your players that you've enjoyed trying to live like Christ with them this year through your Upward team. Then say a prayer in which you ask God to help each of your players continue to become better by putting their trust in him in everything they do.

Section Two: Practice



WEEK TEN PRACTICE PLAN

TIME	ACTIVITY	COACH'S NOTES
	Team Meeting	
	Warm-up	
	Skills & Drills 1	
	Skills & Drills 2	
	Skills & Drills 3	
	Practice Plays	
	Water break	
	Team Huddle	
	Scrimmage/Skills Game	
	Post-Practice Team Huddle	

Mid-Practice Huddle-Devotion 10

Devotion: How do I bond with others?

Play as a team

"I will hear that you continue strong with one purpose and that you work together as a team." (Philippians 1:27(c)).

K5 through 2nd Grade

Picture

Coach:

- › Before you break out of practice for your Team Huddle, do a special drill.
- › Pick out your best player and give him/her the ball. Challenge that player to score a touchdown in 10 seconds or less, without getting a flag pulled, and ask the player if he/she can do it.





Section Two: Practice

- › Before allowing him/her to prove it, put a defender on the player and make the challenge again, and ask the player again if he/she can score, in 10 seconds, without getting a flag pulled. Add another defender to the challenge and ask the player again.
- › Add one more defender so that the drill is now 1-on-3. Tell the player with the ball that he/she now has 10 seconds to try to score a touchdown, in 10 seconds, without getting a flag pulled, while going 1-on-3.
- › Have the players go 1-on-3 for 10 seconds. Stop when ball carrier's flag is pulled or 10 seconds is up.
- › Then, during your Team Huddle ask the player who had the ball how hard it was to score 1-on-3. Ask that player what would have made it easier to score. Listen for responses such as "having teammates to help."

*Is it easier to score playing a team by yourself or when you have teammates?
Why are teammates important in our sport?*

Teammates make it easier for us to play our sport. When we're covered, we can pass the ball to a teammate who has a better chance to score. When we're open, they can pass the ball to us. Because we have teammates, we can work together and play better than we ever could by ourselves.

We need teammates. This is true when we play sports, and it's true in life. As members of God's team, we need to bond with others. God wants us to work well with our teammates on his team.

Today's Bible verse tells us this. God never meant for us to only follow him on our own. He wants us to connect with others that know him so that you can begin to form a team. It also says that we should continue with one purpose, which means we should only do the things he wants us to do.

Section Two: Practice



Learning how to play as a team is a very important part of flag football and it's just as important as we learn to live with other Christians on God's team. Jesus really wants us to be good team members who work together and care about each other.

- › Review Scripture learning verse with players. Give players the opportunity to say the verse with you a few times.

Prayer

Coach:

- › Have the players form a circle. Get each player to high-five the player next to him/her.
- › As they high-five, the players should say, "I want to be a team player!"
- › After each player has said that he/she wants to be a team player, say a prayer asking God to help each of your players bond with others outside of practice as much as they have on your Upward team.

3rd and 4th Grade

Picture

Coach:

- › Before you break out of practice for your Team Huddle, do a special drill.
- › Pick out your best player and give him/her the ball. Challenge that player to score a touchdown in 10 seconds or less, without getting a flag pulled, and ask the player if he/she can do it.
- › Before allowing him/her to prove it, put a defender on the player and make the challenge again, and ask the player again if he/she can score, in 10 seconds, without getting a flag pulled. Add another defender to the challenge and ask the player again.





Section Two: Practice

- › Add one more defender so that the drill is now 1-on-3. Tell the player with the ball that he/she now has 10 seconds to try to score a touchdown, in 10 seconds, without getting a flag pulled, while going 1-on-3.
- › Have the players go 1-on-3 for 10 seconds. Stop when ball carrier's flag is pulled or 10 seconds is up.
- › Then, during your Team Huddle ask the player who had the ball how hard it was to score 1-on-3. Ask that player what would have made it easier to score. Listen for responses such as "having teammates to help."

*Is it easier to score playing a team by yourself or when you have teammates?
Why are teammates important in our sport?*

Teammates make it easier for us to play our sport. When we're covered, we can pass the ball to a teammate who has a better chance to score. When we're open, they can pass the ball to us. Because we have teammates, we can work together and play better than we ever could by ourselves.

We need teammates. This is true when we play sports, and it's true in life. As members of God's team, we need to bond with others. God wants us to work well with our teammates on His team.

Today's Bible verse tells us this. It says that we should not be alone in following him but we should connect with others that also know him, because following Christ is a team sport. Just as we can't go 1-on-5 and be successful on the field we can't go 1-on-5 and succeed in life.

Learning how to play as a team is a very important part of flag football, and it's just as important as we learn to live with other Christians on God's team. Jesus really wants us to be good team members who work together and care about each other.

- › Review Scripture learning verse with players. Give players the opportunity to say the verse with you a few times.



Section Two: Practice



Prayer

Coach:

- › Have the players form a circle. Get each player to high-five the player next to him/her.
- › As they high-five, the players should say, “I want to be a team player!”
- › After each player has said that he/she wants to be a team player, say a prayer asking God to help each of your players bond with others outside of practice as much as they have on your Upward team.

5th and 6th Grade

Picture

Coach:

- › Before you break out of practice for your Team Huddle, do a special drill.
- › Pick out your best player and give him/her the ball. Challenge that player to score a touchdown in 10 seconds or less, without getting a flag pulled, and ask the player if he/she can do it.
- › Before allowing him/her to prove it, put a defender on the player and make the challenge again, and ask the player again if he/she can score, in 10 seconds, without getting a flag pulled. Add another defender to the challenge and ask the player again.
- › Add one more defender so that the drill is now 1-on-3. Tell the player with the ball that he/she now has 10 seconds to try to score a touchdown, in 10 seconds, without getting a flag pulled, while going 1-on-3.
- › Have the players go 1-on-3 for 10 seconds. Stop when ball carrier’s flag is pulled or 10 seconds is up.
- › Then, during your Team Huddle ask the player who had the ball how hard it was to score 1-on-3. Ask that player what would have made it easier to score. Listen for responses such as “having teammates to help.”





Section Two: Practice

Is it easier to score playing a team by yourself or when you have teammates? Why are teammates important in our sport?

Teammates make it easier for us to play our sport. When we're covered, we can pass the ball to a teammate who has a better chance to score. When we're open, they can pass the ball to us. Because we have teammates, we can work together and play better than we ever could by ourselves.

We need teammates. This is true when we play sports, and it's true in life. As members of God's team, we need to bond with others. God wants us to work well with our teammates on His team.

Today's Bible verse tells us this., It says that we should not be alone in following him but we should connect with others that also know him, because following Christ is a team sport. Just as we can't go 1-on-5 and be successful on the field, we can't go 1-on-5 and succeed in life.

Learning how to play as a team is a very important part flag football, and it's just as important as we learn to live with other Christians on God's team. Jesus really wants us to be good team members who work together and care about each other.

Are you a team player? Would you say that you care about others or focus more on yourself? What are some things you can do this week to show that you care about someone else? Pick one of these things and commit to doing it before our practice next week.

- › Review Scripture learning verse with players. Give players the opportunity to say the verse with you a few times.

Prayer

Coach: Say a prayer asking God to help each of your players bond with others outside of practice as much as they have on your Upward team.

Section Two: Practice



WEEK ELEVEN PRACTICE PLAN		
TIME	ACTIVITY	COACH'S NOTES
	Team Meeting	
	Warm-up	
	Skills & Drills 1	
	Skills & Drills 2	
	Skills & Drills 3	
	Practice Plays	
	Water break	
	Team Huddle	
	Scrimmage/Skills Game	
	Post-Practice Team Huddle	

Mid-Practice Huddle-Devotion 11 ***Devotion: Whose bucket can I fill?*** ***Be a mini-coach***

"My work is to tell fully the teaching of God." (Colossians 1:25(b)).

K5 through 2nd Grade

Coach:

- › Review Scripture learning verse with players. Give players the opportunity to say the verse with you a few times.





Section Two: Practice

Picture

Besides me, who is the best coach you have ever had? Why was that coach the best? What did you learn from that coach? Have you ever been a coach for anyone? How did you coach that person?

Did you know that you can be like your favorite coach? You can be a mini-coach. You might not wear a whistle or set up practice, but you can coach others. You can do this with sports by teaching a younger brother or sister some of the skills you've learned this season. You can do this at school by helping someone with their homework if they have questions. You can even coach your parents by inviting them to come to your games or to the church that sponsors your Upward league. No matter how old you are, there are many ways you can act like a mini-coach and help someone else.

We've talked all season in our Team Huddles about how God is like a coach. And we've just seen that we can be mini-coaches. We can help coach other people about what it means to be on God's team. In fact, this is one of the things God wants us to do.

In today's Bible verse, a guy named Paul said that his job was to tell others about God and teach them how to follow him. By doing this, Paul was a mini-coach. God wants us to do the same thing. He wants us to coach others by telling them about Jesus so that they can be on God's team too.

As members of God's team, we should always be looking for ways to tell others about him. When we share Christ with others, we're helping to make God's team the best it can be. God loves it when we become mini-coaches and do this!

Prayer

End your Team Huddle with a prayer in which you thank God for the great season your team has had together this year. Thank God for letting you coach these players. Then ask God to help your players act like mini-coaches who help others become better players for God's team.

Section Two: Practice



3rd and 4th Grade

Coach:

- › Review Scripture learning verse with players. Give players the opportunity to say the verse with you a few times.

Picture

Besides me, who is the best coach you have ever had? Why was that coach the best? What did you learn from that coach? Have you ever been a coach for anyone? How did you coach that person?

Did you know that you can be like your favorite coach? You can be a mini-coach. You might not wear a whistle or set up practice, but you can coach others. You can do this with sports by teaching a younger brother or sister some of the skills you've learned this season. You can do this at school by helping someone with their homework if they have questions. You can even coach your parents by inviting them to come to your games or to the church that sponsors your Upward league. No matter how old you are, there are many ways you can act like a mini-coach and help someone else.

Point

We've talked all season in our Team Huddles about how God is like a coach. And we've just seen that we can be mini-coaches. We can help coach other people about what it means to be on God's team. We can help other people know Christ and be team players. In fact, this is one of the things God wants us to do.

Can you think of any chances you've had to help coach someone else about being on God's team? Can you think of any times other people have coached you about being on God's team? It is a good thing to be coached, but it is also good to be a mini-coach to others.





Section Two: Practice

In today's Bible verse, a guy named Paul said that his job was to tell others about God and teach them how to follow him. By doing this, Paul was a mini-coach. God wants us to do the same thing. He wants us to coach others by telling them about Jesus so that they can be on God's team too.

As members of God's team, we should always be looking for ways to tell others about him. When we share Christ with others, we're helping to make God's team the best it can be. God loves it when we become mini-coaches and do this!

Prayer

End your Team Huddle with a prayer in which you thank God for the great season your team has had together this year. Thank God for letting you coach these players. Then ask God to help your players act like mini-coaches who help others become better players for God's team.

5th and 6th Grade

Coach:

- › Review Scripture learning verse with players. Give players the opportunity to say the verse with you a few times.

Picture

Besides me, who is the best coach you have ever had? Why was that coach the best? What did you learn from that coach? Have you ever been a coach for anyone? How did you coach that person?

Did you know that you can be like your favorite coach? You can be a mini-coach. You might not wear a whistle or set up practice, but you can coach others. You can do this with sports by teaching a younger brother or sister some of the skills you've learned this season. You can do this at school by helping someone with their homework if they have questions. You can even coach your parents by inviting them to come to your games or to the church that sponsors your Upward league. No matter how old you are, there are many ways you can act like a mini-coach and help someone else.

Section Two: Practice



We've talked all season in our Team Huddles about how God is like a coach. And we've just seen that we can be mini-coaches. We can help coach other people about what it means to be on God's team. We can help other people live like Christ and be team players. In fact, this is one of the things God wants us to do.

Can you think of any chances you've had to help coach someone else about being on God's team? Can you think of any times other people have coached you about being on God's team? It is a good thing to be coached, but it is also good to be a mini-coach to others.

In today's Bible verse, a guy named Paul said that his job was to tell others about God and teach them how to follow him. By doing this, Paul was a mini-coach. God wants us to do the same thing. He wants us to coach others by telling them about Jesus so that they can be on God's team too.

As members of God's team, we should always be looking for ways to tell others about him. When we help people grow to be more like Christ, we're helping to make God's team the best it can be. God loves it when we become mini-coaches and do this!

Think of one person you can help become a better player for God's team this week. This could be a friend, a sibling, a classmate, even a parent. How can you help that person? Pick one way you can be a mini-coach to help that person and commit to doing it in the next week.

Prayer

End your Team Huddle with a prayer in which you thank God for the great season your team has had together this year. Thank God for letting you coach these players. Then ask God to help your players act like mini-coaches who help others become better players for God's team.





Section Three:
Game Day



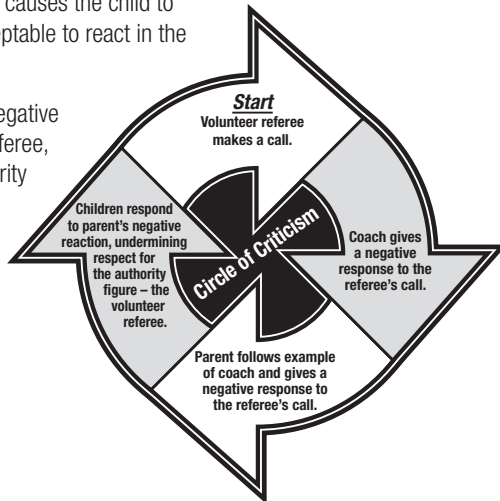


Section Three: Game Day

Circle of Criticism and Circle of Affirmation

Remember one of the key points in becoming an Upward Coach is to know your role in the Circle of Affirmation. Actions and reactions on the field will have a lasting effect that either opens or closes the door to ministry. The Circle of Criticism and the Circle of Affirmation are simple diagrams that illustrate the results of a coach giving a referee either negative or positive feedback.

1. The Circle of Criticism begins when the coach gives a negative response to a right or wrong call made by the referee.
2. The coach's example gives the parent the implied permission to react negatively toward the referee.
3. The parent's example causes the child to assume that it is acceptable to react in the same way.
4. The result can be a negative attitude toward the referee, who represents authority on the field.



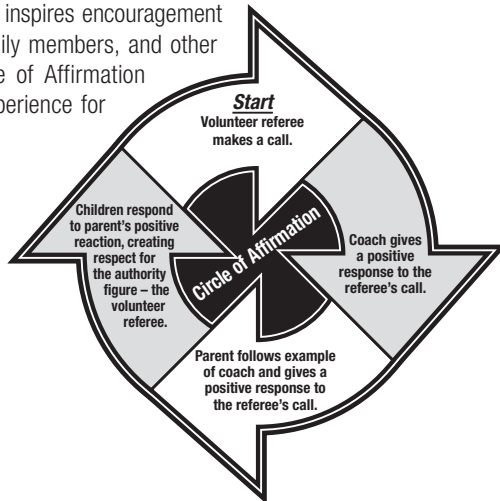
Section Three: Game Day



In Upward Flag Football, coaches and referees work together as a unified team. Coaches have the opportunity and the responsibility to stop the Circle of Criticism by starting the Circle of Affirmation.

1. The Circle of Affirmation begins when the coach gives a positive response to a right or wrong call made by the referee.
2. The coach's example influences the parent to react positively toward the referee.
3. The parent's example encourages the child to give a positive response.
4. The result is a positive attitude toward authority.

The Circle of Affirmation goes beyond the referee. A coach's affirmation of players inspires encouragement and praise from parents, family members, and other players. Practicing the Circle of Affirmation makes the game a better experience for everyone.





Section Three: Game Day

Rules Unique to Upward Flag Football

The rules unique to Upward Flag Football are designed to recognize that Every Child Is a Winner by promoting the following:

- › *Character*
- › *Self-esteem*

Field Diagram and Rules

- › The offensive team is awarded a first down when it crosses the midfield line. Based on the field size, one first down is sufficient to advance the football for a score.
- › The lines 5 yards from each end zone and on both sides of the midfield line are no-run zones. No-run zones do not apply to the K5 division. The no run zones are designed to take away power-running plays. If an offensive team picks up a first down but is then pushed back into the no-run zone, the no-run rule will not apply, as the offensive team cannot pick up another first down.
- › The offensive team begins the game and second half by taking possession of the ball at its 5-yard line. With the no contact rule, this also means no blocking in Upward Flag Football. With kick-offs, the goal is to block and clear the way for the return, which is not a part of Upward Flag Football.



Section Three: Game Day



Down Format

K5 and 1st-2nd Grades

- › The offensive team has four plays to gain a first down by crossing midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four plays to score a touchdown.
- › If the team fails to cross midfield in four downs or score a touchdown, the other team takes possession on its own 5-yard line. There will be no punts for this division. All four downs will be used without the concern of giving up field position.

3rd-6th Grades

- › The offensive team has four plays to gain a first down by crossing midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four plays to score a touchdown.
- › On fourth down, a team has two options.
 - A team may attempt to gain a first down or a touchdown. If a team fails to convert on fourth down, either by scoring or picking up a first down, the ball changes possession at the no-run zone going into the first down.
 - A team may “punt” as its fourth-down play by notifying the referee. In this case, the ball will be placed on the opposing team’s 5-yard line, and there will be a change of possession. For the older divisions, defensive stands will be awarded. This also teaches the field possession aspect of football.





Section Three: Game Day

Offensive starting points

(K5-2nd grades)

SITUATION	STARTING FIELD POSITION AFTER CHANGE OF POSSESSION
AFTER A TOUCHDOWN AND EXTRA POINT(S) ATTEMPT	OFFENSE'S 5-YARD LINE
AFTER A TURNOVER ON DOWNS	OFFENSE'S 5-YARD LINE
AFTER AN INTERCEPTION	AT THE SPOT OF THE INTERCEPTION

(3rd-6th grades)

SITUATION	STARTING FIELD POSITION AFTER CHANGE OF POSSESSION
AFTER A TOUCHDOWN AND EXTRA POINT(S) ATTEMPT	OFFENSE'S 5-YARD LINE
AFTER A "PUNT"	OFFENSE'S 5-YARD LINE
AFTER A TURNOVER ON DOWNS	NO-RUN ZONE GOING INTO THE FIRST DOWN (MIDFIELD LINE)
AFTER AN INTERCEPTION	AT THE SPOT OF THE INTERCEPTION

Section Three: Game Day



Clock Format

- › Games consist of four 9-minute quarters with an 8-minute halftime.
- › The game clock stops briefly at the end of every quarter for predetermined substitutions.
- › Each team has one 30-second timeout per half. Unused timeouts do not carry over to the second half. The clock will stop during the timeout.
- › A 30-second play clock begins after the referee spots the ball as ready for play.
- › The clock will stop in the final minute of the first half and in the final minute of the game for the following situations:
 - After an incomplete pass
 - After the ball carrier goes out of bounds
 - After a touchdown
 - During an extra-point attempt
 - For an official's timeout
 - After an interception
 - During a called timeout until the ball is snapped
 - On a change of possession





Game Format

Upward Flag Football leagues feature a unique game format.

- › Referees lead both teams in prayer at midfield before every game. This is a good time to give reminders about the game and to check that flags are on hips, jerseys are tucked in, jewelry has been removed, and coaches have their substitution cards prepared.
- › The visiting team (wearing the lighter-colored jerseys) calls the coin toss. The team that wins the coin toss may choose to play offense or defense first or choose which goal to defend. The other team has the choice (possession or end to defend) not made by the team winning the toss. The team that plays defense first will play offense first to start the second half.
- › Because the end of a quarter does not signal a change of possession, the team with possession at the end of the quarter will retain possession after substitutions take place.
- › Teams will switch ends of the field at the half, not after each quarter.
- › Score will not be kept in the K5 or 1st-2nd grade divisions.
- › Standings are not kept in any division. Such standings add unnecessary pressure and intensity. In Upward Flag Football, there will not be a playoff system, championship tournament or a division champion thus eliminating the need for any standings.

Section Three: Game Day



- › Each team will have six players on the field at a time. This equips the offense with an appropriate amount of players without crowding the field.
- › Coaches are allowed to walk the sidelines and encourage their players without stepping in the playing area.
- › In the 3rd-6th grade divisions, each team can put one coach in the huddle for the first two games of the season. In the K5 and 1st-2nd grade divisions, each team can put one coach in the huddle throughout the season.
- › Teams will use substitution rules, as detailed on the next page.

Substitutions

Upward's substitution system is designed to provide each player equal opportunity for improvement. The system ensures that:

- › No child sits out more than one possession at a time.
- › Every child plays offense and defense in every game.
- › Every child will start on either offense or defense in each game.
- › In most cases, each child will play against someone of equal ability.
- › Coaches are not able to make unfair substitutions or to be accused of doing so.
- › Coaches do not have to monitor playing time for each player.
- › Playing time for all players is virtually even over the course of the season.





Section Three: Game Day

Implementing the System

Here are a few basics of the substitution system:

- › Each team fields six players at a time.
- › In each quarter, each team will have an offensive and defensive group, and this group will change in each quarter according to the substitution rotation.
- › The coin toss will determine if the first group will play offense or defense first. The second group will play the opposite side of the ball for the entire quarter.

Filling Out the Substitution Form

Coach commissioners should supply each coach with a team roster that includes each player's evaluation score. Using the team roster, place your two best passers in slots 1 and 7 (in that order) on the substitution form. These slots are the designated passer slots and were created to ensure that the team has a passer in the game at all times.

After filling in the passer slots, fill in the rest of the substitution form with your players' names according to their ability levels. Players should not be aware of this system or their rankings. Each quarter, each team will have two groups: one for offense and one for defense.

Section Three: Game Day



To provide an example, we will create a 10-member team called the Hurricanes. Tommy, Chris, Julio, Shane, Jerome, Tim, Marc, Gregg, Felix, and Derek are ranked players 1-10. Because Tommy and Marc are numbers 1 and 7, they will be the designated passers. Excluding the two passers, Chris has the highest score and is assigned number 2. Derek is assigned number 10 because he has the most room for improvement. Player rankings can be evaluated through the first couple of practices to ensure the team's two best passers are identified for slots 1 and 7. Once that evaluation is complete and the rankings are set for game day number one, the order must remain the same for the remainder of the season.

GAME # <u>1</u>		First Half				Second Half			
		1st Quarter		2nd Quarter		3rd Quarter		4th Quarter	
		Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def
①	TOMMY								
②	CHRIS								
③	JULIO								
④	SHANE								
⑤	JEROME								
⑥	TIM								
⑦	MARC								
⑧	GREGG								
⑨	FELIX								
⑩	DEREK								
⑪									
⑫									





Section Three: Game Day

The lineup on the first game day starts with player 1. Players 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 are group one and start the first quarter. That means the starting players for Game 1 are: Tommy, Chris, Julio, Shane, Jerome, and Tim. This will be the first group on the field. The coin toss will determine whether they are playing offense or defense. In our example, the toss was won by the Hurricanes, and they selected to play defense first, so the first group will begin on defense. The coach will circle DEF (defense) at the top of the first section of his/her substitution form.

GAME #1		First Half				Second Half			
		1st Quarter		2nd Quarter		3rd Quarter		4th Quarter	
Player's Name		Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def
①	TOMMY	1	5		3		1	5	
②	CHRIS	2	6		4		2	6	
③	JULIO	3		1	5		3		1
④	SHANE	4		2	6		4		2
⑤	JEROME	5		3		1	5		3
⑥	TIM	6		4		2	6		4
⑦	MARC		1	5		3		1	5
⑧	GREGG		2	6		4		2	6
⑨	FELIX		3		1	5		3	
⑩	DEREK		4		2	6		4	
⑪									
⑫									

Section Three: Game Day



On the second game day, the lineup begins with player 2. Players 2-7 are group one.

GAME # <u>2</u>		First Half				Second Half			
		1st Quarter		2nd Quarter		3rd Quarter		4th Quarter	
		Off	Def	Off	Def	Off	Def	Off	Def
1	TOMMY		4		2	6		4	
2	CHRIS	1	5		3		1	5	
3	JULIO	2	6		4		2	6	
4	SHANE	3		1	5		3		1
5	JEROME	4		2	6		4		2
6	TIM	5		3		1	5		3
7	MARC	6		4		2	6		4
8	GREGG		1	5		3		1	5
9	FELIX		2	6		4		2	6
10	DEREK		3		1	5		3	
11									
12									





Section Three: Game Day

Substitutions on the third game day will start with player 3.
 Players 3-8 are group one.

GAME # <u>3</u>		First Half				Second Half			
Player's Name	1st Quarter		2nd Quarter		3rd Quarter		4th Quarter		
	(Off) or Def	Off or (Def)	(Off) or Def	Off or (Def)	(Off) or Def	Off or (Def)	(Off) or Def	Off or (Def)	
① TOMMY		3		1	5		3		
② CHRIS		4		2	6		4		
③ JULIO	1	5		3		1	5		
④ SHANE	2	6		4		2	6		
⑤ JEROME	3		1	5		3		1	
⑥ TIM	4		2	6		4		2	
⑦ MARC	5		3		1	5		3	
⑧ GREGG	6		4		2	6		4	
⑨ FELIX		1	5		3		1	5	
⑩ DEREK		2	6		4		2	6	
⑪									
⑫									

This rotation continues throughout the season. Additional examples and blank substitution forms are located in the back of the Coach and Referee Playbook.

If a team has 11 or 12 players, with 6 on the field and 5 or 6 off the field at all times, the offense/defense responsibility switches each quarter.

Section Three: Game Day



Scoring

- › **Touchdown:** 6 points
- › **Extra point:** 1 point (played from the 5-yard line with a pass) or 2 points (played from the 10-yard line with a run or pass) The 5-yard attempt is from the no-run zone.
- › **Safety:** 2 points. The scoring team will also receive possession on its own 5-yard line. No physical kicks will occur in Upward Flag Football.

Offensive Basics

- › A minimum of three players must be on the line of scrimmage at every snap. Traditional football format requires seven players on the line of scrimmage at the snap of the ball. The three players on the line for Upward Flag Football will consist of a center and then two receivers positioned anywhere along the line of scrimmage. This adds some structure to offensive sets.
- › Only one player can be in motion when the ball is snapped. This is intact to keep the integrity of the game.
- › In the 3rd-6th grade division, the ball must be snapped between the legs to begin play. K5 and 1st-2nd grade players may use the side snap. The traditional snap can be difficult for the younger players with small hands.
- › Before handing off or passing, the quarterback must have complete possession of the ball. This helps clarify the center sneak play. A possession change between the center and quarterback must occur in order to run the play.
- › A low-profile field cone or beanbag may be used to mark the line of scrimmage.





Section Three: Game Day

Running the Football

- › The quarterback cannot run the ball across the line of scrimmage. This is in place to include others in each offensive play. Without this rule, a quarterback could dominate each play by advancing the football.
- › The person who receives the snap from the center (under-center or shot-gun) is considered the quarterback and cannot run the ball across the line of scrimmage.
- › The option play, where the quarterback runs the ball down the line of scrimmage before pitching the ball is allowed, keeping in mind that he/she cannot run the ball across the line of scrimmage.
- › The quarterback is the only player who can make the pitch. The pitch can occur at anytime while behind the line of scrimmage.
- › Once the pitch is received, the ball carrier can run the ball, hand-off the ball or pass the ball.
- › Direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are legal. Multiple handoffs may be used. After the ball crosses the line of scrimmage, handoffs and laterals are not permitted. This rule exists for safety reasons and to discourage the multiple laterals that would occur to avoid a flag pull.
- › The 5 yards leading toward the goal line and the 5 yards leading to the midfield first-down line are no-run zones. The no-run zones do not apply to the K5 division.
- › A player receiving a handoff or immediate pitch can pass the ball (halfback pass) from behind the line of scrimmage.
- › A ball carrier may not dive. A dive will result in a penalty. This is for safety and abides with the no contact rule. Diving for advancement of the football can bring on injury or contact.
- › The ball carrier's feet determine the spot of the football when a flag is pulled, not the location of the football. This is to discourage a dive for advancement.





Receiving the Football

- › All six players are eligible to receive passes. (The quarterback becomes eligible after a handoff or pitch.) With the no contact rule, no blockers can be used thus allowing all offensive players to be eligible.
- › A completion consists of a receiver gaining control of the football while having at least one foot in bounds. This rule is to keep the integrity of the game.
- › If a player catches a pass with his knee(s) on the ground, the play is dead and the ball is spotted at the point of the completion. This rule helps to keep the no contact rule intact.

Passing the Football

- › All forward passes can be completed behind or beyond the line of scrimmage. Once the ball leaves the quarterback's hand, the defender can make a play on the ball. The defender must avoid contact with the receiver.
- › The quarterback has 7 seconds to throw a pass. If a pass is not thrown within 7 seconds, it is treated as an incomplete pass (loss of down). A handoff or pitch will end the 7-second pass count. This rule keeps a scrambling quarterback from taking too much time with each possession.





Section Three: Game Day

Dead Balls

Play is ruled dead when one of the following occurs:

- › The ball carrier's flag is pulled or falls out.
- › The ball carrier steps out of bounds.
- › The ball carrier's knee hits the ground.
- › A touchdown or safety is scored.
- › A pass falls incomplete.
- › At the point of an interception.
- › The ball hits the ground as a fumble. The ball will be spotted at the point of the fumble. One exception to this rule is with the center/quarterback exchange. If a snap is mishandled, the quarterback and only the quarterback may pick up the ball and continue play. If a defender gets to the ball before the quarterback, the play is ruled dead and the ball is spotted at the point of the fumble (treated like a sack).

Defensive Basics

- › Teams may run man-to-man, zone defenses or a combination of both. This rule allows for defensive schemes and helps equal ability match-ups. Players can have an easier time covering a zone vs. a receiver man-to-man in the open field.
- › Interceptions may not be returned. Change of possession will be awarded at the point of the interception. This rule will force a substitution so players will not sit out more than one possession at a time.
- › Interceptions made in the end zone will result in a touchback and the ball will be spotted at the 5-yard line. Interceptions cannot be returned, so the touchback is used for all endzone picks.





Rushing the Passer

- › All players who are rushing the quarterback must begin 7 yards behind the line of scrimmage. Before each snap, the referee will designate the 7-yard rush line. With no blocking allowed, this gives the quarterback enough time to make a play or escape a rush.
- › With the 3rd through 6th grade division, any number of players may rush the quarterback. The 1st and 2nd grade division may only rush one defender.
- › Defenders not rushing the quarterback may line up on or off the line of scrimmage. In the K5 division, three defenders must line up 7 yards behind the line of scrimmage. Having three players line-up 7 yards from the line of scrimmage for the K5 group keeps the congestion from forming along the line of scrimmage. This is key since majority of K5 plays are running plays. This also helps the defense disguise the rush, since it could be anyone of the three players lined up at the rush line.
- › Once the ball leaves the quarterback's hand, the 7-yard rule is no longer in effect, and all defenders may cross the line of scrimmage to pursue the ball carrier. This allows the defense to react quickly to a play behind the line of scrimmage.

Penalties

Referees will call all penalties.

If a penalty happens near the end zone, where the penalty yardage would place the ball in the end zone, then the penalty will be half the distance to the goal.





Section Three: Game Day

Defense

- › **Encroachment:** The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- › **Illegal rushing** (*enforced when players start rushing from inside the 7-yard rush line*): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- › **Interference:** The penalty is 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down.
- › **Illegal contact** (*pulling the jersey, holding, blocking, pushing*): The penalty is 10 yards from the spot of the foul.
- › **Illegal flag pull** (*before the receiver catches the football*): The penalty is 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down.

Offense

- › **Illegal motion** (*more than one person moving*): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- › **Illegal formation** (*false start, not enough men on the line of scrimmage*): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- › **Illegal pass** (*a pass thrown after the ball carrier has crossed the line of scrimmage*): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a loss of down.
- › **Delay of game:** The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.

Section Three: Game Day



- › **Shielding** (*a non-contact block that impedes a defender from making a tackle*): The penalty is 5 yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down.
- › **Illegal run** (*a running play in the no-run zone or a quarterback crossing the line of scrimmage*): The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
- › **Intentional grounding**: The penalty is 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and a loss of down.
- › **Offensive pass interference** (*illegal pick play, pushing a defender*): The penalty is 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and a loss of down.
- › **Flag guarding** (*intentional or unintentional use of the arm to prevent the flag from being pulled*): The penalty is 5 yards from the spot of the foul and a loss of down.
- › **Illegal use of the hands** (*stiff-arming, blocking*): The penalty is 10 yards from the spot of the foul and a loss of down.
- › **Diving** (*diving toward the end zone or first down*): The penalty is 10 yards from the spot of the foul and a loss of down.





Section Three: Game Day

Game Day Recognition

Regardless of the score, Every Child Is A Winner. Multi-colored sticker stars are given to all players at the end of every game. This should be a time of excitement. Parents should be encouraged to cheer for players as each star is presented to the players.

In order to build self-esteem and team spirit, each player will be awarded a sticker star after each game. Make it a point to explain why each player receives a particular star. Encourage parents and family members to be a part of these presentations and to cheer for players as the stars are awarded. Use the Star Distribution Form on page 132 to track which players have received which stars. Make an attempt to award each player all six stars throughout the season. These stars are located in the back of this playbook.

Below is a list of the multi-colored stars and what they represent:

- › ***Blue is for Effort***
- › ***Gold is for Sportsmanship***
- › ***Gray is for Offense***
- › ***Red is for Defense***
- › ***Orange is for Leadership***
- › ***White is for Christlikeness***



Section Four: Forms





Section Four: Forms

GAME 1

Player's Name	First Half				Second Half			
	1st Quarter		2nd Quarter		3rd Quarter		4th Quarter	
	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								

GAME 2

Player's Name	First Half				Second Half			
	1st Quarter		2nd Quarter		3rd Quarter		4th Quarter	
	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								



Section Four: Forms



GAME 3		First Half				Second Half			
		1st Quarter		2nd Quarter		3rd Quarter		4th Quarter	
Player's Name		Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def
		1							
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									

GAME 4		First Half				Second Half			
		1st Quarter		2nd Quarter		3rd Quarter		4th Quarter	
Player's Name		Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def
		1							
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									





Section Four: Forms

GAME 5		First Half				Second Half			
Player's Name	1st Quarter		2nd Quarter		3rd Quarter		4th Quarter		
	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									

GAME 6		First Half				Second Half			
Player's Name	1st Quarter		2nd Quarter		3rd Quarter		4th Quarter		
	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									

Section Four: Forms



GAME 7		First Half				Second Half			
		1st Quarter		2nd Quarter		3rd Quarter		4th Quarter	
		Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									

GAME 8		First Half				Second Half			
		1st Quarter		2nd Quarter		3rd Quarter		4th Quarter	
		Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									





Section Four: Forms

		First Half				Second Half			
Player's Name	1st Quarter		2nd Quarter		3rd Quarter		4th Quarter		
	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									

		First Half				Second Half			
Player's Name	1st Quarter		2nd Quarter		3rd Quarter		4th Quarter		
	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	Off or Def	
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									



Section Four: Forms



STAR DISTRIBUTION FORM (sample)

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

Name	Game 1	Game 2	Game 3	Game 4	Game 5	Game 6	Game 7	Game 8
TOMMY	B	W	G	Gr	R	O		
CHRIS	G	B	W	O	W	G		
JULIO	Gr	W	O	R	B	B		
SHANE	R	O	W	G	W	W		
JEROME	W	B	R	O	B	R		
TIM	B	Gr	O	W	G	Gr		
MARC	O	G	Gr	B	Gr	W		

Blue (B): Effort
Orange (O): Leadership

Gold (G): Sportsmanship
Red (R): Defense

Gray (Gr): Offense
White (W): Christlikeness



