



CENTRAL SPORTS

Basketball

Central Sports exists to promote the discovery of Jesus through sports

Team name: _____
Practice Day/Time: _____

Updated: November 2024

CENTRAL SPORTS

Central Sports focuses on these three things: fun, growth, and respect.

- **Fun-** We want the kids, parents and you, the coach, to have fun. We want learning about Jesus to be fun. He is the creator of fun, so why wouldn't we have fun learning about Him?
- **Growth** - We want kids to be better players at the end of the season than they were at the beginning of the year. We want the players', coaches' and parents' relationship with Jesus to be deeper that it was when the season started. If they don't know Jesus, we want them to get to know Him.
- **Respect-** We want players and coaches to play to win, but at the same time not win at all costs. We want players and coaches to respect the opponent. We want you to have the same reaction in winning and in losing. Jesus taught us to love others, so we need to love the other team.

Sports Offered

January-February : Basketball, Cheerleading

March-May : Soccer

August- November : Flag Football, Volleyball

Practice/Game Cancellation Policy

Basketball does not normally have weather related cancellations. However, if for some reason a cancellation does occur, emails will be sent out to the league.

Important Dates

- First Practice – Week of December 2nd
- Rosters due – December 19th
- First Game – January 4th
- Picture Weeks – January 11th and 18th
- Be there 15 minutes before your picture time
- Medals due – January 23rd
- Last Game – February 22nd

COACHES: REQUIREMENTS

Application & Background Check

All coaches must complete an application and background check. This includes assistant coaches and fill-in coaches. If you know you will miss a game and need a fill-in coach for a game, please make sure they have completed and turned in the appropriate paperwork.

Ministry Safe

As a coach, you **MUST** complete the Ministry Safe Sexual Assault Awareness Training. This is to protect the players, you as the coach, and Central Sports. There are videos and a test at the conclusion of the training. The entire training should take no longer than 45 minutes. This training certification lasts 3 years. If you have taken the Ministry Safe Training at another church, please send your certification to crice@centralbcs.org If your training expires during the middle of the season, you will be asked to complete a new training prior to the start of the season. We thank you for taking every step possible to protect the kids that we love.

COACHES: EXPECTATIONS

We want you to grow in the knowledge, skills and passion for stewarding players to Christ through the sport of basketball. When you coach, we want you to instill character in the players. This only comes from a relationship with Jesus and a constant renewing of your mind with the things of Him. (Rom. 12:2)

Coaching can have more purpose than teaching players how to serve or pass. As a coach, you can teach your players about the truths of God: that He loves us and wants to know us, along with the sport. We want to come alongside and equip you to share Jesus with your players.

As a coach, we want you to be a positive role model – encourage and respect your players and the game by communicating clearly and consistently, listening to your players, and knowing the sport.

Keys to Coaching

- Teach the game through drills – The ability to execute proper drills enhances skill level and improves athletic foundations. Your practices should utilize drills that enhance skill development.
- Teach the rules of the sport – For the players to grow in the sport, they must understand and apply the rules of the game. Take time to explain rules and why they are important.
- Instill sportsmanship with a competitive spirit – In sports, winning and losing are part of the game, just as it is for life. Knowing how to handle both in a positive way builds character in young athletes. Teach your players to play hard and play to win, but also teach them to put others before themselves with a positive attitude and sportsmanship.
- Communicate effectively – In order to teach the rules, explain drills, and teach sportsmanship, you have to be an effective communicator. Likewise, good communication and organization are crucial in keeping parents informed throughout

the season. This includes keeping them up to date on practice and game times and having a plan in place for each practice. [OBJ]

Central Sports Coaches' Dress Code

- Central Sports Coach shirt or sleeved t-shirt
 - NO tank tops, muscle shirts, crop tops or spaghetti straps
- Athletic or walking shorts
- Tennis/athletic shoes
 - Come dressed for practice the way you want the kids dressed for practice; set the standard and example.

COACHES: RESPONSIBILITIES

Attend Coaches' Training

- Attend training
- Pick-up shirt, roster, and handbook

Contact Your Team

- Introduce yourself (and your assistant coaches if applicable)
- Inform parents of:
 - Team name & age division (for the parents with multiple children playing)
 - Practice nights (day of week, time)
 - First Practice date
 - First Game date
 - Dress code for practice & games
 - Practice atmosphere
 - Game day atmosphere

Conduct Practices

- Be prepared for your practices! Conduct drills that teach skills.
- Be prepared for devotions! The players will get out of it what you put into it.
- Use positive reinforcement only; no punishment! Please no burpees, push-ups, etc.

Coach Games

- Be involved! Engage with players from the bench.
- Be an encourager! Always have uplifting words for your players. Praise them in the post-game locker room.
- **Do not argue with the refs/scorekeepers. Remember that they are volunteers! Please set a good example for your players.**

Award End-of-Year Medals

End-of-the-Year Medals are given after the last game of the season. This highlights your player's strength; it is not a "most improved, MVP, or best player" award. Multiple players

can receive the same award. You will email Central Sports with a list of the awards you need. There are 10 award categories:

- Offense, Defense, Passing, Shooting, Hustle, Sportsmanship, Leadership, Character, Effort, Encourager

You will receive a reminder from Central Sports to provide your medal count & categories. **If you do not turn in your medal requests, your team will receive blank medals.**

BASKETBALL AT CENTRAL

RULES FOR CENTRAL SPORTS BASKETBALL

- Before each game a devotional and prayer will be led over the sound system. Teams and coaches are expected to be at their benches during this time.
- The visiting team will begin the game with the ball.
- During each segment the clock runs continuously stopping only at the end of each segment for predetermined substitutions; this time should not be treated as a timeout.
- At the start of each 6-minute period, coaches will line players up from best to worst on the court, starting with the best player closest to the table. This allows coaches to line up and match substitutions based on height and ability without wasting valuable game time.
- At the end of each segment, the team that receives the ball next is based upon the direction of the possession arrow. This avoids stalling by the offensive team at the end of a segment.
- Teams switch goals at halftime.
- Any games ending in a tie should remain a tie. There is no overtime period.
- No league standings are maintained, but scores will be kept for all games.

1-2nd Grade Defense Rules

- Man-to-man defense will be played at all times. Zone defenses are not allowed. In most cases, players are guarding the opponent that closely matches ability and height, creating a more competitive system for all on the court
- Defensive players must stay within arm's reach of the player they're guarding.
- Isolation plays will not be allowed because they take away the opportunity for improvement for all players and contradict the spirit of the rules. This prevents defenders from sagging or crowding an area of the court to gain a defensive advantage.
- Double teaming is not allowed. However, help defense is strongly encouraged in the following instances:
 - **Offensive Picks and Screens** – Defensive switching is not allowed on offensive picks and screens. The non-screened defender can help his or her teammate by temporarily switching until the teammate recovers to defend his or her offensive player. This is commonly referred to as “help and recover”.

Defense Rules (cont'd)

- **Fast Breaks** – During any fast break (when the team that gains possession pushes quickly into the opponent's end of the court), another defensive player not assigned to the ball handler may help in order to slow or stop the fast break. Upon stopping the fast break, defenders should return to guarding their assigned players.
- **Help Defense** – If a defender is guarding their player, and the player he or she is guarding is within arm's reach, the defender is allowed to provide help defense.
- At the beginning of each segment, both coaches should line up the players at mid-court in the order the table tells you to. This act is performed to promote equal player match-ups.
 - 1-2 grade – each player will wear a colored wristband (red, white, blue black, green). Players guard the corresponding color. (If both coaches agree to a match-up problem they may switch wristbands).
- Full-court presses are not allowed. Defensive players may not guard their opponents in the backcourt. This creates an equal opportunity for each athlete to participate both on offense and defense
- Due to the shortness of the court in cross court play, backcourt violation will not be called.
- Steals:
 - In 1-2 grade a defender may only steal the ball from the player they are guarding.
- A player committing two fouls in one six-minute segment must sit out the remainder of that segment. The next player in the rotation closest in ability comes in as the substitute. This does not change the normal rotation, because the fouled-out player does not come back into the game until scheduled to do so. The player who comes in as a substitute gains extra playing time. This extra time does not affect the predetermined substitution system.

Note: In a second foul situation, when a team only has five players at a game, replace the substitution rule with a two-point penalty by awarding the fouled team two additional points. The opposing team then takes possession.

3-4th Grade Defense Rules

- Man-to-man defense will be played at all times. Zone defenses are not allowed. In most cases, players are guarding the opponent that closely matches ability and height, creating a more competitive system for all on the court
- Defensive players must stay within arm's reach of the player they're guarding.
- Isolation plays will not be allowed because they take away the opportunity for improvement for all players and contradict the spirit of the rules. This prevents defenders from sagging or crowding an area of the court to gain a defensive advantage.

Defense Rules (cont'd)

- Double teaming is not allowed. However, help defense is strongly encouraged in the following instances:
 - **Offensive Picks and Screens** – Defensive switching is allowed on offensive picks and screens. The non-screened defender can help his or her teammate by temporarily switching until the teammate recovers to defend his or her offensive player. This is commonly referred to as “help and recover”.
 - **Fast Breaks** – During any fast break (when the team that gains possession pushes quickly into the opponent’s end of the court), another defensive player not assigned to the ball handler may help in order to slow or stop the fast break. Upon stopping the fast break, defenders may return to their originally assigned player, or they may stay with the player that they are currently guarding.
 - **Help Defense** – If a defender is guarding their player, and the player he or she is guarding is within arm’s reach, the defender is allowed to provide help defense.
- At the beginning of each segment, both coaches should line up the players at mid-court in the order the table tells you to. This act is performed to promote equal player matchups.
 - This is not their ASSIGNED person. They do not HAVE to guard this person, but this is to show the most likely matchups based off of skill.
- Full-court presses are not allowed. Defensive players may not guard their opponents in the backcourt. This creates an equal opportunity for each athlete to participate both on offense and defense
- Due to the shortness of the court in cross court play, backcourt violation will not be called.
- Steals:
 - In 3rd-6th grades if a defender remains within arm’s length of the player they are guarding, they may steal the ball from another offensive player
- A player committing two fouls in one six-minute segment must sit out the remainder of that segment. The next player in the rotation closest in ability comes in as the substitute. This does not change the normal rotation, because the fouled-out player does not come back into the game until scheduled to do so. The player who comes in as a substitute gains extra playing time. This extra time does not affect the predetermined substitution system.

Note: In a second foul situation, when a team only has five players at a game, replace the substitution rule with a two-point penalty by awarding the fouled team two additional points. The opposing team then takes possession.

5-6th Grade Defense Rules

- Man-to-man defense will be played at all times outside the 3-point line. Zone defenses are allowed inside of the 3-point line. In most cases, players are guarding the opponent that closely matches ability and height, creating a more competitive system for all on the court.

Defense Rules (cont'd)

- Isolation plays will not be allowed because they take away the opportunity for improvement for all players and contradict the spirit of the rules. This prevents defenders from sagging or crowding an area of the court to gain a defensive advantage.
- At the beginning of each segment, both coaches should line up the players at mid-court in the order the table tells you to. This act is performed to promote equal player matchups.
 - This is not their ASSIGNED person. They do not HAVE to guard this person, but this is to show the most likely matchups based off of skill.
- Full-court presses are not allowed. Defensive players may not guard their opponents in the backcourt. This creates an equal opportunity for each athlete to participate both on offense and defense
- Backcourt violation will be called when playing 5th – 6th grade.
- Steals:
 - Inside the 3-point line, a defender may steal the ball from an offensive player at any point.
 - Outside the 3-point line, if a double team results in a steal, the official will call for a violation and the offense will retain possession.
- A player committing two fouls in one six-minute segment must sit out the remainder of that segment. The next player in the rotation closest in ability comes in as the substitute. This does not change the normal rotation, because the fouled-out player does not come back into the game until scheduled to do so. The player who comes in as a substitute gains extra playing time. This extra time does not affect the predetermined substitution system.

Note: In a second foul situation, when a team only has five players at a game, replace the substitution rule with a two-point penalty by awarding the fouled team two additional points. The opposing team then takes possession.

1-2nd Grade Offense Rules

- The offense must purposefully attack the defense in every situation – no stalling. After a warning from the referee, a violation will be called resulting in a turnover. This will prevent a team with the lead from running the clock out by staying in the backcourt.
- Non-shooting fouls result in the ball being taken out on the side by the offended team (no bonus rule). All shooting fouls result in 2 points. And the defense gaining possession.
- No score will be given for a basket in the wrong goal. It will be treated as a turnover. This will prevent further embarrassing a player for making this mistake.
- Last 2 minutes of the game:
 - Any non-shooting foul in the last 2 minutes of the game will result in 1 point for the offense and will retain possession of ball.
 - Any shooting foul in the last 2 minutes of the game will result in 2 points for the offense and the defense will take possession of the ball.
 - This will not waste precious game time and will prevent intentional fouling at the end of the game.

3-4th Grade Offense Rules

- The offense must purposefully attack the defense in every situation – no stalling. After a warning from the referee, a violation will be called resulting in a turnover. This will prevent a team with the lead from running the clock out by staying in the backcourt.
- Non-shooting fouls result in the ball being taken out on the side by the offended team (no bonus rule). All shooting fouls result in 2 points and the defense gains possession. If the shooter makes the basket it will be counted as 3 points.
- No score will be given for a basket in the wrong goal. It will be treated as a turnover. This will prevent further embarrassing a player for making this mistake.
- Last 2 minutes of the game:
 - Any non-shooting foul in the last 2 minutes of the game will result in 1 point for the offense and will retain possession of ball.
 - Any shooting foul in the last 2 minutes of the game will result in 2 points for the offense and the defense will take possession of the ball. If the shooter makes the basket it will be counted as 3 points.
 - This will not waste precious game time and will prevent intentional fouling at the end of the game.

5-6th Grade Offense Rules

- The offense must purposefully attack the defense in every situation – no stalling. After a warning from the referee, a violation will be called resulting in a turnover. This will prevent a team with the lead from running the clock out by staying in the backcourt.
- Non-shooting fouls result in the ball being taken out on the side by the offended team (no bonus rule). All shooting fouls result in free throws except for in the last 2 minutes of the game.
(5-6 grade – if a foul occurs on a made basket, the player will shoot one free throw.)
(All free-throws is 5-6 grade will be one shot for corresponding 1,2,3 points).

5-6th Offense Rules (cont'd)

- Score will be given for a basket in the wrong goal, and it will be treated as a turnover.
- Last 2 minutes of the game:
 - Any non-shooting foul in the last 2 minutes of the game will result in 1 point for the offense and will retain possession of ball.
 - Any shooting foul in the last 2 minutes of the game will result in 2 points for the offense and the defense will take possession of the ball. If the foul is on a 3-point shot, it will result in 3 points.
 - This will not waste precious game time and will prevent intentional fouling at the end of the game.

SUBSTITUTIONS

- This substitution system is designed to provide every player an equal opportunity for improvement. The substitution system ensures that:
 - The starting lineup shifts down one player every game, allowing every child the opportunity to be in the starting lineup
 - No child will sit out back-to-back six minute segments
 - Every child will play at least half of the game
 - In most cases, each child will play against someone of similar ability
 - Playing time for all players is virtually even over the course of the season
 - The starting five will change by one player each week
 - The best players on your team will always be playing with teammates who are not as good as them
 - The weaker players will be given the opportunity to play with a teammate who can make them better
 - We will need your player ranking order by **December 19th**.

Practice

- Practice nights: Monday, Tuesday, or Thursday
- Practice times: 5:30-6:30 pm, 6:30-7:30 pm or 7:30-8:30 pm.
- Basketball courts are shared for practices.
- Please wait outside the gym until your practice time begins.
- Devotions are at the midway point of your practice. An intern will announce balls down.
- Positive reinforcement only; no punishments such as burpees, push-ups, etc.

PRACTICE BREAKDOWN

- *Pre-Practice Huddle (3-5 minutes)* – Cover specific rules and the basics of the game. Teach and review proper techniques for each skill needed for practice drills.
- *Warm-up Activity (3-5 minutes)* – Provide players the opportunity to practice individually and slowly warm up their muscles.
- *Practice skills through drills (20 minutes)* – Use drills that reinforce skill development. Focus on only one to two skills per practice.

- *Mid-practice huddle (5-7 minutes)* – Share the practice-specific devotion for each week. An intern will come in and announce devotion time at the mid-point of practice.
- *Scrimmage or games that teach (20 minutes)* – Guide players in using the skills they are learning through scrimmaging.
- *Post-practice huddle (5 minutes)* – Communicate game times, picture times, etc. After practice is a great time to engage in conversation with parents.

Game Day: 1st – 2nd Grade Division

Prior to Game

- Set your lineup (The scoretable will also have this if you forget)
 - Equal start time/play time for every player
- Find out which bench is yours (scoretable will know)
- Warm-up until ref signals ‘balls in’

During Game

- Six 6 minute quarters (no clock stoppages) with a break for substitutions
 - Do not leave the court.
- Teams will switch sides at half time

After the Game

- Line up and shake hands (high-fives)
- Dismiss to the locker room (classroom) on your side of the gym
 - Classrooms will have signs on them for your designated locker room
- Pass out team snack
- Positively congratulation/critique your team

Game Day: 3rd – 4th Grade Division

Prior to Game

- Set your lineup (The scoretable will also have this if you forget)
 - Equal start time/play time for every player
- Find out which bench is yours (scoretable will know)
- Warm-up until ref signals ‘balls in’

During Game

- Six 6-minute quarters (no clock stoppages) with a break for substitutions
 - Do not leave the court.
- Teams will switch sides at half time

After the Game

- Line up and shake hands (high-fives)
- Dismiss to the locker room (classroom) on your side of the gym
 - Classrooms will have signs on them for your designated locker room
- Pass out team snack
- Positively congratulation/critique your team

Game Day: 5th – 6th Grade Division

Prior to Game

- Set your lineup (The scoretable will also have this if you forget)
 - Equal start time/play time for every player
- Find out which bench is yours (scoretable will know)
- Warm-up until ref signals ‘balls in’

During Game

- Six 6-minute quarters (no clock stoppages) with a break for substitutions
 - Do not leave the court.

- Teams will switch sides at half time

After the Game

- Line up and shake hands (high-fives)
- Dismiss to the locker room (classroom) on your side of the gym
 - Classrooms will have signs on them for your designated locker room
- Pass out team snack
- Positively congratulation/critique your team

Example Weekly Team Email:

This is an example of a weekly communication sent out on Sunday or Monday.

The UPCOMING events listed out the whole season (practice, games, pictures, snacks, etc).

Central Sports Basketball – Rockets, Week of 12/1

PRACTICE

Thursday, January 9, 5:30 pm

Please have players ready to go at 5:30 pm.

Make sure they have a water bottle, have used the restroom, and are wearing tennis shoes.

GAME

Saturday January 11, 9:00 am

Arrive by 8:45 – **If you will not make the game please let me know ASAP**

Visit the restroom prior to the game. Bring a water bottle!

****SNACKS** - (Parent Name)**

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

*****UPCOMING*****

PRACTICE

Thursday, January 16, 5:30 pm

PICTURES

Saturday, January 18, 12:40 pm

These examples are provided to assist you with wording. You do not need to copy them word for word.

Make sure to adjust dates, time, and team names!

Make sure that you include the team name & age division in the Subject Line!

WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

- Be prepared each week for devotional. Know the scripture; don't just read it off the paper. Bring your Bible.
- Make the devotional your own; personalize it. Talk about situations your players will understand. Relate it to the game, school, home life, etc.
- Ask for questions! If you don't know the answer, tell them you will get back to them with an answer and do it!
- Remember: YOU may be the only 'Jesus' they see!

Week 1: Getting to Know You

At the halftime of practice – play The Name Game:

1. Have each player give their name and tell you the animal 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 animal they want to be like – this may be challenging.
3. Have each player go around and try to name all the players with the animal.

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 throughout 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

Try to memorize the verse by the end of the season:

- Exodus 34:6 “The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness”

Say it a few times as a team. Try breaking it down with you saying and them repeating each work or saying it in silly voices or loudly and quietly. Make it fun and engaging while helping them to hear it a few times.

Week 2: The Gospel

Memory verse:

Let's practice our memory verse! Exodus 34:6 "The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness"

Lesson:

How many of you have never ever messed up in your life? You've gotten a 100 on every test/homework, you always clean your room right when your parents ask you too, you've never lied about anything? Yeah, we've all messed up at some point or another.

Today we are going to talk about the first people to EVER mess up, Adam and Eve. Their story can be found in Genesis 3. Does anyone know anything about Adam and Eve? (Wait for responses). They were created by God and put in the garden of Eden and got to walk and talk with God on a regular basis. Everything was perfect for them; all they had to do was not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. That was it. They could eat from any other tree/bush in the garden, but one day the devil spoke to Eve and told her she would be like God and convinced her to eat the fruit. So, Eve ate it and then gave some to Adam to eat and they disobeyed God. This was when sin entered the world. Sin is anything that we do that disobeys God and because of sin, God had to cast Adam and Eve out of the garden because He could not be with them anymore. God cannot be in the presence of sin.

Many years went by, and God still looked after His people, but the world was evil because of sin. However, at just the right time, God sent His Son, Jesus, to come and live a perfect life that we never could, die on a cross, and rise 3 days later. Does anyone know the verse John 3:16? (Wait for response; if no one knows it, share it). When Jesus died and rose again, He took on all the sins of every person in the world that had ever lived and will ever live. He took on each of our sin and buried it in the grave and then rose again to show that he had conquered our sin and to show that death had no hold on us anymore.

That's not the end of the story though. Jesus will come back and judge the world based on if we are followers of him or not. Those who are Christians will get to spend forever in Heaven with God. Those who are not will be eternally separated from God, and that is a tragic thing to happen. We want everyone to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior because Jesus wants what's best for you. John 11:25-26 says, "Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

If you have never asked Jesus to be the Lord of your life, I'd love to talk to you more about it, and if you have THAT IS AWESOME!

Application:

God sent His son, Jesus, to live a perfect life and die for our sins

Pray

Week 3: Background on Exodus 34:6

Recap:

Who remembers what we talked about last practice? (Let them try to recap, give them a short window)

For younger kids ask more direct recap questions:

- Who were the first 2 people? Adam and Eve
- What did they do? Disobey God/sinned
- Who did God send to pay for sin? Jesus

Memory verse:

Let's practice our memory verse! Exodus 34:6 "The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness"

Lesson:

What are some characteristics you can use to describe your best friend? (if they need some help, ask if they're funny, kind, outgoing, athletic, smart, etc.) Understanding characteristics of God is very important, and the authors of the Bible thought the same thing. Exodus 34:6 is the most quoted verse in the Bible! The verse is referenced over 27 times in the Old Testament. If it is repeated that many times, it must be important.

Sometimes when we read the Bible, it is easy to see it as a big To-do list. Does anybody have a To-Do list on their fridge? Often your mom or dad will have a list of chores, activities, and jobs to do written down somewhere for them to do. That is often how people read the Bible, as a list of things to do. But what is important is to know the character of God, to know who He is. It's hard to follow a set of rules if you don't know why they were made, or who made them! Knowing God and His character must happen before we know what to do.

The story preceding Exodus 34:6 is the one of the golden calf. In short, the Israelites create and worship this idol instead of God, the One who had led them out of Egypt and preserved them all through the Wilderness. Moses intercedes on the Israelites behalf, and God chooses to not abandon them because of their sins. The love and mercy God displays is described in Exodus 34:6, where God explicitly shares His character with the people of Israel with their sin in full view as well.

Application: God's show His character to the people of Israel through love and mercy

Pray

Week 4: The Lord, The Lord, a God

Recap:

Who remembers what we talked about last practice? (Let them try to recap, give them a short window)

For younger kids ask more direct recap questions:

- What book of the Bible is our verse in? Exodus
- What did the people of Israel do? They made and worshiped a golden calf
- Did God leave them or show them mercy? Showed them mercy

Memory verse:

Let's practice our memory verse! Exodus 34:6 "The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness"

Lesson:

Our first starts out with Moses praising God and calling Him "The LORD". Does anyone know what it means to call someone Lord? Lord is defined as "one possessed of absolute control". Moses is saying God has control over EVERYTHING! Sometimes there's not much we have control over but there's nothing we have absolute or total control over. But Moses is saying God has total, complete, absolute control over everything. Is that a reassuring or scary feeling? (let them share or do show of hands)

That can feel a little scary that we don't have control, but it can actually give us hope! See God isn't going to have control and then leave us one day. Revelation 1:8 is God describing Himself as, "the Alpha and the Omega...who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." Does anyone know what alpha and omega are? (Let them answer if they know) Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet and Omega is the last. Just like A and Z. God is the first. He was here before all of us, before the world, before the oldest person you know. He's also the last. He'll be going long after anyone you know is still around.

On top of always being here, God has some pretty cool characteristics! Isaiah 9:6b says "and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." What words do we hear in that verse that are comforting? (let them shout some out)

God isn't going to come force us to do things we don't want to do. But He is in control when we don't know what's happening or feel scared of things.

Application: God is in control of everything

Pray

Week 5: Merciful

Recap:

Who remembers what we talked about last practice? (Let them try to recap, give them a short window)
For younger kids ask more direct recap questions:

- What does Moses call God? the LORD
- WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? ABSOLUTE CONTROL
- What is God in control of? Everything

Memory verse:

Let's practice our memory verse! Exodus 34:6 "The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness"

Lesson:

God's mercy is the first characteristic mentioned in this passage. What is mercy exactly? (Let them answer if they know) Think about a time you've gotten in trouble for something. You may have lied about something or stolen something from your sibling. Now imagine your parent/teacher or whoever did not give you the punishment you deserved for the wrong thing you did. That would be them giving you mercy!

God has extended mercy to us through Jesus. When we talked about the gospel, we talked about our sins, the wrong we have done. God is merciful because He forgives our sins through Jesus, even though we deserve punishment instead. This is **very** good news! A few weeks ago, we talked about how the Israelites messed up big time and deserved punishment for what they had done. But God is merciful, and continued to love them and care for them, even when they did wrong.

Jesus shows us this idea in Matthew 9:13, saying, "Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." This concept may be hard to follow because our world today does not often practice mercy. We live in a world where it is much easier to judge others but not have mercy on them. James 2:13 says "For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment." But there is a God who is rich in mercy, and He is extending that same mercy to you!

Application: God has mercy on us, even when we mess up. He extends this mercy to lead us to salvation.

Pray

Week 6: Gracious

Recap:

Who remembers what we talked about last practice? (Let them try to recap, give them a short window)

For younger kids ask more direct recap questions:

- What characteristic did we talk about last week? Merciful
- How does God show us mercy? Forgiving our sins

Memory verse:

Let's practice our memory verse! Exodus 34:6 "The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness"

Lesson:

Our verse describes God as being gracious, which is good or kind. A big way we see this is in grace. Have you ever gotten a gift just because? Not for your birthday or Christmas but someone just gave you something for no reason? (Let them raise their hands or nod). That is similar to grace. Grace is getting something we don't deserve.

Someone who understood that more than anyone else was Paul. Does anyone know the story of Paul? (Let them answer) Paul starts his life by going after Christians and killing them (for younger kids, you might say hurt over killed). On the way to find Christians, Jesus stopped him and changed Paul's life. Paul did some of the worst things we can imagine but God gave him grace. Paul took that second chance and grace and spent the rest of his life telling other people about God.

Paul wrote a lot about grace so others could understand it. Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 1:14-15 that "and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost." He knew he had messed up so much! But Paul saw the grace God was offering him. Even writing in Ephesians 2:8 that "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,"

In Romans 8:32, he says, "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?" and Ephesians 2:7 he wrote, "so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." Paul saw the most gracious thing God had done in giving His Son Jesus as a sacrifice for payment of our sins.

Paul sums it up in Titus 3:7, with "so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

Application: God shows His graciousness by offering us salvation

Pray

Week 7: Slow to Anger

Recap:

Who remembers what we talked about last practice? (Let them try to recap, give them a short window)
For younger kids ask more direct recap questions:

- What characteristic did we talk about last week? Gracious
- How does God show us grace? Giving us the gift of salvation

Memory verse:

Let's practice our memory verse! Exodus 34:6 "The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness"

Lesson:

Can you remember a time when you got angry? (Let them raise their hands) Maybe it was toward your brother or sister, a classmate, or your parents. It could be because someone did something wrong to you, or you were just annoyed at them. Whatever the reason, we as humans can often get angry quickly.

God is different! He is not quick to get angry with His people, even if He should! It's easiest to be angry with people who hurt us or mess things up. That's one of the quickest ways to get angry for sure! But when we mess things up or run from God, He is not quickly angry with us.

This is very similar to His mercy that we talked about a few weeks ago! We may deserve punishment, but God is patient with us and extends mercy despite our sins. The Israelites' sin when they built the golden calf and worshiped it could have made God abandon them, and that would have been justified! But God is slow to anger, being patient with His people, even when they fail.

We see God's patience described by Peter in 2 Peter 3:9 where it says, "The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance." Do you believe this about God? Do you really believe that God is patient with you, even when you mess up? Maybe there is someone in your life that is often angry with you, so you think God will do the same. Whatever it may be, we know that God is slow to anger with us.

This slowness to anger shows how powerful our God really is! Proverbs 16:32 tells us that "Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city." God is the one true God, and if He is slow to anger with us, then patience truly must be a powerful act!

Application: God is slow to anger, not only with those who follow Him, but for the lost as well.

Pray

Week 8: Abounding in

Recap:

Who remembers what we talked about last practice? (Let them try to recap, give them a short window)

For younger kids ask more direct recap questions:

- What characteristic did we talk about last week? Slow to anger
- Who did we see God being slow to anger with? The Israelites

Memory verse:

Let's practice our memory verse! Exodus 34:6 "The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness"

Lesson:

Abounding, abundant, full, or above and beyond. Have you ever tried to fill up a cup and the liquid filled up the cup and then some? It can go everywhere when that happens! Our verse tells us that God's love and faithfulness is overflowing, above and beyond.

We see this in the Psalms! They are full of praises of God's character. Psalm 31:19 says God's goodness is abundant. In Psalm 51:1, David calls out to God and His abundant mercy. Psalm 147:5 says that God is "abundant in power".

It's not only in God's character but also in His works. Ephesians 3:20 tells us "Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us," God works in such abundance that it is more than we can imagine or even think to ask!

In fact, Jesus even promises to give us life in abundance in John 10:10 ("I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.")!

God is so full of goodness, love, life, faithfulness, mercy, and so many other things that when He gives to us, He gives in abundance!

Application:

God works in abundance and will go over and above what we can imagine

Pray

Week 9: Steadfast Love

Recap:

Who remembers what we talked about last practice? (Let them try to recap, give them a short window)
For younger kids ask more direct recap questions:

- What characteristic did we talk about last week? Abounding/Abundance
- What are some characteristics that are called abundant? Mercy, power, goodness, giving life

Memory verse:

Let's practice our memory verse! Exodus 34:6 "The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness"

Lesson:

Has anyone ever been to a river or a waterfall? (Let them raise their hands) Something interesting about a river or waterfall is that they continue to flow downstream even with people, rocks, or large things in it. If you get into a flowing river, it will take you with it due to its current, and you can't stop it from flowing downstream, no matter how hard you try. You could say that they are steadfast. The definition of steadfast is to be firmly fixed and not subject to change, to be firm in belief and determination, and to be loyal and faithful.

Likewise, to be immovable is to be unyielding and incapable of being moved or diverted. God's love is described as steadfast in Exodus 34:6. So what does that mean? It means that despite what happens to us or around us, or even what we do, when we are a part of God's people, His love for us never ends. Lamentations 3:22-23 says, "The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

When we trust and believe in Jesus and are adopted as sons and daughters of God, He will never stop loving us. Nothing can get in the way of that. This is such good news! There is no one or no thing that can love us like this. Not your parents, siblings, or friends. Only God can do this. When's the last time we thought about God's love in this way? A love that won't change, no matter what we do. Romans 5:8 speaks to this, saying, Romans 5:8 "But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." How does this change how you view yourself/others? And most importantly, how does this change your view of God?

Application: We can love others because God loves us!

Pray

Week 10: Faithfulness

Recap:

Who remembers what we talked about last practice? (Let them try to recap, give them a short window)
For younger kids ask more direct recap questions:

- What characteristic did we talk about last week? Steadfast love
- Will God's love for us ever change? No

Memory verse:

Let's practice our memory verse! Exodus 34:6 "The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness"

Lesson:

Our verse wraps up with saying God abounds in faithfulness. Meaning He will always come through and be there. Sometimes that can be hard to believe because no one else we know ALWAYS comes through.

But God is different! Deuteronomy 7:9 says, "Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep His commandments, to a thousand generations," He will keep His covenants, or promises, to His people.

It's not just that He will keep promises, God is faithful to protect us. 2 Thessalonians 3:3 says that "But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one." It doesn't mean nothing bad will ever happen to us, but God protects us from attacks by Satan.

God Himself also promises us that He will "will never leave you nor forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5) God is always with His children, looking out for them, working things out for them. In fact, Philippians 1:6 tells us, "And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."

God is faithful to show up in so many more ways that we can ever understand or imagine! (Coaches, you might share sometimes that God has shown you faith, especially with the older kids)

Application: God is faithful in all things

Pray

Week 11: Gospel

Recap:

Who remembers what we talked about last practice? (Let them try to recap, give them a short window)
For younger kids ask more direct recap questions:

- What characteristic did we talk about last week? Faithfulness
- How is God faithful? Never leaves us, working things out for His Children, keeps His promises, protects us

Memory verse:

Let's practice our memory verse! Exodus 34:6 "The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness"

Lesson:

I want you to think all the way back to the first week of practice. Some of you had never played, and some had played. Now think about how much you have learned about the sport and how much better you have gotten at playing (Make sure to point out an accomplishment of one of your struggling players). Even with all the practice, do you think there will ever be a time that you will become a PERFECT basketball player/cheerleader? Do you ever think there will come a time when you don't mess up in a game or practice EVER? No. Probably not. Even professionals still mess up and they play ALL THE TIME.

This is how the Christian life works too. When you first become a Christian, you are still going to mess up and sin. Romans 3:23 tells us "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," But the coolest thing about that is, just like we've been talking about all season long, God is still with us even in those times. Being a Christian is not something that is easy. Jesus even told us, "In this life, you will have trouble." (John 16:33)

The good news is that for those who have become a Christian, Jesus died on the cross for EVERYTHING we have done wrong. That means that everything we have done wrong, and everything we will do wrong in our lives. He paid for it all with His blood and then rose to life three days later, conquering sin and death's power over us. Romans 5:8 tells us, "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." For those who have never made the decision to ask Jesus to be the Lord of your life, that means that Christ died for you too! He loves each and every one of us that much! And He is right there, waiting for you to turn to Him whenever you are ready.

Ephesians 2:8 tells us "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God." All you have to do is admit that you have sinned against God and that there is nothing you can do to fix this on your own, believe that Jesus is God's son and that He came to die on a cross and rise three days later to conquer everyone's sin and death, and then was raised three days later, and finally we must confess that we are followers of Jesus and tell others about Him and what He has done in our life! If any of you have never asked Jesus to be the Lord of your life, please come talk to me and

I'd love to talk more about it with you. If you have, THAT'S AWESOME! Continue to tell your friends about what Jesus has done.

Application: We all mess up but God sent Jesus to be a perfect sacrifice for us to bring us back to a relationship with Him

Pray

2024 Central Sports Basketball Devo Discussion Questions

My hope for these questions is to give you an extra resource to aid you during your devos. You do not have to use these/you can use your own questions if you'd like! I just hope this blesses you. -Colby

Week 3: Background

1st-2nd:

- What are some chores that you do at home?
- Do you always want to do your chores?
- What happens if you don't do your chores?

3rd-4th:

- What are some chores that you do at home?
- Do you always want to do your chores?
- What happens if you don't do your chores?

5th-6th:

- Are you perfect at doing everything that's asked of you?
- What are some areas in life that you fail in?

Week 4: The Lord, the Lord, a God

1st-2nd:

- Have you ever been in a crazy storm?
- Do you have any control over the storm at all?
- Did you know that God controls even the storms!

3rd-4th:

- Where in your life do you feel that you have no control over?
- Do you try and control those situations, even if you can't?

5th-6th

- Where in your life do you feel that you have no control over?
- Do you try and control those situations, even if you can't?

Week 5: Merciful

1st-2nd:

- Have you ever done anything wrong?
- After you did something wrong, have you ever been met with this mercy we've been talking about?

3rd-4th:

- Has a teacher ever shown mercy to you even if you've messed up in class?
- Where else in your life have you seen mercy given to you?

5th-6th

- Do you think of God as merciful?
- Where have you seen God's mercy in your own life?

Week 6: Gracious

1st-2nd:

- What's the best gift you've ever been given?
- Why do you enjoy receiving gifts?

3rd-4th:

- Do you like receiving gifts?
- Why do you enjoy receiving gifts?

5th-6th

- Do you view salvation as a gift?
- What are some gifts that you have seen God give you?

Week 7: Slow to Anger

1st-2nd:

- Have you ever gotten angry at someone/something?
- What typically makes you angry?

3rd-4th:

- With your siblings/friends, would you say you get angry with them often?
- What areas of life would you say make you quick to anger?

5th-6th

- Do you think God should be angry with you?
- What areas of life would you say make you quick to anger?
- How can you follow God's lead in this verse and be slow to anger? What areas of life would that affect the most?

Week 8: Abounding

1st-2nd:

- Think of the wealthiest people in the world. Name a few.
- What is something that you would say you have/own a lot of?

3rd-4th:

- What does it mean to be abounding in something?
- Do you think of God's love as abounding?

5th-6th

- What does it mean to be abounding in something?
- Do you think God's love is enough for you?

Week 9: Steadfast Love

1st-2nd:

- Have you ever seen a waterfall?
- Does it ever stop?
- What would stop it?

3rd-4th:

- Imagine something that is eternal/never ends?
- Is it hard to think about/wrap your mind around it?

5th-6th

- Does God's love stop based on what we do?
- Do you think you've done too much wrong for God to keep loving you?

Week 10: Faithfulness

1st-2nd:

- Who in your life is the most reliable?
- Why would you consider them faithful/reliable?

3rd-4th:

- Who in your life is the most reliable?
- Why would you consider them faithful/reliable?

5th-6th

- Do you ever feel alone?
- Who in your life would you say is faithful to you?