

Calvary Chapel  of Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY BASKETBALL DEVOTIONS

4-9 year olds

Week 4

Playing by the Rules

Playing by the Rules

The objective is the goal or main teaching point of this week's study. If you convey one thing to your players, make it this.

Read this passage aloud to the kids, as it will be the focus of this week's study. Each week's memory verse will be in bold.

Here is where we will discuss today's passage with the players. This can be read off the page or summarized and explained in the coach's own words.

Objective This lesson will teach the kids that God is the one who decides how we should live, not us.

Scripture Passage:

"And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules."

2 Timothy 2:5

In the Word

Imagine a basketball game where everyone got to decide their own rules. One player might decide he doesn't have to dribble and run with the ball. Others might think they can push people out of their way. Pretty soon, the game would be chaos! When we play basketball, there is a set of rules that we all play by, and the referee makes sure that we all obey the rules. We don't get to decide if we are playing by the rules, the ref does, and if the ref sees you break a rule, there is a punishment.

Paul brings this up in 2 Timothy 2:5 because the same is true in our lives as Christians. We don't get to decide what's right or wrong or how we should live our lives. God does. He has given us His "rules" in the Bible so that we know how we should live. In our memory verse, Paul says that just as an athlete can only compete if he or she plays by the rules, if we want to follow Jesus, we have to live how He wants. When we live by God's rules, God is pleased and may bless us, but when we choose to live our own way, we can get into trouble.

Many of us don't like rules. You might think, "Why does God get to decide what I can and can't do? Why can't I live however I want?" But God doesn't make rules up just because. He tells us how to live because He loves us and wants what's best for us. We saw in our example earlier that if players got to decide their own rules in basketball, the game would be chaos. The same is true in life. What if someone decided that lying was okay? What about stealing or hurting people? That doesn't sound like the

In the Word (Continued)

kind of world I want to live in. God tells us not to do these things because He knows it's better for everyone if we live the way He created us to live. Following His rules is what's best for everyone.

So how do we know what God's "rules" are? Where can we find them? The answer is simple: in the Bible! The Bible tells us all we need to know about how to live for and obey Jesus. That's why it's important to read God's Word so we can find out how He wants us to live, but we can't stop there. Once we've read God's Word and know how He wants us to live, we then have to go and obey. It won't be easy, and we will have to pray and ask for God's help, but when we live the way God wants us to live, there is great blessing. So let's make sure we live God's way, not our own way.

"On the Court" gives some in-game situations where today's lesson can be applied, while "Off the Court" gives examples from everyday life. Encourage them to do the things you listed during the game today.

On the Court

- You shouldn't talk to your opponents the way you want to when you are frustrated or angry. Speak to them in love the way God's Word tells us to.
- When you play basketball, you might want to keep the ball for yourself, but that's not kind to your teammates. Share the ball with others.
- Respect the decisions of your coaches and do what they tell you, not what you want to do.

Off the Court

- Study God's Word at home with your family so that you can know how God wants you to live.
- God's Word tells us to love our enemies. It's not easy to be kind to those who are mean to you, but we are blessed when we do.
- Spend your time in ways that please the Lord rather than always doing what you want to do.

These are some final notes/goals to accomplish this week. These are not meant to be read, but are instructions for the coach.

The Game Plan

1. Review last week's memory verse, 2 Timothy 2:3, "You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Give a ticket to any player who can recite it.
2. Learn and memorize 2 Timothy 2:5 with your team. Encourage them to practice the verse over the week.
3. Emphasize to the kids this week that "playing by God's rules" means reading Scripture and doing what it says.