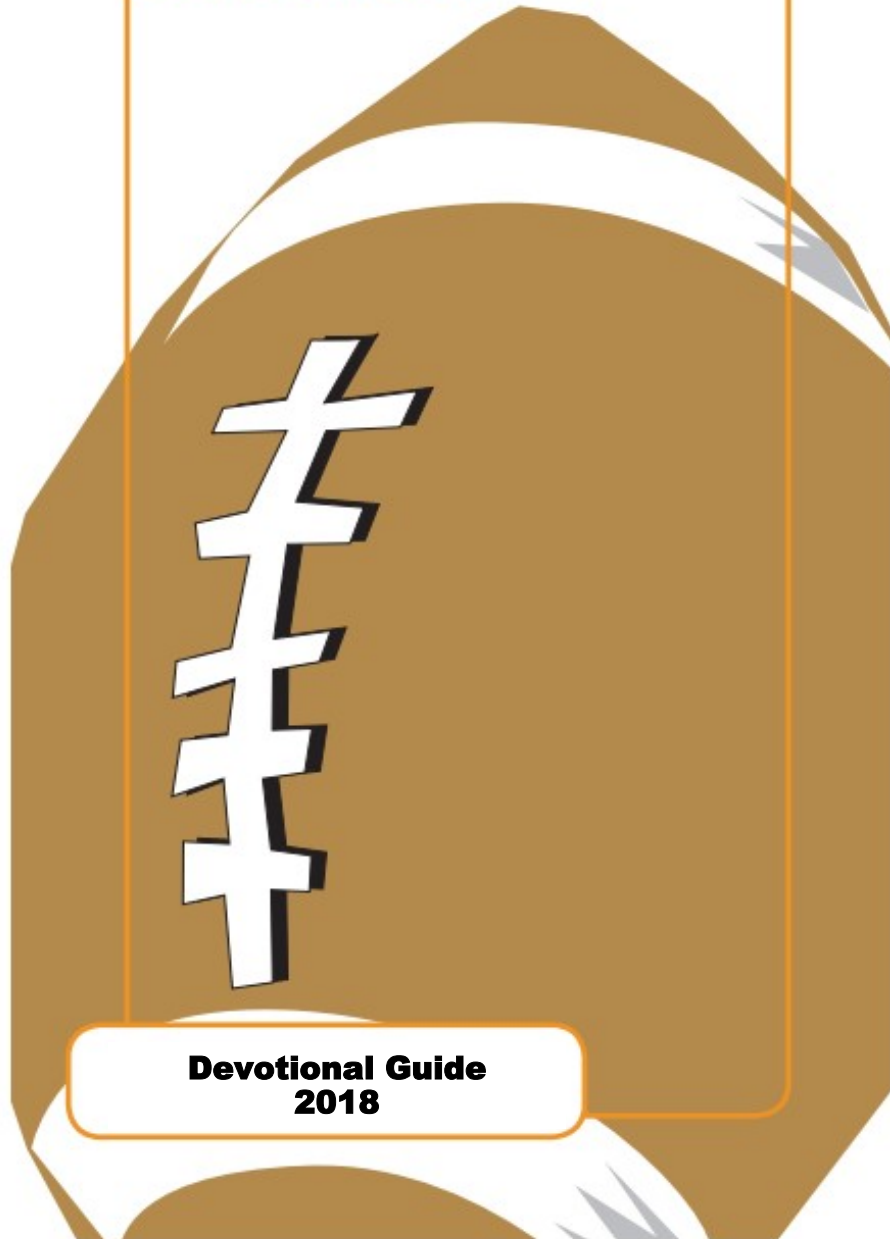


CONNECT *Sports* FOOTBALL



**Devotional Guide
2018**

**Connecting
To Christ**

Welcome to Connect Sports! Through Connect Sports, families and community come together to rejoice in the fellowship of Jesus Christ. This devotional book is designed to encourage and help parents develop the spiritual growth of our youth. Excellence in sports starts within each of us. If we know who we are and whose we are, we can build and develop with the excellence that God has created within each of us.

Each lesson contains a fun object lesson to help them relate scripture to their every day lives as well as a biblical story to share the importance, benefits and consequences of the Jesus's teachings. God is the same today as He was yesterday. Helping our students see how God works within their daily lives is key to helping them understand scripture.

We hope you enjoy the lessons yourself while you develop new gifts within the hearts and lives of your youth.

	Christ Connection	Scripture Connection
1	<i>Let the Light Shine Through!</i>	Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interest of others. Philippians 2:4.
2	<i>Raised With Love</i>	Carry each other's burdens and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2.
3	<i>A Glove Filled with Love</i>	But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8.
4	<i>What's In Your Backpack?</i>	If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1John 1:9.
5	<i>Rooted in Jesus!</i>	So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him. Colossians 2:6
6	<i>God's Strength In Us.....</i>	rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. Colossians 2:7

Devotion #1 - Let the Light Shine Through

Memory Scripture

Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interest of others. Philippians 2:4.

Bible Story Connection

Matthew 14:13-21 — Jesus Feeds 5,000

Objects Needed for Lesson

- 1) A picture frame without the back of the frame. (tape the edges to hold the glass in) or a piece of paper cut to look like a picture frame.
- 2) A mirror.

Presentation

Here are two objects that are both made from glass. Yet they are quite different. Can anyone tell me what the difference is? One is used as a window and the other is used as a mirror. Windows are used to look through so that you can see other things. Mirrors are for looking at yourself.

God doesn't want us to always be thinking about ourselves, but to be thinking more about other people. Guess which He would rather we be like—mirror or the window? That's right, the window. God wants us to spend more time looking out for others than looking out for ourselves.

Doing it God's way actually makes life more enjoyable. When you and I spend more time thinking about what other people need and less time about our own wants and needs, we become happier people.

Imagine living in a house where all the windows have been turned into mirrors. Think about it. How would you like living there? You wouldn't be able to see outside. You wouldn't see the sun, the trees, the clouds, your friends walking by, or anything else. It would also make your house as dark as it is at night because no light can get through a mirror.

The same thing happens when you and I think mainly about ourselves. Life gets gloomy for us. We stop seeing the beautiful things around us and the exciting way we could help other people. We only see ourselves. It is like living in a house where all the windows have been replaced with mirrors. I want to tell you a story about Jesus and how he saw and helped others:

**Tell the story of
Matthew 14:13-21 in your own words.**

Let's be more the person God wants us to be. Like Jesus feeding the 5,000 people, let's think more about other people and less about ourselves. May our eyes be more like a window that can see the world around us and less like the mirror that only lets us see ourselves.



Devotion #2 - Raised With Love

Memory Scripture

Carry each other's burdens and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2.

Bible Story Connection

Luke 10: 25-37—The Good Samaritan

Objects Needed for Lesson

A large sturdy laundry basket.

Presentation

I need a volunteer to stand in this basket for a few moments. (Pick a smaller child for the sake of your back, as you'll see.) Now I'd like you to try and lift yourself up. Grab hold of the basket with both hands and lift. (Let the child try.)

There is a very important reason why (child's name) is not able to lift himself/herself up in the basket; what is it? That's right, he's/she's inside it! There's an old saying your grandparents may be familiar with: "You can't pull yourself up by your own bootstraps."

Someone else, someone outside the basket, will have to do the lifting—like this. (Lift the basket, being certain the child takes hold of you for stability.) It's impossible to carry yourself, but someone else can do it!

This is not just true for people in laundry baskets. It is true for all of us in living our lives. God has made us in such a way that we must depend on the help of others and they must depend on us. None of us has all the strength we need all the time. No one knows everything.

We need other people and they need us. We need teachers, parents, pastors, friends, neighbors, doctors, bakers, fellow church people, and many others. It does not mean you are weak when you need help and ask for it. It means you are smart. You've figured out that God wants it that way.

God's plan is that everybody helps everybody. Don't be afraid to ask for help. And don't be afraid to help someone! Today I want to tell you a story about a good Samaritan who knew how important it was to help others.

Tell the story of the Good Samaritan in your own words from Luke 10:25-37.

Let's be more the person God wants us to be. Let's help others around us as the Good Samaritan did for the man who had been robbed. This week, look around to see who you can help. It could be helping your mom or dad with dishes or setting the table. Maybe helping a grandparent with house chores or yard work. Lift someone else up with your acts of love and kindness.



Devotion #3 - A Glove Filled With Love

Memory Scripture

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8.

Bible Story Connection

1 Samuel 17—David and Goliath

Objects Needed for Lesson

A glove and a pen or pencil.

Presentation

Look at this glove. It doesn't seem to do anything. It just lays here. You can pick it up and shake it and still nothing happens. It can't grasp this pen out of my pocket, let alone write anything. This glove is simply a limp mass of material. It has the shape of a hand but seems unable to do anything a hand can do.

But now watch this glove come to life! When I put the glove on my hand it suddenly has tremendous ability. With my hand inside, the glove can make a fist, walk on two fingers, and even grasp my pen. If we had some paper here it would even be able to write.

Did you know that to God we are like a glove? That's right. And God's Holy Spirit is like the hand that fits into the glove. If we don't invite God to be in our life we are like a limp, useless, empty glove. But if we invite God to come and live inside of us He can begin to do wonderful things.

When God's Holy Spirit is within us we have a far greater ability to love others and to understand what is right and wrong and to do that which is right. We also have more peace and joy. We can do all the things we know we should do when God is living inside of us.

The next time you put on a pair of gloves or mittens, think about how your hands can make them do all kinds of things. Then think about the Holy Spirit of God and how He can help you do all kinds of wonderful and amazing things when you let Him live inside of you. Today I want to tell you about a boy who had great faith. He had so much faith in God that he faced a Giant and saved his people. He even went on to be a King! This is the story of David.

**Tell the story of David and Goliath
in your own words from 1 Samuel 17.**

When we ask God into our lives, He does great things through us. With God, even a boy or girl can do great things in this world. Even face giants! What are some of the giants you face? (school work, chores etc.). If God lives in you, you never have to face any of your giants alone again!



Devotion #4 - What's In Your Backpack?

Memory Scripture

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

Bible Story Connection

John 3:16

Objects Needed for Lesson

A child's backpack and sandwich bags full of sand.

Labels in or on the outside of the bag with the word "sin" written on them..

Presentation

Ask for a volunteer, or choose a child who will stand and wear the backpack during the message. Have them stand before the group wearing the empty backpack. Ask him or her how it feels on their back. Then explain that the bags represent sin in our lives. Begin to place them in the back of the backpack. Once you are finished filling the backpack, ask the volunteer to stand until you are finished.

Did you know that sin in our lives is much like carrying these heavy sand bags? When you have done something wrong and haven't told anyone about it, how does it make you feel inside? That's right. We feel very unhappy. We might feel sad or worried, or sometimes it might even make us feel sick.

What do we need to do to get rid of those yucky feelings we have inside when we've done something wrong? Let's go to our Bible to see if we can find the answer.

Read John 3:16.

Since Jesus died for our sins, He took our sins away. Therefore we need to confess our sins to Him. The Bible says in our memory verse today, 1John 1:9, that we need to confess our sins. Confess is a word that simply means that we need to tell God about what we have done wrong. Now, when we tell God, it won't be any big news to Him, will it? God knows and sees everything we do, so He already knows what we've done even before we tell Him. God still wants us to tell Him. When we do, we are going to feel a huge load lifted from us. Remove the back pack from the child's back.

Isn't it a relief to get that heavy load off of your back? God can take the load of sin off from us. God has promised to forgive us and to make us clean inside, just as though we had never done that wrong thing. All we have to do is ask! Isn't that good news?



Devotion #5 - Rooted In Jesus

Memory Scripture

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him. Colossians 2:6

Bible Story Connection

Matthew 13:24-29—Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds

Objects Needed for Lesson

One cut flower and one potted flower.

Presentation

I have two flowers with me today. One of the flowers is a cut flower. It is meant to be placed in a vase with water. The other is a potted plant.

One of these flowers will last much longer than the other. It will also be able to hold up better under bad conditions. Do you know which one I'm talking about? (Allow them to answer.) That's right, it's the potted plant that will last longer. It is better off because it has roots! The cut flower will only last a few days and then will have to be thrown out because it has been cut off from its roots.

The Bible says that if we want to be the good and wonderful people God intends us to be, we must be rooted--rooted in Jesus Christ. Now of course the Bible doesn't mean we should have actual roots.

It means that we should be very close to Jesus, sticking by Him at all times. Being rooted in Jesus means we depend on Him.

Jesus will give us the strength to handle problems. We won't have to wilt in tough situations like this cut flower will do eventually. We can be like the potted flower and keep on living the good life God wants us to because we are rooted in Jesus.

I'm sure you each have some problems right now. Your problems may have to do with grades at school, friends, or maybe parents. All of us have problems, including me. But if we stay close to Jesus--stay rooted in Him--we'll turn out OK.

Tell the story of the *Wheat and the Weeds* in your own words from *Matthew 13:24-29*.

Sometimes even though we have asked Jesus to be a part of our lives, bad things happen. Sometimes bullies at school are mean to us. Like the Weeds among the Wheat, they can NOT be removed. We must learn to live among others who are unkind, but we can pray for them and try to lead them to know Jesus! Be strong, be kind, be rooted in Jesus so that others can see your inner beauty!

Go to church
Read your Bible
Obey what you read
Witness



Devotion #6 - God's Strength in Us

Memory Scripture

Rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. Colossians 2:7

Bible Story Connection

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—Daniel 3:16-28

Objects Needed for Lesson

1) 3 pieces of copy paper, 2) One coffee can

Presentation

Start by sharing with the children that while we all are human, when we ask God to give us strength, we can do great things. 1) Wrap one piece of copy paper around the jar and tape the ends together. Pull the paper cylinder off the jar. Do this a second time with another piece of copy paper. You now have two paper cylinders. 2) Set the two cylinders 4"-5" from one another. 3) Place the third piece of copy paper on top of the cylinders. 4) Start to set the jar on the paper between the cylinders. Ask the children what they think will happen? (It will fall and break.)

Now, take the piece of copy paper that was resting on top of the cylinders and fold it back and forth to corrugate it. Make the folds $\frac{1}{4}$ "- $\frac{1}{2}$ " in width. Put the corrugated piece of paper back on top of the two paper cylinders so that the pleats are going from one cylinder to the other. Set the jar on the corrugated paper between the cylinders. The coffee can will sit on the corrugated paper.

Ask the children, "What happened to the jar when it was set on the plain paper?" Wait for responses and encourage their observations. Ask, "What happened to the jar when it was set on the corrugated paper?" Something was added to the paper when it was folded back and forth. What was added to the paper? (strength) What is it called when paper is folded to add strength? (corrugate) The paper did not have strength to stand against the can when it was flat. We can't stand against all the things that the enemy throws at us by ourselves. When we added the folds to the paper, it got a lot stronger. The more folds (God's strength) we added, the stronger the paper got, and it was able to hold the jar without caving in. God will give us more and more strength to face everything that the enemy tries to get us to think and do. Let me share a story from the Bible about three men who stood up against a King and God gave them strength.

Tell the story of the Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in your own words from Daniel 3:16-28.

Like these three men, our God and our friends will go through trials with us. Together we are stronger and can hold up under pressure, just like the corrugated paper did to the coffee can. You too can be strong now that God is in your life and you have friends that will pray with you!





Connecting Families and Community in Christ through Sports

MINISTRY PARTNERS

(In Alphabetical Order)

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