

Highlighted in yellow is the abbreviated scriptures for Kindergarten and First Grade

Practice Week 1: Excellence

Today's topic is excellence. Can anyone tell us what excellence means? Can anyone tell us what excellence looks like?

Commentary: Excellence means greatness-the very best. People appreciate excellence because they know it is hard to find and takes a great deal of practice, patience, and work. Excellence always stands out as a goal to aim towards. Getting an A in school shows excellence. Michael Jordan's basketball career was filled with excellence. LSU baseball demonstrates excellence as does LSU Women's Basketball by winning National Titles. Work toward your own excellence in what you do as well as encourage others for their excellence.... you know it when you see it!

Verse: 2 Timothy 2:15 NIV "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for teaching me about the importance of excellence...doing my best. Help me to see you and to honor you in everything I do. It is in your name I pray, amen.

Practice Week 2: Teamwork

Today's topic is teamwork. Who can tell me what teamwork means? How do we know when we see good teamwork?

Commentary: Teamwork is work done by a group acting together so that each individual member plays a part in contributing to the goal or outcome of the entire team. Each person's individual strengths are brought together to help the entire team win the game. Together the team is stronger and better than individuals working alone. Working well and getting along with others is a personal skill needed for good teamwork. The 12 disciples that Jesus picked to be his followers is a great example of a strong team acting together for one purpose...to bring the good news of God to all people.

Verse: Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 NIV "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor. If either of them falls down, one can help the other up, but pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up."

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, let me do my best today to help my teammates do their best so that together we may become stronger and better than ever. Help us to encourage each other today. It is in your name I pray, amen.

Practice Week 3: Encouragement

Today's topic is encouragement. Who can tell me what encouragement means? When was the last time you encouraged someone? When was the last time someone encouraged you?

Commentary: Encouragement is the act of giving someone help in the form of support, comfort, confidence, hope, or inspiration. Being a good cheerleader for someone, saying nice things to support someone, doing something nice for someone are all ways we can encourage someone.

Verse: 1 Thessalonians 5:11 NIV “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, help me encourage my teammates, my coaches, and my opponents today so that I may speak kind words over them. Guide me to be the eyes and ears of Jesus today to give you glory. It is in your name I pray, amen.

Practice Week 4: Courage

Today’s topic is courage. Can anyone tell me what it means to have courage? Who can tell me about one person they think has courage?

Commentary: Courage is the ability to face fear or danger, and to act bravely in difficult conditions. Courage doesn’t mean you do not have fear but that you do what is necessary despite being afraid. In the Bible God commands us to be courageous! Courage is contagious. Other people will follow your leadership. However, even if you stand alone, God has called us to courage!

Verse: Joshua 1:9 NIV “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, no matter what happens today help me to be courageous in everything I do. Thank you for promising to be with me everywhere I go!

Practice Week 5: Integrity

Today’s topic is integrity. Who can tell me what integrity is? Do you know anyone who has integrity?

Commentary: Someone with integrity is someone who always does the right thing even when no one is looking! Imagine that you are home alone. Your mom and dad aren’t there to see you do something wrong. You know you won’t get caught. What would you do? Are you really alone? Does God see what you are doing?

Verse: Proverbs 4:25-26 (ICB) “Keep your eyes focused on what is right. Keep looking straight ahead to what is good. Be careful what you do. Always do what is right”.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, lead me to always do the right thing. Help me to live a life that is pleasing to you even when no one is watching. Amen!

Game Week 1:

Genesis 1:1 NIV “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

Question: What does this scripture tell us about God?

Commentary: God is all powerful. He created everything you see in the world and you too! You are here on purpose and for a purpose. Some people don't believe in God. That is like seeing a painting and not believing there was a painter or a building and not believing there was a builder. We see creation and know there was a creator!

Prayer: God you are amazing! Thank you for the wonderful world we have been given. Thank you for my life. Help me to find your purpose for me! Amen!

Game Week 2:

Romans 3:23 NIV “ For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Question: What does this scripture tell us about humans everywhere?

Commentary: All people have sinned against God in various ways. We are beautiful, but broken. We are all beautifully created, but also broken because of sin. Jesus Christ is the answer to our sin. In baseball no one plays a perfect game. In life everyone sins! We can be called safe because of what Jesus did for us through his life and death.

Prayer: God thank you for loving me despite my sin. Thank you Jesus for being the solution to my brokenness.

Game Week 3:

Romans 6:23 NIV “For the wages of sin is death, but **the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**”

Question: How much does a gift cost you when you receive it? How much did God pay for the gift of eternal life?

Commentary: Sin brought death, pain and suffering into the world. However, Jesus Christ who is God paid the price for our sin on the cross. The gift of eternal life is free for the Christian, but the cost was very high for Christ on the cross. What if your parents or coach gave you a very expensive gift? How would they feel if you rejected it? This is how God feels when we reject Jesus.

Prayer: Jesus, thank you for paying the price of sin on the cross. We thank you for eternal life that we can freely receive through you!

Game Week 4:

Mark 1:15 NIV “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. **Repent and believe the good news!**”

Question: What does repentance mean? What does saving belief mean?

Commentary: Repentance is asking forgiveness and turning away from sin. Saving belief is to trust and believe in the person of Jesus Christ as the risen Savior and Lord. If we go the wrong

way around the bases we will get thrown out! However, when we go the wrong way in life we can turn around and come back to a loving God through repentance.

Prayer: Jesus thank you for coming to the world. Help us to live for you! We believe you are God and that you rose again from the grave!

Game Week 5:

1 John 1:8 NIV “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.”

Question: Is there anyone who lives a perfect life?

Commentary: Jesus was the only one who lived a sinless life. We all sin and this sin separates us from God. When the umpire says we are out there is no arguing with him. He is in charge and we are out. In life when we sin we need to simply admit it and go to Jesus for forgiveness.

Prayer: Jesus show me where I have sinned in my life. I want to live for you everyday. Thank you for loving me when I fall short. Help me to do my best for you daily and accept your forgiveness when I fail.

Game Week 6:

1 John 1:9 NIV “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

Question: How can we confess our sins?

Commentary: We can go right to Jesus in prayer and confess our sins to Him. We can trust Him and He loves us. He wants to help us live in a way that brings Him glory and shines a light of love and holiness in the world. After a game our cleats and uniform can be very dirty. The water from a hose and washing machine makes them like new. When it comes to sin it is Jesus that can clean us up!

Prayer: Jesus thank you for your love and forgiveness when I sin. I trust you completely in my life.

Game Week 7:

Ephesians 2:8 NIV “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.”

Question: What is grace? Who is your favorite player? What if your favorite player statistics were given to you?

Commentary: Grace is getting something really great you don't deserve. We don't deserve God's favor and forgiveness, but we can be saved because of God's goodness. It has nothing to do with our goodness. Jesus played the perfect game in life. When we accept Him His goodness is given to us.

Prayer: Jesus, thank you for your grace. We know we don't deserve it, and so we are so grateful for your kindness towards us. Help me to live everyday with a thankfulness that helps me to live for you in every way!

Game Week 8:

Acts 4:12 NIV "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

Question: What are we saved from?

Commentary: We are saved from paying the price for our sins. This is like a criminal getting bailed out by an innocent person. In baseball sometimes we win and sometimes we lose. How does it feel to lose? In life we have hard times too, but if we have Jesus in the end we win! Heaven is the biggest win of all.

Prayer: Jesus thank you for saving me. Thank you for rescuing me from the penalty of my sin. Help me to live for you! Thank you for the biggest win of all which is eternal life!

Game Week 9:

John 14:6 NIV Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Question: Can you make up your own way to score in a game apart from the rules?

Commentary: God has given us a way to Heaven. We can't just make up our own way. The way is through Jesus Christ alone. What if you told the umpire that you scored a touchdown in your baseball game? Would that work? In the same way, God has given us one way to Him through Jesus!

Prayer: God, the world tries to find so many ways to find goodness or ways of knowing God. Thank you for making it clear through Jesus how we can come to you. I commit to following Jesus who is the way!

Game Week 10:

Romans 5:8 NIV "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Question: What is the most someone has ever done for you? What if someone gave their life for you?

Commentary: Someone has given their life for you. His name is Jesus Christ. Many times people work hard and earn things in life. However, the only thing we have contributed towards our salvation is the sin required to make it necessary. In baseball, we can tell our coach we want to work harder than anyone else. However, if we don't back up our words with action then our promise to work is obviously not real. In the same way Jesus SHOWED his ultimate love for us by giving his life.

Prayer: Jesus thank you for loving a sinner like me through the cross. I love you and I want to show love to you and the world that needs you. Help me to see your plan for my life. Help me to love others like you love! Let my love be more than words!

Game Week 11:

2nd Corinthians: 5-15 NIV “**And he died for all,** that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.”

Question: Do you think more about yourself or about God and others?

Commentary: We all naturally are selfish and think mainly about ourselves. God wants our thoughts on Him and on loving others. It is not natural for us to do this, but we serve a supernatural God. Through prayer, and being close to Jesus we can live a life pleasing to Him. In baseball, we can achieve a great deal with our team through sacrifice. In life we can achieve a great deal for God by serving with other believers through church or in various ways in the name of Jesus!

Prayer: God thank you for my life. Thank you for dying for me. I give my life to you! Help me to focus on loving Jesus and loving others!

The Sinner's Prayer

If you are unsure if you are saved you could pray a prayer like the one below. A prayer does not save you, but this could be a way to start a real relationship with God.

Dear God in heaven, I come to you in the name of Jesus. I acknowledge to You that I am a sinner, and I am sorry for my sins and the life that I have lived. I need your forgiveness. I believe that your only son Jesus Christ shed His blood on the cross and died for my sins, and I am now willing to turn from my sin.

Right now I accept Jesus as my Lord. With my heart, I believe that God raised Jesus from the dead. This very moment I accept Jesus Christ as my own personal Savior! Thank you Lord! Help me to live for you! Amen!