

Soccer for the Glory of God

Integrating sports, life, and truth

Sport(s): Soccer

Ages: 6-14

Overall Application:

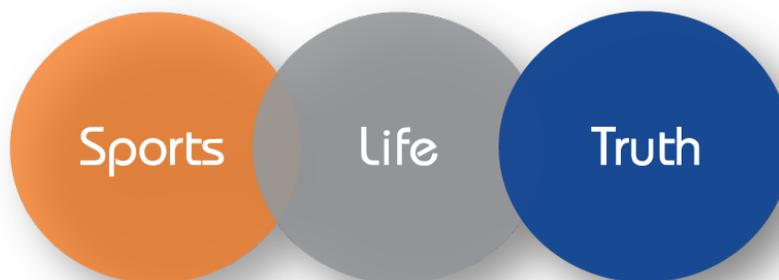


These devotionals outline a soccer drill to be used during practice. The coach will ask age-appropriate leading questions to engage the players in a life-topic. The goal in each week is to tie in a Biblical truth pertaining to the topic discussed during practice.

How to use 3D Devotionals:

In our efforts to bring Christianity and Sports together, historically, Christians established a devotional time during practice breaks or half times of games. Oftentimes, the stories or passages used during these times didn't have much to do with the sports, and, even if they did, tended to feel like the biblical truths were being **injected** into the sports realm. Unfortunately, these efforts often led to players and coaches to disconnect sports from biblical truth and build a “compartmentalized view” of life.

3D Devotionals come from a passion to live all of life for God's glory and, therefore, an approach to **integrate** sports and biblical truth. We designed 3D Devotionals to be used in the flow of practice, utilizing the drills and skills emphasized in each particular practice setting. Ultimately, the goal of 3D Devotionals is not to just learn truth but for coaches, players and parents to learn a new way of thinking that integrates **SPORTS – LIFE – TRUTH** and can be used far beyond their time in sports.



Week 1 - Getting to Know Your Players



Purpose – Get to know your players, showing them interest and concern.

Soccer/Icebreaker:

At the beginning of practice – play The Name Game

- 1) Have each player give his/her name and tell you the athlete they would most like to be and why.
- 2) You, the coach, now try to go around and name each of the players and the athlete he wants to be like – this may be challenging
- 3) Have each player go around and try to name all the players with the hero's name.

During a water break, find out from your players:

- Where they go to school
- Whether they have brothers and sisters
- What they like to do in their free time

Tell them a snippet of your story – you will do more of this through the season. This would include

- Where you grew up
- Where you went to school
- Whether you have brothers and sisters
- What you liked to do in your free time when you were their age

**As you can see, the first week is very much an introductory week. The goal for week 1 is just to get to know your players and have them become comfortable with you as well as become comfortable sitting down and doing a devotional time.*

Week 2 – “Be Aware!”

Purpose –

for the players to recognize the importance of developing awareness of what is around them – particularly God and his kingdom

Soccer Skill: Feel for the Ball



Drills you could use – Toe Touch, Ball on instep back and forth

Comments during drills - (Make age appropriate.)

- Emphasize the goal of these various drills - being aware of the ball (eventually without looking at the ball)
- Talk about feeling for the ball with your feet
- Talk about seeing the ball in your peripheral vision – look somewhere else while doing the drills

Conclusion – To be a good soccer player, you need to be aware of the ball when it is in your possession. This comes from lots of practice with the ball at your feet. If you practice this awareness long enough, the ball starts to become almost a part of you.

Life Principle: - Awareness of something outside of yourself

Comments – (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- There are things in life that you either carry or have around you that you need to become aware of – like your books, your backpack, your wallet, your phone.
- Your parents want you to protect them. The way you protect and know where these things are is just like we did with the soccer ball – you touch it, a lot, in different ways –to check to make sure it is still there.
- Goal is that this awareness of this item would become a part of you – ie “second nature”

Biblical Truth: - – God is present, whether we are aware of it or not. We need to develop our awareness of his presence and work.

Comments during drills – (Make age appropriate. During practice)

- There is something around us all the time that we cannot see. Therefore, we may or may not be aware of it. That something is God.
- The Bible speaks of this in Ephesians 4:6 – Our God ...”Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. He is in and through all – that means everything. To be in everything he has to be everywhere. All the time. Because he is everywhere, he is always with us.



- But because we don't see him, we need to learn to be aware that he is there and with us. Everywhere. All the time. We do that by the same way we do with the soccer ball or our backpack – we practice God's presence. How? We practice reminding ourselves of the fact that he is there. As we go through the rest of practice, I am going to remind you that God is here with us. Before practice, during practice, after practice, before games, after games - We will do this throughout the season, until we start doing it ourselves. It becomes part of us.

Week 3 - ““LOOSE CONTROL so we don't LOSE CONTROL”

Purpose: – To learn the importance of “loose” control

Soccer Skill: - Dribbling

Drills you could use – Dribbling in straight lines (within cones), Dribbling around cones, Dribbling as fast as possible

Comments - (Make age appropriate.)

- The reason we practice dribbling is to move the ball while keeping some control of it ourselves.
- We don't want to put the ball too far out ahead of us – because it can easily be stolen. (Tendency is to kick way ahead to go fast.)
- We don't want to keep it too close to us - - because it slows us down.
- We want to keep what I call “loose control” - a little out in front but not too far. If we don't have this loose control we will either lose the ball when we kick it way out in front or lose our advancement by keeping it too close.
- The better we get at this, the faster we can go and the better we can advance the ball.

Life Principle: - Develop “loose control” of themselves

Comments - (Make age appropriate. During practice.)



- Want to talk about this idea of “loose control” when you are at school. Can you do anything you want at school? (No.) So when the teacher asks you to do something, you have to stop yourself from doing what you want and cooperate with her/him. Right? For you to advance as a student, you need to have control of yourself.
- But you can’t just focus on controlling yourself, because this will distract you from moving forward with the other things you have to do. You need the same kind of loose control of yourself that you need of the soccer ball. Not too close, too much control or too little. Just the right amount to keep advancing.

Biblical Truth: - God wants to show us how to know how to learn this loose control.

Comments - (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- Just like I as the coach have to teach you how close to keep the ball when you dribble, and your parents and teacher need to show you how to control yourself in school, God has promised to show us how to control ourselves in all of life. Everywhere. All the time because he alone is everywhere and always with us.
- The Bible speaks about this when it says, “The Fruit of the Spirit of God is self- control.” Galatians 5:22-23
- So as we develop this loose control of the ball by our practicing dribbling, let’s remember that God wants to give us this self-control to keep growing up positively and moving forward in life.

Week 4 - “Serve Others”

Purpose – To see the importance of giving away what we value (serving)

Soccer Skill

Drills you can use – Stationary passing between 2 players, Passing in a circle of all players with a player in the middle trying to steal the ball, Passing while advancing down the field between two players

Comments – (Make age appropriate.)



- When you are dribbling down the field, we all want to keep the ball. Why?
- We want to score. Why? It is fun.
- But if we keep the ball to ourselves, eventually the other team will figure it out and swarm around us and keep us from scoring.
- The way to stop that from happening is to learn to pass.
- When we pass, we give the possibility of our joy to score to another person. We share the ball and give them our joy.
- When we do that, we make their joy our joy.

Life Principle: - Greater joy comes from sharing rather than keeping for ourselves.

Comments during drills – (Make age appropriate)

- Sharing is a part of all of our lives. You practice this at home with your brothers and sisters when you share your (Fill in blank or ask them – could be Valentines Candy or Wii or some game,)
- If you keep it all for yourself, then you don't let them have any joy. This is called selfishness.
- Just like in soccer, if we do this in life, we eventually lose our joy

Biblical Truth: - – Sharing with others is serving – by making their joy our joy.

Comments – (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- God calls this kind of sharing serving – when we want to share ourselves with someone else so they get happy/joyful.
- The greatest person who ever lived, Jesus Christ, said this about himself. “The Son of Man didn't come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Mark 10:45
- Jesus didn't live his life to keep what he had, to keep dribbling the ball so he could score. He passed the ball, shared what he had, his life so we could experience the greatest joy –that of having a relationship with Him and all it promises.

- So with Jesus as our example, let's keep practicing passing and remember what this opportunity presents – a chance to keep for ourselves or share the joy with others.



Week 5 - “Everyone Is Important”

Purpose: – To see the reality that everyone is important – you to others and others to you

Soccer Skill – Advancing the Ball by Passing (rather than dribbling)

*Drill - **Who’s the Leader?***

3 Players, 3 cones

Place the Middle Player about ½ field

Place the Left Player on the left about ½ way to the goal from the Middle Player

Place the Right Player on the right about ¾ up towards the goal from the Middle Player

Middle Player starts the ball and can only touch it once and pass it forward to the player on the left who must have to move up to get the ball. The player on the left passes the ball in the same manner to the player on the right – leading them with the pass and then that player puts it in the goal.

Accomplishes: passing, teamwork and spreading the field.

Comments

There are two ways to move the ball down the field. What are they? Dribbling, passing. Which one is faster? (Passing if good passing, Dribbling if poor passing but good dribbling) we want to learn to pass effectively to advance the ball down the field quickly. For this quick advancement, we need two things – good positioning/spacing and then good passing.

Good Spacing is not getting too close together. Why is this important? (Makes it much tougher to defend - One defender can't stop two passers well spaced.)

Good Passing is passing long enough and far enough ahead of them to run to the ball. Not have to stop.

Life Principle: We need others to effectively accomplish tasks in life.
Others need us to effectively accomplish tasks in life.



Comments during drills – (Make age appropriate)

- There are two common misconceptions people have – I don't need other people. Other people don't need me. We see this on the soccer field – players either think the team doesn't need them or they don't need the team.
- In the drill we just did, we learned the opposite of those two ideas - we need each other to move the ball down the field. We need the team and the team needs me.
- When you believe that if you don't have the ball, you work on spacing.
- When you believe that and have the ball, you pass the ball to your teammate.
- Life is just like that drill. We have things in life where we need others and others need us. Can you think of an example of this in your family?
 - o You need your parents to provide clothes, food, etc.
 - o Your parents need you to help around the house – do chores.
- How about at school?
 - o You need the teacher to teach you – pass along the information like a soccer ball.
 - o She needs you to cooperate and listen to receive that information.

Biblical Truth: - God has designed us to work together – needing others and others needing us.

Comments during drills – (Make age appropriate. During practice)

- This truth – others need us and we need others – is mentioned in the Scriptures in 1 Corinthians 12.
- The writer Paul says it this way. “Now the body is not made up of one part but of many.” Here he is using our physical body as the illustration.
- How many body parts can you mention?



- Which ones are important? (They all are.)
- Paul then addresses those who think they are not needed or important and says, “and if the ear should say, ‘because I am not an eye, I don’t belong to the body.’” Or because I am not an eye the body doesn’t need me.
- Paul then says, “God has arranged the parts in the body every one of them as he wanted them to be.” They are all important. All with a significant contribution.
- Then Paul addresses those who think they don’t need others by saying “The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you. On the contrary those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable.” This is the way God made it.
- We need each other. Others need us.
- So let’s remember this as we think about advancing the ball down the field or taking on any task or challenge in life.
- You are important to others. They are important to you. This is the way God designed us.

Week 6 – “The Goal of the Game”

Purpose: for players to realize the greatest goal of life

Soccer Skill – looking for scoring opportunities

Drill – Counter Attack

Divide team into two teams.

Set up two small goals in corners of the field opposite the big goal (about 10 yards in from mid field)

One team attacks the big goal

Other team attacks the two small goals

Change ends about every two minutes



When the team is about to dribble through the either of the two small goals teams change directions.

Goal is to always be looking for scoring opportunities

Comments during drills – (Make age appropriate)

- In this drill, what we are trying to work on is “looking to score” – looking for scoring opportunities.
- So that when you see them, you shoot, you try to score.
- This scoring is what we are working toward – all our passing, dribbling, spacing. All is designed so that when one of you has a scoring opportunity, a good shot, you take it.

Life Principle – It is often very confusing/difficult to determine what it means to score in life.

Comments during drills – (Make age appropriate)

- It is clear in a soccer game what it means to score – you put the ball in the goal.
- But in life it sometimes isn't quite so clear. What do you think it means to score in life? (interesting to see what they say – I would imagine it will be some things like “make good grades, cooperate with mom & dad/family but interesting to see. If they have a difficult time answering this illustrates the idea.)
- Do you notice the difference in our answers? So which one is right?
- How do we know the best or right answers to what it means to score in life?

Biblical Truth - God has made it clear that when we please God we score in life

Comments during drills – (Make age appropriate. During practice)

- To answer that question, let's go back to soccer. Who determine what it means to score? (inventor of the game)
- So who determines what it means to score in life? Inventor of life. And who is that? God



- And just like the soccer inventor, God has told us what it means to score in life.
- He did this in the Scriptures.
- If you were to sum all that up in one sentence it would be – To score in life is to live in a way that pleases God. That makes him happy.
- How do we do that? By obeying what he has said to do in life.
- Can you think of some things he has told us to do?
- Doing these things, makes him happy.
- When we make him happy, we score in life.
- That is why the apostle Paul says, “I make it my goal to please God.” (2Corinthians 5:9)
- In 1Corinthians 10:31 he tells us “Whatever you do, do it all to make God happy.” (My translation)
- So remember, the goal in soccer is to score. The goal in life is to make God happy.

Week 7 - “A Defensive Attitude”

Purpose: for the players to have a mindset that equips them to get rid of the things in life they need to

Soccer Skill - Defensively moving the ball away from the goal, in the opposite direction of coming toward you

Drill – Clean Your Room

Tell the players they need to think of themselves on defense.

Define an area in the field (may be the area around ½ the field)

Put about a 4 foot area in the middle with cones – dead area

Players are divided into two teams one on each ½ of the dead zone



Players are not allowed in the dead zone

Each player has a ball

They are to use the inside of their foot and pass the ball to the other side (change to kicking technique as you play the game) inside foot/outside of foot, left foot only, etc.

The team is to try and kick as many balls on the other teams side as possible

They are not allowed to retrieve any balls from the dead zone in the center.

You can have extra balls for this drill

Works on quickness to the ball and power behind the kick

Comments – (make age appropriate)

- In this game, imagine you are on defense.
- On defense, when the ball comes to you, you want to get rid of it. Get it out of your area. Move in the other direction, away from your goal.
- To do that, you don't just kick wildly.
- You first control the ball (trap it) and then kick hard and accurately away from your area.

Life Principle - We need to remember who we are and recognize those dangers that come our way.

Comments during drills – (Make age appropriate)

- In soccer if you are on defense, you need to think of the ball as something you need to get rid of, move away from your goal.
- Life has certain things like that that you need to get rid of. Can you think of some things that are bad for you that when they come you need to rid yourself of them? (drugs, lying, cheating, but probe more for attitudes as well like anger, selfishness, jealousy)
- What if instead of thinking you were on defense you thought you were on offense how would that change your attitude toward the ball? (Want to keep it not get rid of it.)
- Life is just like that. To rid ourselves of bad things, we first need to remember who we are and where we are.

- Second, we need to be aware of the dangers that are coming at us. Like the ball coming at us in the drill, we need to recognize those things that we need to rid ourselves of.



Biblical Truth – God provides us with truth about what we need to get rid of and the help to do so.

Comments during drills – (Make age appropriate. During practice)

- God has told us what those things are in the Scriptures. One example where he did that is in Colossians 3:8 – Bu now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, saying hurtful things to others, telling bad things about others, and all filthy language. (My translation)
- These are just some of many things we need to get rid of in our lives.
- The Bible calls these things we need to get rid of sin. When we are offered the opportunity to do these things, we call that temptation. (Give an example)
- Learning about these things is one of the reasons we read the Bible. To see the dangers, the balls coming toward us on defense, so we can get rid of them.
- But God doesn't just tell us what to get rid of and then leave us alone to do it by ourselves. He has promised to come alongside us and help us when we face these temptations, when we need to get rid of the "ball". He says whenever we are tempted, he will provide "the way of escape" so that we can get rid of it, we can kick the "ball" away from us and our goal.
- So when you are facing something that you need to get rid of, ask God for help. He promises he will help you.
- One of the ways he does that is to give you teammates and a coach in life just like on this team. If you have something in your life these days that you are having a hard time getting rid of that you know you should – like playing defense but not doing it very well – then let me know. I would love to talk to you about it and pray for you. (You may want to refer to one of the previous lessons where we emphasized the need for others. Getting rid of bad things is one of those places we need others – God and people.)