

# COACHES TRAINING FIELD MANUAL

# SPORTS OUTREACH

RESTORING HOPE TRANSFORMING LIVES

2019 EDITION



This manual is given freely to help train, equip and deploy coaches in the use of sports ministry around the globe. These materials are taken from ReadySetGo Multiplication Kit, the Global School of Sports Ministry Manual and the Athletes in Action: CRU Press. The materials in this manual have been written by many people from around the world.  
NOT FOR RESALE.

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## What is Sports Ministry?

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Sports is a unique, all-terrain vehicle that knows no bounds. It is intentional in scope, intercultural in appeal, and there is no cultural or social hang-ups. It moves swiftly through all differences – race, religion, age and sex. Sports is a great common denominator, opening doors to all levels of society. Teamed with ministry, the potential is incredible, the impact staggering.

**We are called to go out into the world, “so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life . . .”**  
*Philippians 2:15-16*

We live in a world of need. We can use the gifts that God has given us to shine as a light within the world of sports. It is easy for us to put our salvation in a vault and never share it with others. But that is not what we are called to do. We must step out of our comfort zones and use the talents and the opportunities that God has given us for His glory.

### Sport is Worship

- 1. Made to worship (*Genesis 1 and 2*)** When we play sport in a way that honors God and others, we bring Him glory. We are made in God’s image and this means that we were made to reflect Him as we use the abilities He has given us. We were designed to run, play, compete and share life together. God made us to be creative and to be in relationship with Him and with one another.
- 2. The problem of sin (*Genesis 3*)** Sport is also a reflection of our basic human problem: sin. Sin causes us to reject God and to want to rule our own lives. As a result our relationship with Him is broken. We no longer use our abilities for Him but for ourselves, playing for our own glory, not His. Our relationships with others are also broken. Sport can be painful, frustrating and fruitless because of this problem of sin. Sin ultimately leads to death.
- 3. Restored to worship (*Romans 12*)** However, God has not left us like this. He loves us. So, in His mercy, He sent Jesus Christ to pay for our sin on the cross and restore our relationship with God. Therefore, as we play, we can now offer Him our abilities and relationships as worship to Him, seeing sport as a wonderful opportunity to worship God every time we play, compete or train.

### Sport is Mission

Sport is a wonderful opportunity to share the good news of Jesus with others. Here is why:

- Billions of people love, play and watch sport regularly.
- Sport includes many groups unreached by the Gospel.
- Sport brings and keeps people together.

## History of Sports Ministry Movement

### 1st Century

Paul, in many of his letters in the New Testament, features sport (*Galations 5:7; Philippians 2:16; 1 Corinthians 9:24-26; 2 Timothy 2:5*). He clearly understood the role of sport in the cultures he served. He featured sport as a metaphor and the discipline of sport as a helpful way to understand what it meant to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

### 18th Century

It was 1,750 years after Paul's writing before sport was again mentioned explicitly in regard to following Jesus.

### 19th Century

A hundred years later in the mid-19th century, a movement which emphasized the more physical and muscular aspects of faith emerged, combining faith, philanthropic service and sport. Amazingly, the church and sport had featured prominently in the 1800s in the UK with several of the Premier League Football clubs starting in churches. Sport and the Gospel spread around the world as the British Empire spread and took many of the sports we know today across the globe. Organizations like the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) also had a focus on sport. The sports of basketball was created for Christ-centered ministry in a YMCA.

### 20th Century

In the early decades of the 20th Century, this vision of sports as an important ministry of the Body of Christ largely disappeared. Despite this, many notable sportspeople in this period, like 1924 British Olympian Eric Liddell (featured in the 1981 Oscar-winning film *Chariots of Fire*) and others, were faithful followers of Jesus.

After the Second World War, sports emerged as a ministry opportunity in the US and a few other places. However, across the world, very few countries knew anything about sports ministry and the church was largely ignorant and mostly negative towards sport. At the time, there were a handful of sports ministry organizations, but little happening in 98% of the nations of the world.

### 1960s

The current global sports movement started in 1969 as a result of a vision to see churches and ministry leaders understand and engage with sport. At the heart of this vision was a desire to make disciples in every country and city on earth. Chaplaincy to top level sport athletes also began in the 1960's. It rapidly spread and today serves team and individual sports across the world.

### 1970s

An increasing number of people started to catch the vision. Sports ministry work started in parts of Europe, Brazil, India, Africa, Asia and the Pacific.

### 1980s

A significant moment happened in Hong Kong in 1982 with the first global sports ministry gathering. Out of this gathering, sports teams traveled to new countries and new ministries started. The start of outreach around major sports events began with the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul, South Korea. This grew and new activities emerged in Barcelona in 1992 and Atlanta in 1996.

### 1990s – Now

Since that first global sports ministry gathering, the global scope of sports ministry has continued to expand. Sports ministry training programs and schools have been launched. Numerous sport specific ministries are currently laboring to make disciples all over the world through sports. Now, tens of thousands of leaders are trained each year in sports ministry strategies and millions of people are influenced by them. There are few places on earth where sports ministry hasn't had some impact.

## The Heart of Sports Ministry is MINISTRY

### We Proclaim the Gospel

We need to begin to understand the key elements of the Gospel and why we need the Gospel. We will also begin to recognize the strategy Jesus used to take this Good News to the world.

#### **What is the Gospel?**

The Gospel is the good news about Jesus bringing us into right relationship with God so that together we can live in His Kingdom forever.

It is important to know it accurately. It must include each of these key themes: God created us, we fell into sin, God restores us to live in His Kingdom through Jesus's death and resurrection. *John 11:25-27, Colossians 1:15-23, John 3:16-19, 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, Romans 5:9-10, Romans 1:1-5.*

#### **Why do we need the Gospel?**

We need the Gospel because Jesus gives us a right relationship with God forever when we believe in Him as the Son of God. This new life only happens through Jesus' death and resurrection.

*Romans 1:16, John 10:10, Colossians 1:6, Philippians 3:20*

#### **Helpful quote:**

**“Never be content with your current grasp of the Gospel. The Gospel is the life-permeating, world-altering, universe-changing truth. It has more facets than a diamond. It's depths man will never exhaust.”** — *C.J. Mahaney, Sovereign Grace Church, Louisville, KY*

#### **Bible discovery: The Gospel**

The word “Gospel” means “Good News.”

Romans 1:1-3. It tells us that the Gospel is God's story. It was promised through Scripture and it is all about Jesus.

*Colossians 1:15-23, John 3:16-19, Romans 5:9-10, Ephesians 2:3-10, 1 Corinthians 15:1-8*

## Preparing Your Personal Testimony

Every time we tell our story (our testimony) we give honor and glory to God, and He is pleased with that. Why? Well, our story is actually the story of how God rescued us . . . saved us. It's our eye-witness (or "I-witness") account of how our lives have changed. It's the story of His pursuit of a lost soul (you!) and the dramatic rescue to tear you from the clutches of your mortal enemy and bring you safely into His eternal kingdom. It's the stuff movies are made of. And that retelling of your redemption highlights His character. That's what we call "glorifying God" it's giving Him the credit and acknowledging His work.

We like to think that because it's our story, we don't have to put any effort into telling it. We were there when it happened, and we're living it now. But it's easy to get jumbled up, flustered, off the point, and onto a tangent that can distract, bore, annoy, or confuse your listener. We want to glorify God and be listener-friendly. That's why a little planning and practice are so valuable.

There are five basic parts to "Your Story"—the opening, your life before Christ, how you came to Christ, your life after Christ, and the closing. You should be able to talk through all five parts clearly and succinctly within 3-5 minutes. Let's take a look at how to put it together.

**The Opening. Identify a Theme.** What did your life revolve around that God used to help bring you to Him? Try to illustrate your theme with a word picture that your audience can identify with.

**Your Life before Christ.** You want to paint a picture of what your life was like before you came to Christ, but don't dwell on how bad you used to be or glory in past sin. Share only the details that relate to your theme, and give enough detail to show your need for Christ. This is not the time to give your resume.

**How You Came to Christ.** Ah, this is it. Make sure you speak in such a way that the person you are talking with, and anyone who overhears you, can understand how you became a Christian, and how they can become a Christian, too. Give only the details that are important to communicate why and how you became a Christian. As you begin to work on it, consider what your life was like before you trusted Christ or you really began to see change. This is an educational aspect to your story, so that even if your listener is not interested right now, s/he'll be able to make that decision down the road because you've equipped them with the right information.

**Your Life after Christ.** Share some of the changes that Christ has made in your life as they relate to your theme. Emphasize the changes in your character, attitude, and perspective, not just the mere changes in behavior. And be realistic. We will struggle as Christians. Life is far from perfect, isn't it? But what makes it different for you now? Be honest, and God will use your personal experience regardless of how "unspectacular" you may think it is.

**The Closing.** Close it out with a summary statement that ties your story together according to your theme. You could close with a verse, but only if it's meaningful and relates to the story you've just told.

## Preparing Your Personal Testimony (Continued)

### Helpful Hints

- Write the way you speak—make the testimony yours.
- Choose a theme and carry it throughout the testimony.
- Don't be overly negative or positive. Be truthful.
- Don't criticize or name any church, denomination, organization, etc.
- Time limit should be 3 minutes.
- Practice it over and over until it becomes natural.

### Among Christians

- 80% agree it is their personal responsibility to share their faith
- 75% feel comfortable sharing their beliefs with another
- 61% haven't shared how to become a follower of Christ with another person in the last 6 months
- 48% haven't invited anyone to church in the last 6 months
- 20% rarely or never pray for people who are not followers of Christ

### Helpful Questions

- **What stops us from proclaiming the Gospel?**
- **Are we ever ashamed of the Gospel?**
- Read Romans 1:16. **How does this verse challenge you?**
- **Pray and confess struggles in proclaiming the Gospel with a partner.**

**Link:** If we understand the key ideas of the Gospel and we realize that the Gospel is powerful and vitally important, how do we take the Gospel into the world?

### How do we take the Gospel to the world?

#### Explore Jesus' strategy

Read Matthew 9:35-38.

- What word describes Jesus' attitude to people? (*compassion*)
- What words describe the condition of the people? (*harassed and helpless, sheep with no shepherd*)
- What are examples of this in our cities and villages today?
- What was Jesus' strategy? (Go out, tell people, befriend them, help them, heal them, equip disciples to do the same, pray)

**Link:** Jesus was motivated by compassion for the people who were lost and helpless. His strategy was to go, help them, tell them the good news, and help others to do the same.

**Link:** If we are committed to the Gospel we must share it and live it. Otherwise we are hypocrites.

Now we have a basic understanding of the Gospel. We know that when we believe that Jesus is the Son of God, He gives us life for eternity. Now we must go with compassion to the lost and share this good news!

## We Make Disciples

In this session we will discover that the Great Commission and the Great Commandment are primary in God's plans for all nations. We want people to discover ways to make disciples in the world of sport and play.

### Who is a disciple?

A disciple of Christ is explained many times and in different ways throughout the New Testament. A disciple is:

- **Righteous** – Someone who has been brought into a right relationship with God through His grace alone. *Romans 3:24, Ephesians 1:4-5*
- **A follower** – Someone who follows the example of Jesus by learning to walk in the truth by being obedient to the Bible. *Ephesians 5:1, 1 Peter 2:21, 1 John 2:6, 3 John 4*
- **A disciple-maker** – Someone who both lives for Christ and who makes disciples of Christ. *1 Corinthians 11:1, Galatians 4:19*  
As you live as a disciple you make disciples. As you make disciples you learn to live as a disciple. *Matthew 28:18-20, 1 Corinthians 4:16-17, 2 Timothy 2:2*

### Why do we make disciples?

The sports ministry movement is dedicated to 'Making disciples in all nations for Christ in the world of sport and play.' We make disciples because:

- It is who we are, followers of Christ, as Jesus' Spirit is **transforming us to become more like Jesus**. *Romans 8:29*
- Disciples of Christ have this **Great Commandment** to love one another as God has loved us. *Mark 12:30-31*
- Disciples are sent by the **Great Commission** of *Matthew 28:18-20*. It is our primary mission. Christ has all the authority and He is always with us to accomplish this task through us.

### How do we make disciples?

- We make disciples by encouraging each other to live Jesus' great Commandment. *Matthew 22:37-39, Mark 12:30-31*
- We make disciples by obeying Jesus' Great Commission: by going out of our comfort zone, going to all people groups, baptizing them and teaching them to obey Jesus. *Matthew 28:18-20*
- We make disciples by encouraging each other to follow Christ and become like Christ. *1 John 2:6*

### Reflect on your own story, does the process of discipleship ever end?

Think about your experience of becoming a disciple.

- Who discipled you? Who is discipling you now?
- If you are not discipled, would you want it? Why?

### How would you answer if someone asked you: Why is discipleship needed?



**How do we make disciples?**

- By going, baptizing, teaching to all nations and with Jesus' authority)
- How do you think the first disciples would have felt about the task written in Matthew 28:18-20?
- How does Mark 12:30-31 help us understand HOW we should GO?
- What do you think it means for you to GO? (obey, be active, try something new, go to new places)
- How do you feel about GOING?

**Link:** GOING is about leaving the comfort of our believing friends and GOING to where not-yet-believers are.

**Summary:** Matthew 28:19 says we are to make disciples of all nations. It makes sense to think of all nations as all people groups. Therefore we are called to GO to all people groups; that includes the people group of sport. We can make disciples through our involvement in sport and play.

## We Obey the Bible

In this session we will understand that the Bible is foundational to our lives. We need to take it seriously by understanding it faithfully, obeying it actively and communicating it relevantly.

### Why is the Bible important?

The Bible is an amazing collection of 66 books. Different people wrote it over many centuries. However the Bible makes a huge claim. It says that God speaks to us today through its words.

The Bible is important because:

- It is God's full revelation of Himself and His rescue plan for all people.
- It reveals Jesus - it is an urgent message of salvation.
- It is useful - it shows us how to live God's way.
- It has authority - it is necessary to obey because it is God-breathed. *Hebrews 4:12-13, 2 Timothy 3:16*

### How do we use the Bible?

There are three elements to using the Bible well. We need to:

- Understand it faithfully - listen, read and study each verse in context.
- Obey it actively in our everyday lives.
- Communicate it relevantly to help those who learn from us.

*2 Timothy 2:15, James 1:22-25, 2 Timothy 3:16 and 4:2-6, John 12:49*

### How will we obey the Bible?

- There are practical steps to obeying the Bible. It requires prayer, commitment and accountability.

### What words are used to describe God's Word in Hebrews 4:12 and what does it say about the purpose of the Bible?

- What does it mean to be 'living and active'? (it achieves the purpose of God. It is not outdated, but relevant for today)
- Why is the 'double edge sword' illustration used? (effective, sharp, it cuts on every stroke, a skilled person needs to use it)
- The Bible reveals our thoughts and attitudes, it lays us exposed before God to whom we must give an account one day.
- The Bible introduces us to merciful Jesus who saves us.

**Summary:** Why is the Bible important? The Bible shows us the reality of our situation. The Bible reveals Jesus the Savior to us.

- **Link:** We need to read and understand the Bible faithfully. However unless we act on this it will have no value to us. We must also **obey it**. We only know we are obeying it if we read the Bible regularly and faithfully. Obey actively! **We can only teach others if we have an understanding of what we are teaching.**

## **Bible teaching**

Read 2 Timothy 3:16, 4:2-6

- What does it say about communicating the message? (useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, training, encouraging)
- What does it tell us about the Bible's power?
- What is the warning here? (verses 3-4 false doctrine and only telling people what they want to hear)

**Link:** We need to be well prepared to share God's word in appropriate and creative ways. The Bible is most powerful in our lives when we understand it faithfully, obey it actively and communicate it relevantly. It is like the three colored spotlights.

**Summary:** If we look at Matthew 28:20 we see that Jesus is with us by His Spirit for all time. As we are obedient to the command to "Go to make disciples, teaching them to obey", He is guiding and empowering us. We must make disciples who obey the Bible.

## Biblical Foundations: How Does the Bible View Sports?

**“What on earth do sports have to do with the mission of the church?”**

Sports are viewed differently in different parts of the world. In some parts of the world, sports are actually considered sinful. If we are to use sports as a means of sharing the Gospel and making disciples, it is important to first understand the Biblical foundation for its use.

### **1. Creation: All things God created are good.**

“God saw all that he had made and it was very good.” *Genesis 1:31*

“For by Him all things were created; things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities. All things were created by Him and for Him.”

*Colossians 1:16*

#### **Discuss**

Why might certain people or cultures regard sports as sinful?

How does the understanding that God made everything good affect the way we view sports?

How can sports be bad? (We place our identity in the sport or in winning, rather than in God)

How can sports be good?

**Sports are not inherently bad. God created us with the ability to use our bodies to play sports so that we might glorify Him. Sports become sinful when we find our identity in winning and losing, rather than in Christ. The problem is not with sports. It's with our sinful hearts. Our identity is in Christ and not sports.**

### **2. We've been created to utilize our talents for the glory of God and the good of others.**

“Now the Lord spoke to Moses saying ‘I have called by name Bezalel ... and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship to design artistic works, to work in gold, silver, bronze, in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood and to work in all manner of workmanship...it continues with other people and their gifts for the temple work.’” *Exodus 31:1-6*

“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks the oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” *1 Peter 4:10-11*

#### **Discuss**

What talents has God given you and how are you using them for His glory and for the benefit of others?

What does it mean to use an ability “for God's glory?”

### **3. Our bodies are God's temple**

“Do you not know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?”

*1 Corinthians 3:16*

“For physical training is of some value but Godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.” *1 Timothy 4:8*

## **Discuss**

How is God dishonored when we do not take care of our body?

Physical fitness is glorifying to God when it is kept in proper perspective and does not become our primary pursuit.

## **4. Sporting metaphors – positive use of sports in Scripture**

“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.” *1 Corinthians 9:24-27*

“Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor’s crown unless he competes according to the rules.” *2 Timothy 2:5*

“You were running well. Who hindered you and kept you obeying the truth?” *Galatians 5:7*

“But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and pressing forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” *Philippians 3:13-14*

## **Discuss**

Why does Paul use sports illustrations when teaching Biblical principles?

Think back to your own sports career.

What life lessons did you learn from your coach(es)?

How did you learn these lessons?

## **5. The Great Commission—Use of sports for discipleship and evangelism.**

“Then Jesus came to them and said “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” *Matthew 28:18-20*

“Jesus replied, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. The second is like it, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” *Matthew 22:37-40*

“I have become all things to all people, that by all means, I might save some.” *1 Corinthians 9:22*

**We have been commanded by Christ to “make disciples of all nations,” and to teach these disciples to “obey everything” that Jesus has commanded us. The apostle Paul was willing to adapt himself to various cultures in order to preach the Gospel in an understandable and relevant way. Will we do the same?**

## Why Sports Ministry?

In Matthew 28:19 Jesus commands us to go and make disciples. In Acts 1:8 Jesus told us He would teach, empower and guide us with the Holy Spirit and commands us go to the ends of the world. Start where you are and move outwards.

*To every city. To every community.*

What a remarkable moment in history you and I live in. We are seeing the Great Commission being fulfilled in the world of sport and play.

It is hard to find a community where there is no sport or play. In most of the world's cities, towns and villages, sport is the language that is understood, experienced and enjoyed. No activity other than a Global Games or World Cup style event has a viewing audience in the billions.

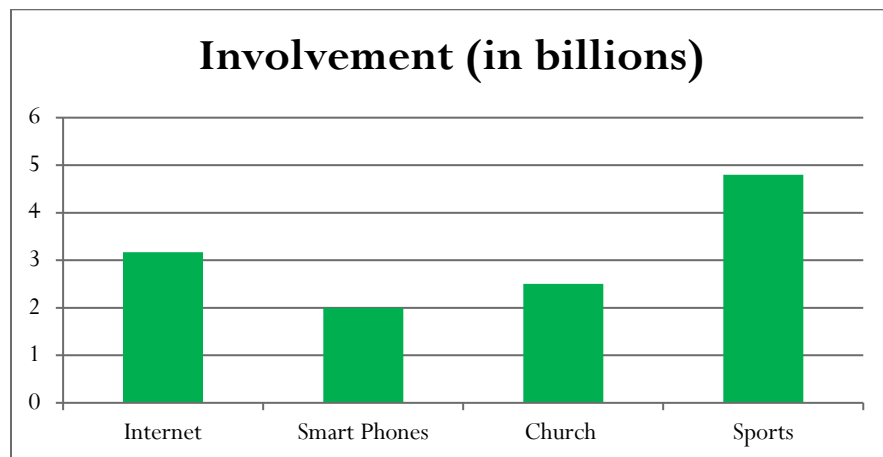
In sport, there is a harvest that is ready, however as Jesus explained in Matthew 9:37, the laborers are few. Our challenge and opportunity is to raise up servant-hearted local sports ministry teams, which multiply themselves, to serve each village, town and city.

**1. Sport is a powerful youth development tool:** Sport is the one medium that is universal. It connects with both men and women of any age in every culture.

**2. Sport is a remarkable community transformation tool:** It brings and keeps people together. All that is needed is a ball on a field, in a parking lot or in an empty space and a team will form.

**3. Sport is a way to promote a good message:** The cost of sport is small compared to other methods of getting people focused face to face. It requires minimal equipment and is an easy avenue by which to communicate.

**4. Sports is the most popular global influencer**



**There are many reasons that believers can embrace sport.**

- Sport is valuable in and of itself. It is a place to worship God (Romans 12:1-2).
- Sport is valued by many people (Global Games, World Cup, regular participation etc.).
- Sport is a setting in which to live and communicate the Gospel.
- Sport is a context for regular discipleship (it's all about relationship).
- Sport is a tool for developing youth both inside and outside the church.
- Sport breaks down cultural, social, economic, language and religious barriers.
- Sport is fun and healthy.

**“Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire, it has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to young people in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than government in breaking down racial barriers.”** - Nelson Mandela (*remarkable world figure and former President of South Africa*)

If we ignore this mission field, one which can cross boundaries and unite people in such unique ways, we are missing out on a tremendous harvest field. We are all called to ‘Go and make disciples’ and your sport gives you a unique opportunity to do this. The best person to share Jesus Christ (with your team, other players or coach) is you! *1 Thessalonians 2:8, Matthew 28:18-20, Colossians 4:2-6*

## The Essentials of Sports Ministry

### Number One: Prayer

The single most important ingredient in building a sports ministry program is prayer. If a program is truly to be God driven, the guiding force must come from the Holy Spirit. Anything less and the program will be a spiritual disaster.

Prayer is communicating with God. It is where we voice our concerns, place our petitions, offer our praise and worship and seek wisdom and guidance. Prayer is where we offer ourselves as servants of the Most High. It is where we place ourselves on the altar along with everything that makes us unique...our gifts, our talents, our strengths and weaknesses. We place ourselves in God's hands and seek His help and guidance in fulfilling the task to which He has called us.

We must come before Him humbly seeking no honor or glory for ourselves. We are called to build His kingdom, not ours. We must acknowledge that everything in the world belongs to God. He created it. He owns it. He will distribute His resources as it pleases Him.

Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst." *Matthew 18:20*

"Ask and it will be given to you. Seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you." *Matthew 7:7*

"But first seek His kingdom and His righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well." *Matthew 6:33*

"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." *Matthew 21:22*

The Scriptures demonstrate the significance of prayer over and over again. Any true follower of Christ knows that prayer is critical. Prayer must be at the forefront of any endeavor being used to further God's kingdom.

Forming a prayer team of godly men and women is critical strategy that should not be ignored or taken lightly. God honors prayer. Prayer can overcome obstacles that appear to be impossible. With God, all things are possible.

In addition, identifying a support team that will also help with the financial challenges that may be encountered is highly recommended. These individuals, in addition to praying for the endeavor, may be able to help you financially or find ways to raise the funds and other items needed to run the ministry.

Finding dedicated individuals of this sort will require, once again, much prayer and fasting. Remember, the resources are there. God owns it all. We need to ask for wisdom as to where to go, with whom we should share our vision and then allow the Holy Spirit to do His work.

Take note: There is power in prayer. God answers prayer. Do not, under any circumstances, underestimate prayer and its importance. It is our link with God and His link with us.



## Number Two: Leadership Is Critical

Identifying the right leader or leaders to direct sports ministry programs is critical. You can develop the best curriculum, the best programs and have an abundance of resources but without the right leadership you will not have a successful program of sports ministry.

The following characteristics are a “must” for a successful sports minister:

1. Be totally committed to Christ.
2. Have a great love and overwhelming passion to reach others for Christ.
3. Be a person of integrity who will not compromise.
4. Be honest, sincere, someone who can be trusted and depended upon.
5. Be creative, frugal and able to do a lot with a little.
6. Have a servant heart and a willingness to serve others. Strive to give all the honor and glory to God and not to self.
7. Not be easily discouraged, have perseverance. Will not let obstacles prevent him/her from achieving goals.
8. Have a positive attitude, not blaming others but seeking solutions, not excuses.
9. Have a sense of humor.
10. Have patience and respect for others.
11. Be a good teacher, understand sports and relate well with young people.
12. Be enthusiastic and trustworthy.

In addition to the above, 1 Timothy 3:1-7 describes the condition set forth to be an overseer. These considerations should also be woven into the character of the individual that is seeking a leadership position. Remember, leadership is key to a successful sports ministry program.

In addition to the qualities already discussed, leaders should also:

- Realize that “local” disciple-makers have an as important role in a sports ministry
- Actively mentor others and willingly give up roles to reproduce and empower others
- Seek to grow their teams with people who have greater talent and ability than themselves. Good leaders are not threatened by the gifts of others.
- Seek to include men, women, people from all age ranges, cultures, and cultural.

Impossible to find a person with all of these characteristics? Not really. Go back to Number One: Prayer. God has already prepared an individual for this task. Your job as the one developing this outreach is to find that person. Don't be in a hurry or you may be tempted to compromise the program before it even starts. Be patient and wait upon the Lord.

### Number Three: Link with the Local Church

It is essential to partner with the local evangelical church when initiating a sports ministry program. The church is the vessel that God has chosen to work through.

Prior to contacting a church, you and your prayer team should spend time praying for the right church, the proper contact and for openness on the part of the pastor, youth leader or other individual occupying a leadership position.

Before meeting with the appropriate individual in the church, have a plan that is carefully mapped out including objectives, goals, procedures, and a strategy that is clearly worded. The strategy should state your intentions to evangelize, disciple and to direct the new believers into the church for further fellowship and oversight.

It is always helpful if you know a member of the church who is in good standing and even better if you are a member yourself. Although the church may not initially offer financial support for the program it is still important that they be informed and give you their blessing and offer prayer cover for this new outreach.

Regardless, do your best to establish a good relationship with the church and their leadership. If all goes well they may be willing to allow you use of some of their facilities for a few of the activities that you plan to offer.

If an evangelical church does not exist in the vicinity where you feel called to work, perhaps you can “plant” a church by beginning with the converts that respond through your outreach. A godly friend or one of your team members could become a lay pastor for this new flock. This church could then become a launching pad for other sports ministry programs in the future. However, do your best to link up with a local church in the area not only to give your program credibility but to make a statement of support for the local church.

## Number Four: Biblical Foundation is a Must

*“What on earth do sports have to do with the mission of the church?”*

The above question has often been posed by some in the church who see absolutely no connection at all. In fact, in some parts of the world, sports are considered sinful.

One of the first obstacles that needed to be overcome in Sports Outreach Institute’s initial work in East Africa, was the notion that sports are essentially evil and therefore, sinful.

The idea that competition was wrong coupled with the fact that most sportsmen were men of the world (drinking, chasing women, playing on Sundays, etc.) led to the obvious conclusion that sports was a tool of the devil. Therefore, to be a good Christian meant you had to give up sports.

In challenging this concept, seminars held by Sports Outreach Institute raised certain questions.

1. Is reading sinful? Reading the Bible is certainly not sinful. But what about reading pornographic books, magazines? Thus reading can be good but it can also be bad.
2. Music? Is it sinful or good? Singing praises to God and singing great hymns of the church is by all means a good thing to do. But what about some of hip hop, rap and other contemporary music which contain lyrics that are sexually suggestive, condone violence and encourage drug use . . . would this not be considered bad? So music can be both good and sinful.

Sports can be viewed in the same manner. Participating in various games can develop sportsmanship, a team spirit, the ability to put the other person first, discipline, exercising our bodies and keeping fit (our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, *1 Corinthians 6:19*) and numerous other positive effects. But sports can also be sinful when a person does not play by the rules, cheats, condones violence and lying and will attempt to win at all costs putting aside sportsmanship and fair play.

To resolve this conflict of thinking, turn to the Scriptures for the Biblical perspective. In *1 Corinthians 9:22* the Apostle Paul makes this statement: “I have become all things to all men that I may, by all means, save some.” Essentially, Paul was willing to adapt himself to each culture in order to employ the “means” to preach the Gospel.

The Scriptures are sprinkled with the references to sports competition. Paul, the apostle, probably offers more illustrations than any other writer. This, of course, begs the question, why? Why use sports as an illustration when teaching Biblical principles? The answer is rather simple. Long before Paul walked the planet people were interested in sports. It is no wonder then that Paul and other writers of Scripture used sports as a means to illustrate a Biblical point.

Taking common experiences and weaving them into principles of Christian living, was and is, a potent teaching method that readily assists people in understanding the concepts being taught. Christ used parables frequently. His stories carried a dynamic message couched in a common experience that allowed many to better understand the principles He sought to teach. Since sports were a part of most everyone’s experience, several of the authors that God anointed to write scripture chose to use an athletic illustration. A few examples follow:

- “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore, I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not box or fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.” *1 Corinthians 9: 24-27*
- “Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victors crown unless he competes according to the rules.” *2 Timothy 2:5*
- “But this one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” *Philippians 3:13, 14*
- “You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?” *Galatians 5:7*
- “Train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.” *1 Timothy 4:7, 8*

Sports, therefore, can be a potent force to reach people for Christ and to teach Biblical principles. It can be one of those “means” that Paul suggests as appropriate to reach people where they are—which is often outside the church.

Music, drama, and sports are powerful tools that can serve as stepping stones to the Kingdom of God if used properly. The Holy Spirit, however, must serve as the guide or the pathway could lead to an unwanted destination.

## Number Five: Training and Equipping is Crucial

Sending an army into battle that is ill-equipped with little or no training will spell disaster with a capital “D”.

Sending a sports team onto a competitive field with little or no training will have the same result.

Sending a sports minister out to initiate a program of sports ministry without adequate training and preparation will also fail.

The point is that training and equipping are essential ingredients that can lead to a successful sports ministry outreach. Any individual wishing to serve the Lord effectively must be well trained.

The 12 disciples were not simply thrown into the world to bear witness of the remarkable salvation afforded all those who seek forgiveness of their sins and invite Christ into their lives. They needed to be prepared prior to going out and representing the Lord.

Christ, like every good teacher, allowed His disciples to observe a master teacher in action. He taught the 12 disciples basic fundamentals of the faith, allowed them to have first-hand field experiences and then sent them out to apply the things they had learned. At this point, Jesus brought them back for further training both in His classroom and through additional on-the-job training experiences.

In light of Christ’s example, it is imperative that the leadership of a sports ministry program go through a training program of some depth in order to properly equip them for what lies ahead.

This training should follow a well-conceived curriculum based on experiences and knowledge compiled from successful programs that have proven results over a period of time. This does not negate, however, the importance of allowing for creative thinking as one continues the search for new and more effective ways of reaching people for Christ. It does suggest, however, that there are fundamental foundational principles that should be followed to every successful venture in starting a sports ministry program.

Four such principles follow. Some of them have been briefly discussed earlier but bear repeating.

### **Remember!**

The major purpose of a sports ministry program is to provide a vehicle to share the Gospel and to provide a means for Christians to grow in their faith. Fellowship is also an important element for the believer and sports do provide this ingredient. Recreation and its many benefits from a physical, emotional and mental point of view offer yet another valid goal for sports programs.

**However, when you are establishing a true sports ministry program, the focus must be on evangelism and discipleship. The other elements should become secondary benefits. Far too often the fellowship and recreational goals subtly replace the key goals of a sports ministry outreach. As a consequence, the church ends up with a recreational program and not a sports ministry.**

## **Discipleship**

“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.” *Luke 9:23-24*

A disciple is one who has identified with Christ and accepted Him as Lord and Savior. He is a committed follower of the Lord, an obedient servant. He is ever learning, ever growing. A disciple is always attempting to apply the principles Jesus taught, striving to live a Christ-like life style and is willing to bear his cross. His goal is to become a true image bearer of Christ. Interestingly, the cross that we are asked to bear is often the cross we share.

## **The Process of Discipleship**

If we are to be disciple-makers, we must be active in evangelism, winning people to Christ. Unless a person truly knows the Lord you certainly can't make a disciple out of him. Therefore, we must go and share the truth. It requires action on our part. In all probability the individual will not come to you. Sports are a means by which we can reach the unbeliever.

Secondly, when a person comes to Christ it is important for that new believer to openly identify himself or herself as a follower of the Lord. A public declaration makes it clear as to what side the individual makes his stand. Following this important step, the individual must be incorporated into a local church and be identified with other believers.

Thirdly, a new believer being discipled must be taught. Christ was explicit and stated very clearly that we are to teach the new convert to “observe all that I have commanded you,” *Matthew 28:20*. Learning the commandments is not enough, the new believer must live them as well. The principles of living a Christ-like life must be applied or the whole idea of being a disciple is negated.

As teachers we must not only convey the concepts, but we must make sure that the principles are understood and observed. We ourselves must live exemplary lives. “Actions speak louder than words.” “Show me, don't tell me.”

Disciplers then, must not only help the new believer acquire knowledge, they must assist the learner to the point of fully appreciating what the information means to their lives. They must actively embrace the principles, gain a conviction about the truth of Christ's teachings and truly desire to live a life guided by Biblical principles.

Finally, if true conviction has taken root, the new believer will begin to live by the newly acquired guidelines. The disciple must be an encourager to the one taking a step in this direction and help the new believer in the practical outworking of his new-found faith.

It is important to note, however, that the process of discipling a new convert is not something that is accomplished alone. It is a team process where other team members are actively involved as well.

We need to be reminded too that we are not the ones who will bring about growth any more than we can cause salvation to come to an individual. It is God who draws an individual to Himself

and it is God who brings about his growth. We are simply instruments. We are part of His team. He is the captain, the coach. He calls the plays; we help to carry them out.

We must, therefore, learn to listen, to ask. Essentially, before attempting to direct anyone on the discipleship trail, we must pray and ask for God's direction. We must not simply jump off on our own path with ideas that we have conjured up. Paul proclaims this warning when speaking to the Galatians: "Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by hearing with faith? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now perfected by the flesh?" *Galatians 3:2-3*

It would do us well to remind ourselves that the One who created the individual in the first place and endowed him with unique gifts, certainly has the best plan in mind for him. Therefore, it behooves us to consult Him prior to launching our own ideas and plans. Doing so would lead to certain failure.

A second player on the team of discipleship is the church. The purpose of the church is to train, to teach, to equip the saints. It provides the environment in which the new disciple can grow.

As the responsible disciple, you are a key instrument in the making of a disciple. You are an assistant coach on the team, a shepherd selected to oversee one of God's flock. It is crucial, therefore, that you not abandon the new believer. Stay with them. Encourage them, challenge them and hold them accountable.

When dealing with a large number of youth it is obvious that you cannot provide all of them with the time that is required to truly disciple a person. You must be selective. Christ had His 70 followers and He had His 12 disciples. He chose to spend most of His time training the 12. He also had three that He worked with the most intimately. The three were given special attention by Christ; He even allowed them to accompany Him to the mountain where The Transfiguration occurred.

You, too, must narrow your efforts. Train well one or two at a time. Work with others but not to the extent you would with the most committed of the lot. By so doing you will be more effective in the long run.

## Appendix



## Testimony Worksheet

### Helpful Hints

Write the way you speak—make the testimony yours.

Choose a theme and carry it throughout the testimony.

Don't be overly negative or positive. Be truthful.

Don't criticize or name any church, denomination, organization, etc.

Time limit should be 3 minutes.

Practice it over and over until it becomes natural.

**1. The Opening** – Identify a theme.

**2. Your Life before Christ** (or before you gave Him complete control)

A. What was your life like that will relate most to the non-Christian?

B. How did those things let you down? Why were you open to change?

**3. How You Came to Christ** (or gave Him complete control)

A. When was the first time you heard the gospel? (Or were exposed to dynamic Christianity?)

B. What were your initial reactions?

C. When did your attitude begin to change? Why?

D. What were the doubts and struggles that went through your mind just before you accepted Christ?

E. Why did you accept Christ?

**4. Your life After Christ** (or after you gave Him complete control)

A. What are the specific changes Christ has made in my life?

B. Are there illustrations that would be helpful?

C. Why am I motivated differently?

**5. Closing**



## Sports Outreach Coaches Training Outline

(Taken from the Sports Outreach Coaches Field Manual)

- **(TRAIN): to Sports Outreach and sports ministry:** “It Starts With A ball”
  - History of Sports Ministry
  - Vision and History of Sports Outreach and the Domestic Ministry
  - What is Sports Ministry?
    - Biblical Foundations: How does the Bible view sports?
    - Essentials of Sports Ministry (Prayer, Bible Study, Leadership, Link with Local Church, Training and Equipping)
- **(EQUIP SESSION):** Utilizing Your Greatest Resources
  - The Gospel
  - Your Testimony
  - Helpful Illustrations
  - Sample Devotional Material: “Anything you learn you should be able to teach it to someone else”
- **(DEPLOY SESSION):**
  - Stepping On the Field:** The Coaches Role
    - Leading a club or camp session (Outdoor sport specific session)
    - Coaching Games Resources (Games training sport specific session)
    - Gear/Resources hand out
  - Stepping Off the Field:**
    - Making Disciple Makers
      - Defining a disciple and our role in disciple making

