

Diocesan Recreation Association Ideas for Coaching As Ministry

Diocesan Recreation Association (DRA) is a sports program informed by the values of the Catholic Church. The important lessons of commitment, sacrifice, and choosing among good choices are part of the experience.

For DRA Athletics, our efforts of sports as youth ministry are rooted in the Latin “ministerium” which means service. We are fortunate to have so many people who give of themselves in service to our young people through DRA Athletics. It is important to root our sporting efforts in the most important gathering of our Catholic community – the Mass – and to ensure that our young people are blessed in their experience of athletics through DRA – both figuratively and literally.

It is a reminder that sports, as youth ministry and DRA Athletics are a vital part of the community of the Catholic Church. Therefore, it is suggested that one or more of the following take place in each parish/school that participates in DRA Athletics:

- Participation at Mass in uniform before games on Sundays
- Praying the Our Father and Hail Mary while doing exercises (planks)
- When breaking the team huddle asking the patron saint of the parish for support, “Mary, Mother of Victory, Pray for us”
- Discussing the patron saint of the teams you are playing
- Sharing facts about the saints before playing that team each week.
- Prayer during practices
- Prayers before and after practice
- Mass before an evening practice
- Have athletes take turns leading prayers—using traditional prayer or free form
- Praying for specific things, i.e. Learning something new, have fun, stay safe, to improve skills
- Asking for the intercession of St. Sebastian, patron saints of athletes
- Special intentions outside the world of sports
- Attending Mass and a pregame meal
- Team discussion around How is St. _____ Parish going to look and be good because of me?
- Discuss : God give us talents to be our best
- Team discussions on what the team did well and what we need to work on. What to do in different situations and what is unfair
- Create a team prayer
- Thought for the Day (TFTD)
 - Your potential is God’s gift to you; what you do with your potential is your gift to God
 - Your dreams won’t work unless you do
 - The only place success comes before work is in the dictionary
 - The road to success is always under construction
 - If you think you can or think you can’t, you are usually right.

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- Team spirit award to encourage positivity—captain for the next game
- Draw names and complement the person at the end of practices; write and post an uplifting message
- Prayer Circles with special intentions
- Play 20 Questions while warming up. Have someone ask 20 yes-or-no questions in order to guess the person, place or thing. You can use saints, leaders, sports figures, or team members, etc.
- Guess the Biblical Figure—Come up with some creative descriptions of biblical figures and see if the team can guess them. For example, the “Hairiest man in the Bible” could be used to describe Esau

Other Ideas!

- Remember that coaches are youth ministers!
- Instead of one team leading the pregame prayer, have both teams and fans join in
- Joint huddle after the contest with coaches or athletes leading the entire group in prayer
- Participate in the Rosary Rally
- Kickoff Mass for season—set a date for the diocese; encourage all to participate; etc.
- Use the Coach Notes that come from Notre Dame for ideas
- Blessing of the Athletes at Mass;
- Recognition of Athletes before/during/after Mass for their participation and especially for those that reflect the principles of the Play Like A Champion Today[®] program, good sportsmanship and the spirit of DRA Athletics;
- Mass of Thanksgiving—Celebrate Mass after the championship weekend. Put a Prayer of the Faithful in for DRA athletes. Have players bring up the gifts.
- Make a visit to church as a team
- Go to adoration as a team
- Participate in a team service project
- Collaboration with Youth Minister/Faith Formation/Religious Education/Pastoral Staff to raise the level of Catholic identity within the DRA Athletics program

New Ideas in 2017

- The Five Finger Prayer
 - The thumb: Pray for your teammates past and present
 - The index finger: Pray for your coaches
 - The middle finger: Pray for the authority figures-- ADs, league directors, the referees
 - The ring finger: Pray for your teammates who are hurt, sick or suffering
 - The pinky: Pray for yourself and for your opponents
 - Prayer Cards—make 4 x 6 laminated cards with a prayer on one side (Runner’s Prayer) and on the other side and inspirational quote, another prayer or a picture of a saint
- Invite guest speakers to a practice—this could be anyone with a message to share: a parent, a teacher, another coach, a former athlete

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New Ideas in 2018

- For coaches:
 - Pray with the team roster in front of you, remembering each team member
- Breathing as prayer
 - Find a quiet place
 - Close your eyes and take 10 deep breaths
 - Focus on your breathing, expanding your stomach each time you breathe in
 - Each time your exhale, thank God for a blessing in your life
 - When you are done, sit for a while longer and just enjoy the silence before heading back to your day, practice, etc.

New Ideas in 2019

Parishes hold a coaches evening of reflection

- What does the title coach mean to you
 - What relationships are you especially grateful for
 - If done at the end of the season, how did the season go
 - What does the school motto meaning to you
 - How is your sport spiritual for you
 - What was the special moment of the season
- Celebrate your alumni
 - Pray with your roster—someone or something will stand out for prayer
 - Have ceremonies
 - Award uniforms to the athletes instead of just handing them out
 - Have a parents night
 - Celebrate your 8th graders
 - Honor long term coaches
 - Invite pastors and teachers to games
 - This will have a large impact on the kids. Children will be more comfortable in approaching the adults
 - Send them thank you notes for coming

New Ideas in 2021

- Ask your pastors to do a blessing of the in-season athletes
- Pray The Examen: A Daily Prayer with your team or by yourself
The Ignatian Examen, or the Daily Examen, is a contemplative prayer led by memory. During an Examen, one reflects of the current day, focusing on memories from the events of the day as a way of recognizing God's Divine Presence. It invites us to find the movement of God in all the people and events of our day. The Examen should facilitate God's love in you to act in the world.

The Examen is simply a set of introspective prompts for you to follow. You can adapt this creatively to your own character and spirit as you exercise the practice. Here are the basic steps:

- Prepare Your Heart and Mind
 - ◆ Place yourself in the presence of God
- Give Thanks
 - ◆ Express gratitude for the day as a gift from God
- Review the Day
 - ◆ Think back through the events of your day, noting the joys and delights as a gift from God
- Face Your Shortcomings

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- ◆ Acknowledge where and how you fell short of God's full glory during the day
- Pray for Tomorrow
 - ◆ Ask God to be with you in the day to come

End with the Suscipe (Prayer of St. Ignatius) This is a reflective prayer on your day.

"Take, Lord, receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, my whole will. All that I have and all that I possess. You gave it all to me. I surrender it all back to you. Do with it as you will, according to your good pleasure. Give me your love and your grace; for with this I have all that I need."

Idea's for Coaches

- Reread or use your PLACT Coaches Training Manual as a source
 - *"Ask yourself and answer the following before each season:*
 - *Why are you involved in Catholic youth sports?*
 - *Identify a coach who has made a difference in your life. Whom did you select and why? What did this coach say and do that was memorable?*
 - *What are the top 3 values that you hope to pass on to your players?*
 - *What do you hope is your coaching legacy?*
 - *Reflect on how "coaching-as-ministry" impacts how...*
 - *...we develop each of your players' skills and sense of confidence?*
 - *...we treat members of our team, our opponents, and officials*
 - *...we exercise authority as coaches*
 - *...we make up our lineups and distribute playing time*
 - *Coaching as Ministry: What Does this mean for our athletes?*
 - *Keeping in mind that we are all God's Children, champion practice their faith by:*
 - *Reaching out to a lonely or unpopular teammate*
 - *Helping a teammate get over a mistake*
 - *Showing sportsmanship to an obnoxious opponent*
 - *Standing up to a bully*
 - *"While playing sports, Christians also find help in developing the cardinal virtues—fortitude, temperance, prudence, and justice." Pope John Paul ii, Sept. 2004*
 - *Fortitude—pursuing goals with courage and persistence*
 - *Temperance—keeping sports in perspective, maintaining control, and leading a balanced life*
 - *Prudence—Sound decision making based on the good*
 - *Justice—Treating others with care and respect"*

5 Ways to Encourage Athletic Success

- Be a good role model. Children learn as much from how you act as they do from what you say.
- Treat your athletes with respect and they will take your words and example to heart.
- Celebrate every child's success and sincere efforts. Be generous with your words of praise.
- Have patience. Accept that children make mistakes, are inconsistent, and act thoughtlessly—this is part of being a child.
- Share your enthusiasm for the value of athletics and the fun of learning.

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Possible Resources:

Living Faith Kids Daily reflections www.livingfaithkids.com There is a fee for this one

3 Minute Retreats 3MinuteRetreat@LoyolaPress.com This would be good for a short meditation prior to practice

Sacred Space <http://www.sacredspace.ie/> Good way to begin practice.

CATHOLIC MEDITATION - FREE DAILY MEDITATIONS spiritualcatholic.com/catholic-meditation

Strong Catholic Family Faith-- Lots of ideas on this website.
<http://www.catholicfamilyfaith.org/praying.html>

Catholic Kids—Lots of ideas <http://www.catholic-kids.com/index.html> I liked the idea of a Bible Quiz

Prayer and Practice with Purpose by Anne Stricherz 2017 by National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA)